

RICS Europe

Assessment of Professional Competence (APC)

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Graduate route 3 candidate guidance



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Section one - Introduction

As a graduate route 3 candidate you will hold an RICS accredited degree, have 10 years or more relevant working experience and you will be currently in relevant employment.

Entry requirements

| Graduate route 3 | Training period | Final assessment submissions |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <p>For applicants with minimum 10 years experience (<i>pre-degree experience can count</i>)</p> <p>RICS accredited degree</p> | <p>Straight to final assessment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of competence – which must show that you have met the competency requirements of your chosen pathway, e.g. building surveying and this must be signed off by a chartered surveyor • Record of 48 hours professional development over the last twelve months • Critical analysis (3 000 words) • CV |

If you would like to apply for this route, please send your CV to the National Group of your country of residence or the RICS Europe office in Brussels. Your CV must include details of your academic qualifications and a brief career history. Go to www.joinricsineurope.eu, 'Key APC documents/templates' in the 'How to join' section for the CV template. On this website you will also find all contact details of the European National Groups and the RICS Europe office in Brussels.

RICS will review your CV and will let you know whether you meet the criteria of this route. If so, you will first need to fill in the APC Passport (enrolment form) available in MyAPC, the online platform for the APC process. An account will be opened for you once the route to membership has been confirmed by your National Group or RICS Europe. You have to submit all the required material and pay the relevant fee before your enrolment is accepted and you are registered as a trainee.

Section two - The Assessment of Professional Competence

The Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) is the process by which RICS ensures you are competent to be a member of RICS.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the 'APC requirements and competencies guide', which is available in 'Key APC documents/templates' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

The objectives of the APC

Each surveying discipline is covered by a Professional Group within RICS. For each discipline, the relevant Professional Group has identified the set of competencies you must achieve before you can become a chartered surveyor (a competency is a statement of the capabilities required to perform a specific role). These sets of competencies are known as 'pathways'. If, for example, you are employed within building surveying, you will follow the building surveying pathway, which comprises the competencies required for that role.

RICS will consider whether you meet the requirements to become a member by ensuring that you:

- have learned to apply your theoretical knowledge through professional experience
- can understand and apply the skills that form the knowledge base of your pathway
- are aware of the need to pay attention to accuracy and detail to safeguard the interests of employers and clients
- are aware of the professional and commercial implications of your work
- understand your clients' and employer's objectives
- have an up-to-date knowledge of legal and technical matters relevant to the work you do and the law of the region or country in which you practise
- are aware of general economic principles
- can communicate effectively – orally, in writing and graphically
- act in accordance with the RICS rules of conduct, possess the highest level of professional integrity and objectivity, and recognise your duties to clients, employers and the community
- are a good ambassador for our profession, RICS and your employer.

Choosing your competencies

RICS competencies are written in 3 levels of expertise:

Level 1 - Knowledge and understanding

Level 2 - Application of knowledge and understanding

Level 3 - Reasoned advice and/or depth of technical knowledge

Each pathway requires you to demonstrate three types of competence:

- Mandatory competencies – personal, interpersonal and business skills common to all pathways and compulsory for all candidates
- Core competencies – which are compulsory and relate to the primary skills of your chosen pathway
- Optional competencies – which are chosen by you as additional skill requirements for your chosen pathway

The APC pathways are as follows:

Arts and antiques
 Building control
 Building surveying
 Commercial property practice
 Environment
 Facilities management
 Geomatics (including hydrographic)
 Housing management and development
 Machinery and business assets
 Management consultancy
 Minerals and waste management
 Planning and development
 Project management
 Property finance and investment
 Quantity surveying and construction
 Research
 Residential property practice
 Residential survey and valuation
 Rural
 Taxation allowances
 Valuation

The mandatory competencies

These competencies are a mix of the professional practice, interpersonal, business and management skills that are considered common to, and necessary for, all surveyors. These competencies are compulsory for all candidates.

You must achieve the following minimum standards:

Conduct rules, ethics and professional practice – to level 3

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|
| Client care |] | |
| Communication and negotiation |] | to level 2 |
| Health and safety |] | |

| | | |
|--|---|---------|
| Accounting principles and procedures |] | |
| Business planning |] | |
| Conflict avoidance, management and dispute resolution procedures |] | to |
| Data management |] | level 1 |
| Sustainability |] | |
| Teamworking |] | |

The technical competencies

For each APC pathway, specific technical competencies must be achieved. These are divided into core and optional.

It is important that you give careful thought to your choice and combination of competencies. The combination of core and optional competencies will reflect the work you do in your day-to-day environment (driven by the needs of your employer/clients). At the final assessment interview, the assessors will take these choices into account and will consider their appropriateness.

Your choice of APC pathway will be determined by your employment as you can only demonstrate competence on the basis of actual work experience. Your counsellor will advise you on your choice of APC pathway.

