



Academic Assessment

Counsellor guide

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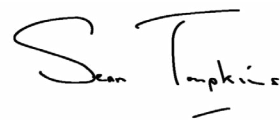
Foreword

I would like to express my personal thanks for the contribution that you are making to RICS through committing your time and expertise to support and counsel potential new professionals.

The academic perspective is an essential facet in assessing competence beyond that demonstrated through practice. The academic assessment is the start of a lifelong professional commitment to our standards and encourages greater diversity within our professional organisation.

As an academic counsellor you play a central role in ensuring that only those who fulfil our ethical standards and professional, academic and technical competency requirements are granted the RICS qualification. Your role in preparing applicants is vital to the effectiveness of the assessment and to applicants' chances of success. This guide explains what support you should offer to plan and review applicants' experience and to prepare them for the final assessment.

Thank you for your commitment to RICS and to ensuring the future of the profession. I hope you will find the role both professionally and personally rewarding.



Sean Tompkins

Chief Executive

Academic Assessment

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Introduction

All applicants must appoint a counsellor, who is a chartered surveyor, to support and guide them and to sign them off as competent to sit their final assessment interview.

This guide provides an overview of the counsellor role for academic applicants. It is essential that as a counsellor you familiarise yourself with the 'Academic Applicant Guide' and the appropriate pathway guide which are located along with other support materials here [rics.org/academic](https://www.rics.org/academic)

As a counsellor you will support academic applicants who are currently undertaking teaching, research and scholarship activities that are relevant to the profession over a minimum three year period.

The terms **teaching, research and scholarship, and external engagement/academic activities** are used throughout this document and are defined as:

Teaching. The development, production and delivery of learning material, including the formative and summative assessment of the material, marking of submission and feedback to students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Research and scholarship. The publishing of research material in refereed published journals, conference proceedings, books and articles in journals which relate to the general subject area of the built environment / surveying. Research relating to the learning and teaching practises of the subject area are also included here as well as research work required to produce learning materials.

External engagement / Academic activities. This term relates to teaching, research activities and any other scholarly activities undertaken. This can include, but not exhaustive to embedding research, employability or professional practice into the curriculum, industry engagement and knowledge transfer.

Criteria for the academic assessment

Academic/professional qualifications	Relevant prior experience
Bachelor's degree or relevant higher degree [Bologne/ EU equivalent]	Undertaken academic activities relevant to the profession over a three year period. [This does not need to have been in a continuous period i.e. in 'one block']

The academic activities should be related to teaching or detailed research. The academic applicant will be required to demonstrate competence largely through academic work rather than practical experience. They are likely to have a narrower range of pathway-specific technical competencies than other applicants, but they will compensate with extra competencies in for example generic research skills.

The emphasis is to demonstrate a theoretical and academic understanding of the competencies for their chosen pathway.

Providing support to applicants

You are not required to be a practicing academic yourself; however as a counsellor you must understand the principles and processes behind the academic assessment to be able to provide support. You must be familiar with the scope of activities, the nature of the academics role and how this is evident throughout the academic assessment.

Your role as an academic counsellor is to:

- Assist with the review statement. *
- Have a clear understanding of competency levels and the application specific to academic assessment.
- Discuss the applicant's academic career, relevant experience, chosen pathway and the most appropriate competencies that reflect the work that the applicant does in their day to day environment.
- Help the applicant choose the appropriate pathway and competencies on enrolment to reflect their academic skills.
- Agree the most appropriate way of filling in any gaps where experience shortfalls are identified.
- Discuss the applicant's continuing professional development activities during the last 12 months. Many academics will have carried out a greater number of hours than required, so assist them to ensure a good balance of activities to best represent them and their role within the pathway competencies (all applicants are required to complete 48 hours' of CPD during the last 12 months).
- Discuss the topic for their presentation – what would show the best spread of skills, does it cover the technical competencies in an academic context? What research or other experiences will best demonstrates their ability?
- Ensure you are confident in the applicant's skills and ability and that their submission is accurate, contains no errors and meets the stated requirements before they submit.

