



Specialist Assessment
Assessor guide

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Foreword

I want to personally thank each and every one of you for making a major contribution to the future of your profession by assessing those that will ultimately go on to shape the future of the built and natural environments and inspire the next generations. RICS Assessments are the beginning of a lifelong professional commitment to upholding the profession's standards for thousands of people each year.

As an RICS assessor you play an important role in ensuring that only those who fulfil our ethical standards and professional and technical competency requirements become RICS professionals. It is vital to our professional status, world standing and credibility that the assessment process is consistent worldwide. This guide explains the criteria involved and provides guidance on how to conduct the final assessment interview. Ensuring standards are maintained and that ethical conduct operates at all times, is at the very heart of a profession that will enjoy long-term public confidence and trust.

Thank you for your commitment to RICS and to ensuring the future of your profession. I hope you find being an RICS assessor both professionally and personally rewarding and that you value the legacy that you are creating for many years into the future.



Sean Tompkins

Chief Executive

Introduction

The specialist assessment involves five stages:

1. Eligibility – applicants must meet the qualification and experience requirements
2. Vetting – an initial application will be reviewed to confirm the applicant has a suitable profile for the assessment
3. Ethics – applicants complete the RICS ethics module
4. Submission – applicants provide evidence of their experience for you to prepare for the final assessment interview
5. Final assessment interview – applicants are assessed to determine if they are competent to practise as an RICS chartered professional

Your role as an assessor will begin at the submission stage. This guide will explain the approach you must take to assess specialist assessment applicants.

Assessment Resource Centre (ARC)

The Assessment Resource Centre (ARC) is an online tool where candidates manage their assessment details, CPD and selected competency records, and prepare their submission for assessment.

As an assessor you will have access to ARC in order to download candidate submissions and details of the each interview panel you are assigned to.

Guidance on using ARC is available at [rics.org/assessments](https://www.rics.org/assessments)

Applicant eligibility

Applicants must have 10 years' relevant experience. This is reduced to 5 years if they have an undergraduate degree (or equivalent professional qualification) and a relevant post-graduate degree (master's level or higher).

Specialist profile

The definition, indicators and behaviours are designed to allow applicants to demonstrate their senior profile.

Definition

An individual delivering enhanced services who is recognised for their impact and authority within the profession.

Indicators

Applicants must be able to demonstrate their responsibility for delivering services in a specialist area of work.

In addition, the following elements of their career may indicate their specialist area of work:

- Position in the organisation structure (title, function, decision-making, who else in the organisation provides your level of services)
- Publications (articles in journals, technical authorship)
- Record of specialist consultancy work
- Record of speaker at high level conferences
- Recognition from peers, media, professional bodies, or industry stakeholders (adviser, author, contributor, board member)

- Appointment by governance or judicial body (expert witness, advisor)
- Record of lecturing or formal training
- Degree qualification beyond master's level (PhD or similar)
- Dispute resolution in a specific technical area

Note: This list is not exhaustive. Applicants may identify other indicators relevant to their career.

Behaviours

Within the applicant's specialist area of work they should be able to demonstrate how they:

- pursue opportunities to develop the industry and profession
- advocate best practice standards
- take responsibility to deliver professionalism
- act with integrity to promote responsible business

Note: They are required to demonstrate at least one behaviour.

RICS pathway and competencies

In addition to the experience and senior profile requirements, applicants must demonstrate they are working within an RICS pathway and can provide evidence of the required competencies.

Specialist area of work

When selecting their technical competencies applicants must identify one or two core competencies for the pathway to demonstrate their specialist area of work. One competency must be required to Level 3 as stated in the pathway guide.

Submission

You will have the following information on which to base the interview.

Application details

The application details include:

- Qualifications
- Professional body memberships (if any)
- Employment history
- Statement on specialist profile
- Organisation chart or description of the organisation structure (in context of applicant's role)

This will provide you with an overview of the type and level of work the applicant does.

Declared competencies

A list of the competencies and levels the applicant has selected – you should assess only against this. It will allow you to begin to identify areas of questioning.

Record of continuing professional development (CPD)

The record of CPD will add to your understanding of the applicant's training and experience and will also give you ideas for areas of questioning in the interview.