The detailed requirements for each APC pathway are set out in the 'APC requirements and competencies guide' which is available in 'Key APC documents/templates' in the 'How to join' section on www.joinricsineurope.eu. You can also find the Pathway guides in the "How to join" section.

Section three - The submissions

Once you have been approved for this route to membership you will be asked to attend the final assessment in which a panel of two to three RICS members will discuss your experience and form a judgement about whether you are competent to practise as a chartered surveyor.

You will have to demonstrate that you have met the competencies required by your chosen pathway and be able to satisfy the interview panel that you are aware of, and intend to act in accordance with the RICS code of ethics, professional identity and accountability.

Before the final assessment you will be asked to submit a record of professional development covering the last 12 months, your CV, a record of competence, and a 3 000 word critical analysis. In preparation for the interview, the panel will consider these submissions, which will form the basis of the discussions. The objective is to allow the panel to reach the decision that you are competent to be a member of RICS.

Record of competence (Template available in MyAPC on www.joinmyapc.eu)

Evidence that you meet the competency requirements should be presented in your record of competence.

Please note that it is a requirement to nominate a ‘counsellor’. Your counsellor must be a chartered surveyor and is usually (but does not have to be) appointed at your workplace. Your counsellor should confirm that you have achieved all the required levels in the competencies required for your chosen pathway.

Make sure you read the ‘APC requirements and competencies guide’ (see ‘APC key documents/templates’ in the ‘How to join’ section of www.joinricsineurope.eu) carefully to ensure you fully understand the requirements for the route you have chosen.

CV

The CV submitted with your application will be provided to the panel. It is important evidence to help them decide whether you meet the competency requirements of your chosen pathway.

Professional development (Template available in MyAPC on www.joinmyapc.eu)

You should complete a minimum of 48 hours professional development over the 12 months up to final assessment. These hours can be recorded retrospectively. This helps you gain extra skills and knowledge which are not always possible to achieve within the week-to-week business of the practice. For example, you might study business management, professional ethics or information technology through formal training courses, distance learning programmes or more informal structured reading. It is important your supervisor and counsellor take an active interest and help with the planning and evaluation of your professional development.

Special attention must be given to the principles underpinning professional development. It should be:

- 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.

Professional development should complement and support your mandatory and technical competencies.

Critical analysis (no template)

The critical analysis is a written report of your involvement in a project or projects during your professional career.

The critical analysis must be:

- word processed
- a **maximum** of 3 000 words (excluding the appendices)
- signed and dated by you and include photographs and plans (no larger than A4 size when folded).

You must explain not only the project itself but the processes you followed and the rationale behind your decision-making. Your focus must be on analysing the project: do not simply provide a summary of what it involved. It is quality not quantity that counts. Appendices should support your report, not add to or expand on it.

You should include the following four aspects.

- **Key issues:** your project may be complex. If you select too many key issues you will skim the surface instead of providing a detailed analysis. Be selective. Think about the depth required as being to about level three of the various competencies involved. There may be one key issue that can form the basis of your critical analysis.
- **Options:** before proposing a solution to a client, you should consider all the options, demonstrating your ability to think logically, laterally and professionally. You must demonstrate you have genuinely considered the options. Give reasons why some options may not be feasible.
- **Your proposed solution:** you must give a detailed account of the reasons supporting your adopted course of action. Relate your reasons to the technical competencies. Think about all the aspects that support your decision, for example client care, financial/technical/professional aspects, rules of conduct, ethics and conflicts of interest.
- **Conclusion and analysis of experience gained:** finally, and most importantly, your conclusion must provide a critical appraisal of the outcomes, with a statement of what you learned from the experience. This part of your report should comprise approximately one third of the total number of words. You should look at the project, consider what has gone well and identify what did not go well. You can then plan how you might improve the next time you carry out a similar task. Stand back from the project and reflect on what you have learned.

The assessors will use your critical analysis as a starting point to question you beyond what you actually did, probing your understanding of your project's wider issues. Start thinking about these processes while you are writing your critical analysis so you are well prepared for the interview. Focus on matters that cross the whole project.

Confidentiality: you must ensure you have your employer's and client's consent to disclose any sensitive details in your critical analysis. If you cannot get this consent you should disguise facts that might otherwise make the project identifiable.

Note: the information contained in your critical analysis will be treated in the strictest confidence by the panel of assessors.

References: sources should not be quoted at length but essential references must be given.

Total word count: you must include a word count at the end. You can include notes on what you have included in the count.

Finally, your critical analysis must reflect your abilities in the following areas:

- written and graphic communication
- professional standards of organisation and presentation
- analysis, reflective thought and problem-solving
- learning from experience gained.

Important: If you are not ready and need to **postpone your final assessment**, contact us immediately. Failure to do so and not attending the final assessment will result in RICS having to charge you a no-show fee. For details of this no-show fee, see the 'APC Fees list' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

Ethics, professional identity and accountability

This subject will form part of the interview and you will be tested on it.