- Read the academic applicant guide and chosen pathway guide.
- Support, guide and encourage the applicant so that all the relevant documentation is included in the final assessment submissions [see Appendix 2 for a list of the required documents which together form the academic final assessment submission].
- When requested, ensure the applicant has passed the conduct rules, ethics and professional practise on-line course within the last 12 months.
- Work with them to give the best advice and guidance to your applicant to help them in preparing for the final assessment presentation and interview
- If you have experience of an academic assessment then conduct a mock interview to help them prepare for the type of questions they may get asked [see Appendix 1 for interviewing timing].

If the applicant has been referred, agree a plan of action that will allow the applicant to remedy the deficient areas as per their referral report. Work closely with them to help them build confidence and understand the reasons for the referral.

*All academic applications are required to be evaluated by a review panel. Review panels use their experience to come to a balanced decision on the individual merits of each application.

The applicant will be asked to submit a 3,000 word statement showing how they have met the required competencies. You may be asked to assist with the statement or the applicant may have approached you after the application has been approved.

Assessing progress

A key element is the assessment of your applicant's progress against the chosen pathway competencies. The competency- based approach, while still assessing what people know, also assesses what they can do. You have to ensure that your applicant not only has the knowledge and understanding but can also put this into an academic context by providing detailed advice and in-depth study.

You will be using similar skills to those for appraising staff:

- Be aware of how they are performing in day-to-day activities, assessing competencies such as planning learning materials, problem solving and working to deadlines, which can all be regular occurrences in teaching.
- Look at research they have produced, this will help you to learn more about their technical and professional knowledge and understanding how they can transfer this knowledge.
- Ask questions about why they chose a particular approach, exploring their knowledge and understanding – this will help in developing their submissions and prepare them for their interview. How would they approach a new research project?
- Ask about the wider implications of their work, testing their understanding of teaching, research and academic activities they have taken part in.
- Ask about their knowledge and understanding, application and the provision of reasoned advice during their academic activities.

From this you can begin to form a judgement of how well they are doing and they can demonstrate the skills within their role.

The applicant will require clear guidance on where they need to develop, this is important where you have reviewed their progress and have decided they are not yet competent. They may not realise there is a gap and miss out on a learning opportunity.

Before the applicant can progress to the final assessment, you as the counsellor must be satisfied that they have achieved the required levels in all the competencies needed for their chosen pathway and the defined levels in the academic assessment.

See Appendix 3 for the list of the academic competency levels.

You may not have personal knowledge of the applicant's experience in all the chosen competencies as they may have achieved some of them a number of years ago, and possibly in a different job.

As a counsellor you must understand the applicant's experience: this knowledge may be built up through discussion and questioning with the applicant and any previous employers (where possible).

Preparing for final assessment

The final assessment interview is primarily competency based. It is extremely important that you ensure your applicant has a good working and well-rounded knowledge of their chosen pathway and how this relates to an academic context, RICS ethics and standards as well as detailed experience of the core and selected optional competencies.

Ethics module

The academic applicants may be required to successfully complete the RICS online ethics module prior to final assessment*. This is made up of three elements:

1. The ethical standards and what they mean
2. Real life ethical scenarios that members have faced
3. A 20 question multiple choice test.

*We will inform the applicant on the requirement to complete the ethics module. Please note once successfully completed this is valid for 12 months.

Judging the evidence

Think about the type of evidence that will best demonstrate your applicant's competence. Appendix 1 contained within the 'Applicant Guide' has conceptualised the mandatory competencies within an academic perspective to assist.

Base your decisions on actual evidence of work produced rather than their ability to talk about what they do. Competency-based assessment is about the applicant being able to operate under normal work pressures, such as interruptions and tight deadlines. It is also about having interpersonal skills, communication and being part of a team. The best way to judge this is to observe them in their normal working day. Be objective in your assessments and give your applicant honest and reasoned advice.

The main ways to assess applicants are:

- Observation in the natural course of their work
- Examination of their work, asking them questions about their work and the decisions they make
- Speaking to other people within surveying and in the academic sector who know their work for confirmation of their abilities
- Observing teaching and academic activities taking place
- Reading research produced by the applicant
- Checking students evaluation of learning.

