



Associate Assessment

Counsellor guide

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Introduction

A colleague or member of your team is working towards RICS Associate qualification [AssocRICS]. S/he would like you to act as a counsellor as you are an RICS member. This guide will help you understand the qualification and your role as a counsellor.

In addition to reading this guide, we recommend you read the candidate guide and relevant pathway guide. These are available from www.rics.org/associate

The qualification

The RICS Associate qualification provides an opportunity for those with relevant work experience and/or vocational qualification[s] to gain recognition of their skills. It is based on written submissions.

Your role

A counsellor who knows the candidate's work – often the line manager, employer or simply a more experienced colleague – is a key part of directing, supporting and encouraging the candidate through the qualification. Ideally, you should be a 'critical friend' to the candidate. You should:

- meet the candidate at regular intervals (every four to six weeks)
- give clear guidance about where the candidate needs to develop
- ensure the candidate understands the assessment requirements and is progressing as expected
- encourage the candidate, if progress is slow, to maintain momentum
- give constructive feedback
- develop a training programme and ensure the candidate follows it
- ensure work opportunities are available to meet the assessment requirements, and
- ensure support is being provided by other colleagues.

You will need to understand the RICS competencies. Reading the relevant pathway guide and working with the candidate to complete the competency selection sheet will help.

Items for assessment

Candidates submit:

- a summary of experience relating to the competencies
- a record of continuing professional development (CPD)
- a case study focused on a project, demonstrating the most relevant competencies in greater depth.

These are described in more detail below. Candidates must also pass the online RICS ethics module, consisting of learning materials and a test that is completed at the end of the process.

Time limits

There are no specific time limits for the process but candidates, with their counsellors, should set clear milestones to ensure progress. The documentation at the end of this guide will help you to create this together.

Candidates who already have experience may be ready for assessment almost straight away. They simply need to capture that experience in their submission. Candidates just starting in a role will take longer to gain the necessary experience and complete the written requirements.

Competencies

For each of the distinct roles covered by RICS, there is a 'pathway' (such as Building Surveying, Residential Property Management, or Valuation). RICS has identified the competencies needed for each pathway. The Associate qualification is achieved by demonstrating, through written submission, that the required competencies have been achieved.

Each pathway requires candidates to achieve six technical competencies, covering the key skills and abilities for the job role concerned.

There is a pathway guide for each pathway, setting out:

- what the technical competencies are
- how they are defined in the context of the pathway
- what experience the candidate needs to achieve each competency.

All candidates must also achieve eight mandatory competencies, covering the general business skills all RICS members need. They are:

- client care
- communication and negotiation
- conduct rules, ethics and professional practice
- conflict avoidance, management and dispute resolution procedures
- data management
- health and safety
- sustainability
- teamworking.

Definitions of the mandatory competencies are provided in the pathway guide.

What you can do to help

Understand the pathway and competencies

Help the candidate study the pathway guide. Ensure you both have a thorough understanding of the competencies and their relevance to the pathway.

Plan how the competencies can be achieved

Identify any gaps in the candidate's experience and competence. Compile a structured plan of activities together with training and development requirements to ensure the competencies can be met. The plan can then be reviewed at regular meetings.

If the candidate cannot achieve a competency because s/he will not be exposed to the necessary sort of work, try to create opportunities to widen the scope of activity. Consider the possibility of secondment to another department or to another firm. A competency can be achieved by a certain amount of practical experience combined with theoretical learning and observation. In some cases, work shadowing, simulated activities and work-based exercises overseen by a colleague with management responsibility may be sufficient. The more concrete contribution the candidate makes to real work outputs, and the higher the level of individual responsibility for a piece of work, the better.

Candidates may have achieved competencies already. If so, help the candidate decide how this can be demonstrated in the submission.

Meet the candidate at regular intervals

We recommend regular meetings with the candidate to:

- review how the candidate is performing in day-to-day activities
- review the candidate's technical knowledge and understanding
- discuss the wider implications of work completed to ensure the candidate has an understanding of the broader work environment
- discuss and advise on any improvements to be made
- establish whether the candidate has any concerns about their progress, discuss opportunities for undertaking new areas of relevant work, and advise on any training needs
- set goals.

Assuming a candidate is taking some time to prepare for assessment, we recommend the following schedule:

- at the start – plan a programme of work activities to gain experience in all the competencies
- every six weeks – meet to consider progress with individual competencies
- every three months – review overall progress
- every six months – conduct a strategic review and, if necessary, revise the programme of work to ensure the candidate is on track.

The documents at the end of this guide can help you at each of the stages set out above. They are included only to provide assistance, it is not mandatory to use them.

Submission

Summary of experience

The summary of experience should demonstrate how the candidate's experience meets the competency requirements:

- the six technical competencies – an individual statement for each one, with a total of 2000 words
- the eight mandatory competencies – an individual statement for each one, with a total of 1000 words.

Please note that the mandatory competence 'Conduct rules, ethics and professional practice' does not need to be covered in the summary of experience as this is assessed through the online RICS ethics module and test.

Help the candidate review these statements. Compare them with the competency definitions and examples in the pathway guide, to ensure everything is covered. Check they make sense, and do not have spelling or grammatical errors. Challenge the candidate to justify what s/he has written and make sure you are satisfied that it gives a true representation of the candidate's work.

- Do the statements demonstrate the whole range and depth of experience required to achieve the competency?
- Do they demonstrate reasonably up-to-date skills, drawing on recent examples?

Confidentiality

Work produced by candidates is confidential and will not be disclosed by RICS to any third party without the candidate's permission or used for any purpose other than assessing the candidate's competence.