The applicant must provide a record of CPD from the previous 12 months that meets the requirements set by RICS Regulation. This must amount to at least 20 hours of learning activities – visit [rics.org/cpd](https://www.rics.org/cpd) for more details.

Case studies

Applicants will submit three case studies (1,000-1,500 words each) based on projects they have worked on. They are recommended to select projects in which they have played a leading role in terms of strategy, management, decision making, problem-solving and client relationship management. The project could be related to a technical or professional service for a client or an internal or external activity/initiative for the applicant's employer/business.

If candidates have worked in more than one country, they must submit at least one case study on a project in the country in which they are being assessed. The applicant's involvement in each project must be within three years of their application for final assessment.

Case study on specialist area of work

1000-1500 words covering a project that demonstrates specialist experience against one or two core technical competencies selected for the pathway (the applicant's specialist area of work). One competency must be required to Level 3.

Case study on technical competence 1

1000-1500 words covering a project that demonstrates experience against a minimum of two technical competencies (different from other case studies) selected for the pathway.

Case study on technical competence 2

1000-1500 words covering a project that demonstrates experience against a minimum of two technical competencies (different from other case studies) selected for the pathway.

Applicants are asked to include the following in each case study:

- A brief overview of the key issues
- An account of their role/personal involvement
- An outline of any problems and the experience used to resolve these problems
- A note of the outcome and successful delivery with emphasis on the role they played.

All case studies should provide evidence of the applicant's specialist profile, relevance of their experience to the pathway and the mandatory competencies, especially conduct rules, ethics and professional practice. For each case study applicants will state the technical and mandatory competencies they have demonstrated.

Conflict of interest

All RICS members are bound by their professional ethics to ensure the credibility of the final assessment process. In particular, it is important that potential conflicts of interest between assessors and applicants are properly identified and managed.

A conflict of interest arises, in the context of final assessment, where a chairman or assessor is privy to certain information or interests which could influence, or could be perceived as influencing, their decisions in relation to an applicant.

'Influences' could include friendships, loyalties to a firm, or loyalties to fellow members of an organisation. Factors of influence could include the possibility of financial gain or other advantages, whether to the individual panel member or to a person or organisation they are connected with.

There is no definitive list of situations where a conflict would arise. The following is only to illustrate relationships which could give rise to conflict.

- friend
- acquaintance
- any family relationship (even remote)
- neighbour
- friends in common
- colleague past or present
- client
- competitor
- does business with you or your firm.

Example questions to ask yourself

- Do I or my firm have an ongoing commercial relationship with the applicant or his/her firm?
- Has there been any conflict between our firms or the applicant in the past, regarding services provided, or financial charges?
- Could the outcome of the assessment positively/negatively affect the assessors' business interests?

'Personal' versus 'Prejudicial' distinctions

There is a distinction between personal interests and prejudicial interests.

- 'Personal' interests: in certain circumstances, there may be a connection between the assessor, and the applicant, but this may not present an issue to the applicant in practice. For instance, the individuals may have met at a CPD event or know of one another in a professional capacity.
- 'Prejudicial' interests: where the assessor either stands to benefit from the outcome of an assessment interview or might otherwise be perceived as being influenced, the assessor must declare the conflict and should recuse themselves from the panel.

Before the final assessment interview

- RICS uses all reasonable endeavours to identify and avoid any obvious conflicts of interest, when selecting a panel of assessors, prior to the interview going ahead.
- Once in receipt of the candidate's final assessment documentation the chairperson and assessors should further ensure that they do not have a conflict of interest and if so declare it to RICS, who will decide whether the panel needs to change or is okay to proceed.

If you think a conflict of interest might exist you should declare this immediately and in advance of the interview. You should contact your chairperson and explain the circumstances fully. Together you need to decide whether the personal interest is 'prejudicial'. Could the interest affect your judgement? Would a member of the public reasonably think it could? If it is decided that the personal interest is not prejudicial, the interview can go ahead.