The following questions will help determine whether they have met the competencies or not.

- Is the work they have produced relevant to the competencies?
- Is it sufficient? Are you sure they could do this again in similar circumstances?
- Are they drawing upon current experience? If the examples they are using are not current, can they still complete the task accurately and professionally?

Note: When you certify an applicant as competent, you are confirming that not only can the applicant do the task in their current education sector but, allowing for minor differences, could also do so in another similar sector. Most importantly, you are confirming that you consider this applicant to be suitable to become a chartered surveyor who will uphold the rigorous standards of RICS. You are signing a declaration in your capacity as an RICS member and as such you are bound by the RICS ethical principles and rules of conduct.

Supporting a referred applicant

Your support and guidance will be of great importance to a referred applicant. Ask them to write a few notes about their experience in relation to the interview and the referral report contents. When you meet, adopt a counselling style of discussion.

You and your applicant will agree how to address the deficiencies identified in the referral report. Formulate a plan which will help them to gain the further experience and development necessary to reach the standard required the next time they take the assessment.

To be eligible for re-assessment applicants should:

- complete some further relevant professional experience
- continue to complete their CPD
- write a presentation or re-submit the same presentation as per the referral report
- agree together how best to address the deficiencies identified in the referral report
- provide an updated summary of experience covering all the competencies the applicant has gained further experience in since their referral focusing on any areas identified in their referral report.

The applicant will then be re-interviewed in the normal manner.

Appendix 1 – Interview timing for the academic assessment

Stage	Duration (minutes)
Chairperson's opening and introductions.	5
Applicant's presentation. The applicant will give a personal introduction and present one of the four items from their submission.	10
Questions on the presentation in relation to pathway competencies and the applicant's role in academia.	15
Discussion on overall experience and of the full submissions in relation to the applicant's role in academia in teaching / research / external engagement and the pathway competencies, including CPD, technical competencies, Rules of Conduct and professional practice.	15
Chairperson's areas of questioning may include professional and technical matters, CPD, Rules of Conduct, mandatory competencies.	10
Chairperson to close.	5

Appendix 2 – Submission documentation

Document	Notes
Academic CV and review statement.	This is reviewed by a trained academic review panel made of members who will decide whether the applicant is ready to come forward for final assessment.
Summary of experience.	The summary of experience is an overview of the applicant's declared competencies and attainment levels as agreed with their supervisor/ counsellor. It is made up of a series of statements against each of the technical and mandatory competencies. This shows you the knowledge and activities that the candidate has undertaken to demonstrate competence.
CPD record.	Applicants need to demonstrate a minimum of 48 hours in the 12 months prior to final assessment. The 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 the CPD undertaken must be dedicated to formal development.
Supporting evidence (Four items).	The four items will provide supporting evidence and will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the mandatory, core and optional competencies of the chosen APC pathway in an academic context.
Confirmation on completion of ethics online module.	Academic applicants may be required to successfully complete the RICS online ethics module prior to final assessment. This does not replace the requirement to question on these areas during the assessment.

Appendix 3 – The competency level requirements

Important – Please note the competency levels and requirements for the academic assessment are as per the table on the right and not the requirements in the ‘Pathway Guides’ or ‘Requirements and Competency Guide’.

Mandatory competencies	Level required
Conduct rules, ethics and professional practice	Level 3
Client care	Level 2
Communication and negotiation	Level 2
Health and safety	Level 2
Accounting principles and procedures	Level 1
Business planning	Level 1
Conflict avoidance, management and dispute resolution procedures	Level 1
Sustainability	Level 1
Teamworking	Level 1
Core competencies	Level required
Data management	Level 2
Research methodologies and techniques or Leadership	Level 3
Plus one core competency from the chosen pathway	Level 3
Optional competencies	Level required
Five optional competencies from the chosen pathway. [These competencies can be taken from the core and/or optional list]. Please note some of the pathways have the option to select from the full list of competencies, you must select from the listed competencies only.	Level 2



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 118,000 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 members are involved the same professional 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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