Candidates may need to ensure, for commercial reasons, that the evidence does not include names of clients, the location of a development, etc. In this case candidates should include a statement with the evidence, for example: 'the names in this document have been changed to preserve confidentiality'. You should advise the candidate if you think there are confidentiality issues.

Case study

The case study is an account of a project or piece of work, described in terms of the competencies. It should focus mainly on the two technical competencies most relevant to the candidate's day-to-day work, but try to refer to other technical and mandatory competencies as well. The project should be recent, to show up-to-date skills.

The case study should show the following:

- the objective of the project
- the knowledge, skills and experience
- the role played and the contribution made
- technical skills employed
- the overall outcome of the project.

You should help and challenge the candidate to ensure the case study:

- demonstrates understanding of the competencies
- focuses on two technical competencies
- displays some of the general business skills [mandatory competencies]
- is of a standard of writing you would expect in a report prepared for a client.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

CPD is the systematic updating and enhancement of skills, knowledge and competence that takes place throughout working life. It should be closely linked to the candidate's current work.

CPD can be taken from various sources including attending conferences, meetings or seminars, completing an academic course or informal reading. You can help the candidate decide what is appropriate to complement both their mandatory and technical competencies. You can also evaluate where there are gaps in the candidate's knowledge or skills, and consider what study, training or additional experience would fill those gaps.

Special attention must be given to the principles underpinning CPD:

- gained in a structured manner
- based on an explicit process of selecting, planning and evaluating the activities
- reflect learning from informal training sources e.g. structured reading, secondments

All candidates are required to complete 48 hours of CPD over the 12 months prior to assessment.

Candidates' CPD must be split between formal development such as professional courses, seminars or online events and informal development such as private study or on the job training. At least 50% of their CPD must be dedicated to formal development. For more information on the types of formal and informal CPD please go to www.rics.org/cpd.

Candidates must record their CPD in the Associate submission document.

Once candidates have been awarded Associate membership (AssocRICS) they will continue to undertake and record online a minimum of 20 hours of CPD activity each calendar year as part of their commitment to continuing professional development.

Ethics module

Before becoming an RICS Associate, candidates must successfully complete the online RICS ethics module to show their understanding of RICS' ethical requirements, rules and regulations.

The module consists of learning materials and case studies followed by a multiple choice test.

You can help by discussing ethical questions with the candidate at your regular meetings. You, or the candidate, may have faced ethical dilemmas in real work situations – you can explore these dilemmas and discuss the ideal solutions with the candidate.

Impress on the candidate the importance of understanding professional ethics, as this forms a significant part of the qualification process. Refer to the RICS Rules of Conduct and the professional and ethical standards – these can be downloaded from www.rics.org/regulation

Results

The result of the assessment will either be pass or refer.

Pass

Candidates who pass will have to follow the formal election procedures. As an RICS Associate, they will be required to maintain continuing professional development. You should encourage and support this.

Some RICS Associates may also want to progress to chartered RICS membership (MRICS). RICS Associates wishing to progress to MRICS should contact RICS for further information. You should then discuss the various options with them.

Refer

Referred candidates will receive a referral report from the assessors that says what they need to do before they will be ready for reassessment.

The referral report will identify any individual elements of the assessment that were satisfactory. These are 'banked' and will be valid for 12 months – if candidates submit for reassessment within 12 months the banked elements will not be reassessed.

You can help by reviewing the report with the candidate to ensure s/he understands the reasons for the referral, and what is now required. You should then decide on an action plan, and help ensure the candidate will be in a position to submit for reassessment within 12 months to ensure any banked evidence remains valid.

Actions to consider include:

- formal training provided by an external organisation
- exposure to other areas of work
- additional peer mentoring, or
- secondment or work placement in other departments, offices or firms.

Thank you for supporting your colleague and RICS.

Meeting template

Items reviewed	Comments
Review how the candidate is performing in day-to-day activities	
Review the candidate's technical knowledge and understanding – see competency achievement record	
Highlight any gaps and discuss actions for improvement – see competency review sheet	
Question candidate on competencies and discuss examples of work which demonstrate those competencies	
Review any actions from last meeting	
Discuss any ethical dimensions involved in the candidate's work	
Review any continuing professional development undertaken	
Schedule and set goals for next meeting	

Competency review sheet

Competency title:		Date of review:
Examples of work	Describe tasks undertaken, how they demonstrate the competency and any action required	Completed Y/N
1		
2		
3		
4		
Comments		

Competency achievement record



Confidence through professional standards

RICS promotes and enforces the highest professional qualifications and standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our name promises the consistent delivery of standards – bringing confidence to the markets we serve.

We accredit 125,000 professionals and any individual or firm registered with RICS is subject to our quality assurance. Their expertise covers property, asset valuation and real estate management; the costing and leadership of construction projects; the development of infrastructure; and the management of natural resources, such as mining, farms and woodland. From environmental assessments and building controls to negotiating land rights in an emerging economy; if our professionals are involved the same standards and ethics apply.

We believe that standards underpin effective markets. With up to seventy per cent of the world's wealth bound up in land and real estate, our sector is vital to economic development, helping to support stable, sustainable investment and growth around the globe.

With offices covering the major political and financial centres of the world, our market presence means we are ideally placed to influence policy and embed professional standards. We work at a cross-governmental level, delivering international standards that will support a safe and vibrant marketplace in land, real estate, construction and infrastructure, for the benefit of all.

We are proud of our reputation and we guard it fiercely, so clients who work with an RICS professional can have confidence in the quality and ethics of the services they receive.

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