If it is decided that the personal interest is prejudicial, alternative arrangements will be made. The chairperson must inform the RICS team as soon as possible so an alternative assessor can be assigned. If it is the chairperson who has the personal interest, the other assessors should decide whether the interest is prejudicial. If they think it is, or if they cannot agree, the interview should not go ahead. Contact RICS for support and alternative arrangements will be made.

On the final assessment interview day

In the unlikely event an applicant or panel member does consider there is a conflict of interest, the chairperson should decide whether the interview should go ahead with the panel member in question OR whether the panel member should sit out of the interview. If this is only a two-personal panel and a conflict is raised on the day of the interview, then the interview will need to be deferred and rescheduled for another date.

Note: Whenever a potential conflict of interest arises please contact your local RICS office, so they can advise you.

Final assessment interview

Interview structure

Chairperson's opening and introductions	5 minutes
Applicant's personal introduction	10 minutes
Discussion of the three case studies and career, addressing the technical and mandatory competencies and the applicant's specialist area of work Discussion of CPD [if necessary] Discussion of professional ethics [Note: Look for opportunities to discuss ethical issues throughout]	40 minutes
Closing remarks and final comments from applicant	5 minutes
Total	60 minutes

Use of electronic equipment

You can use electronic devices to facilitate the interview and refer to a candidate's submission. However, please ensure:

- Wi-Fi is turned off.
- Silent mode is enabled.
- No recording facility is activated.
- The device is fully charged and does not require mains power.

You should position your device so it does not present a barrier between you or the candidate but ensure that the screen is not visible to the candidate.

Assessment approach

Please take account of the applicant's experience and specialist area of work. Your task is to determine whether the applicant is competent to practise as an RICS chartered professional. You should approach the interview as a professional structured discussion.

The most important thing to bear in mind is that an applicant may be focusing on a narrower area of activities but in significant detail, so no longer covering the full range of pathway competencies. Your emphasis is on the specialist area of work.

Your questions should focus on the applicant's career experience, concentrating mostly on recent experience. The application details and case studies will be a good source of evidence for this.

Be aware that applicants are likely to have had little previous exposure to RICS terminology, so may express the concepts behind the RICS competencies in different ways: you should be prepared to adapt the way you express these concepts so that the applicant understands clearly.

Applicants may have gained experience in some technical competencies earlier in their career, and progressed to more specialised work. It is acceptable to judge an applicant as competent if you are satisfied that the required levels of a competency were achieved at some point in the applicant's experience.

Applicants may also have gained experience from other geographical locations. As an assessor, you will be expected to take a holistic approach and take into consideration and ask questions on also the broader experience gained that has been submitted. However the candidate must demonstrate they have a working knowledge of the legislation and are competent to practise in the country they are being assessed in.

Use your judgement. If you feel a level 3 question more appropriate you may start your questioning there; if the candidate answers it competently you may decide that it is unnecessary to go into detail about levels 1 and 2 and may move on to another competency.

You should be able to identify the mandatory competencies when applicants discuss their career history.

Panel decision

The applicant should demonstrate technical competence (achieved at some point in their career).

You should apply the most weight to the area of specialism and the level of enhanced service they offer. As a recognised authority a specialist applicant should set an example and dictate how services are delivered. Ethics are therefore of vital importance and you must ensure you cover this in your decision.

Your decision should be based broadly on the following priorities.

Specialist area of work and specialist profile	50%
Technical pathway competencies and mandatory competencies	25%
Ethics and professionalism	25%

Result

The result will be pass or refer. If you refer an applicant the chairperson is required to produce a referral report.

The RICS APC assessor manual and chairperson supplement guide provide guidance on writing referral reports: please contact RICS if you need more information.

If the applicant has been referred, the chairperson should cover the following:

- Explain why the referral decision was reached
- Provide guidance and advice to enable the applicant to be successful in the near future.

Any major concerns about the applicant's suitability should be discussed with RICS. Advice and guidance should be provided and, in particular, any specific advice about presentation or interview skills. RICS will contact the applicant to discuss the next steps and send a referral pack.



Confidence through professional standards

RICS promotes and enforces the highest professional qualifications and standards in the valuation, development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our name promises the consistent delivery of standards – bringing confidence to markets and effecting positive change in the built and natural environments.

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