If you are a member of another professional body you may already be well versed in the subject but you should also take time to understand the subject fully from an RICS standpoint. Please refer to 'More about ethics' in the 'Why join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

Section four - The final assessment

Preparing for the interview

You must provide evidence to support experience across the full range and depth of competencies of your chosen pathway. Some of this evidence may be drawn from the earlier part of your career, possibly up to 10 years ago.

You will need to consider your submissions carefully so that you identify which competencies can be evidenced by your CV and critical analysis. Where possible you should identify at what point in your career these competencies were achieved. This approach will be particularly relevant to the core and technical optional competencies.

Important: If you are not ready and need to **postpone your final assessment**, contact us immediately. Failure to do so and not attending the final assessment will result in RICS having to charge you a no-show fee. For details of this no-show fee, see the 'APC Fees list' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

Your experience

You may not have achieved all the required competencies of the pathway to the required levels in the last two years. It is acceptable if those requirements have been met in the last 10 years. It will not be possible or appropriate to test the full 10 years of experience in a 60-minute interview. The panel will therefore assess which competencies are covered adequately in your written submissions and identify where further questioning is appropriate. You may, however, have to answer questions about *any* of your competencies to convince the panel of your knowledge and experience.

The panel

The panel will be made up of two to three chartered surveyors, trained and selected for this role.

Special needs and disabilities

RICS will be responsive to candidates with special needs or disabilities. It will do its utmost to ensure that suitable arrangements are made to assist candidates. It is, therefore, essential that you give suitable notice to RICS of any special needs or disabilities you have, to ensure appropriate assistance is available at the final assessment.

The structure of the interview

The interview structure is as follows:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • Chairman's opening and introductions | 3-4 minutes |
| • Candidate's presentation on critical analysis | 10 minutes |
| • Questions on the presentation | 10 minutes |
| • Discussion on overall experience including professional development, competencies, rules of conduct and professional practice | 25 minutes |
| • Areas of questioning may include professional and technical matters, rules of conduct, mandatory competencies, professional development | 10 minutes |
| • Chairman closes | 1-2 minutes |

The outcome of the interview

After the interview the panel will review the evidence you have provided and reach a conclusion. In broad terms the weighting placed on the various components of the interview is as follows:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Experience/understanding/knowledge | 50% |
| Business | 30% |
| Ethics, professional identity and accountability | 20% |

After the final assessment, you will be advised of the outcome by the panel chairman within 21 days. This will be followed by formal confirmation by the relevant National Group.

Referral (not succeeding the final assessment)

In the event of a referral (not having been successful at the final assessment) the panel chairman will arrange to discuss the outcome with you in more detail, giving guidance on areas of concern so that you will be better prepared for a future assessment. You will receive a referral report within 21 days.

To be eligible for re-assessment you must normally:

- provide the original professional development record
- record 24 hours extra professional development
- provide the original resume
- provide the original record of competence
- provide the critical analysis (redrafted or updated if required in the referral report)
- fill in the referral assessment record (Template available in MyAPC on www.joinmyapc.eu)

You will also need to pay a referral fee before you are entitled to re-sit. For details of the fee, see the 'APC Fees list' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

Appeal

Before final assessment

If your country's National Group rejects your application for entry to the final assessment under the Graduate 3 route, you may request RICS Europe to review your application.

If you wish to have your application reviewed, please email your full CV, the communication you have received from the National Group and a statement setting out the reasons why you consider that your application should not have been rejected, to RICS Europe on ricseurope@rics.org. All requests for review will be dealt with within 15 days.

After final assessment

If you are referred after your final assessment, you have 10 days from the date of the results letter received from your National Group to appeal. This letter will explain the reasons for the referral and details of how to make an appeal. Appeals may be made for one of three reasons:

- administrative or procedural matters: for example, the panel may not have been provided with the correct information
- questioning and testing of competence that has concentrated too much outside of the main areas of training and experience
- any form of discrimination.

When an appeal is made it must:

- be in writing, accompanied by an administrative fee, which will be returned if the appeal is upheld. For details of the fee, see the 'APC Fees list' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu
- be made by you and not a third party
- clearly state the grounds on which the appeal is being made, supported by appropriate evidence.

The appeal needs to be sent to your the RICS Europe office, who will respond within 15 days.

Section four – Where to find help

Completing the APC carries with it responsibility and commitment. Extensive support and guidance are available for candidates and employers. If you need any help during the training period please contact the National Group of your country of residence or the RICS Europe office in Brussels (see contact details on www.joinricsineurope.eu).

Finally

Remember to ensure that the National Group of your country of residence or the RICS Europe office in Brussels has your up-to-date contact details.

| For contact details or further information, go to: www.joinricsineurope.eu