

RICS Europe

Assessment of Professional Competence (APC)

January 2010

Senior professional route candidate guidance

Contents		Page
Section one	Introduction	3
Section two	The Assessment of Professional Competence	5
	The objectives of the APC Choosing your competencies The mandatory competencies The technical competencies What you have to do	
Section three	The requirements	9
	CV Case studies Professional development Ethics, professional identity and accountability	
Section four	The final assessment	11
	The panel Structure of the interview Special needs and disabilities Outcome of the interview Notification of the outcome Referral (not succeeding your final assessment) Appeal (before and after the final assessment)	
Section five	Where to find help	14

Section one - Introduction

The senior professional route to membership was introduced by RICS to facilitate greater diversity of membership. A 'senior professional' is someone who formulates strategy and policy within a senior position of their organisation, exercising extensive leadership and management skills. There are different options within this route depending on the candidate's academic and professional qualifications and relevant experience.

Academic / Professional Qualifications	Relevant Prior Experience (2 years need to be post-graduation)
A first degree OR Relevant professional (degree equivalent) membership	10 years surveying experience and now in a senior industry position
A first degree and higher degree (one of the two should be surveying related) OR PhD OR A relevant Master Degree	Five years surveying experience and now in a senior industry position OR Five years surveying experience and now in a senior industry position OR Five years surveying experience and now in a senior industry position

If you would like to apply for the senior professional route to membership, please send your CV to the National Group of your country of residence or the RICS Europe office in Brussels (for contact details see Contacts on www.joinricsineurope.eu). Your CV must include details of your academic qualifications, membership of any relevant professional organisations and a brief career history. You will find the CV template in 'Key APC documents/templates' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

You should attach an organisation chart to your CV. In addition, clearly outline your position within the organisation and describe your roles and responsibilities. These should cover:

- leadership
- management
- formulation of strategy and policy.

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
- Have achieved a level of understanding and application of the skills that form the knowledge base of your chosen pathway
- Are aware of the need to pay attention to accuracy and detail to safeguard the interests of employers and clients
- Can communicate effectively – orally and in writing
- Act in accordance with RICS' rules of conduct, possess the highest level of professional integrity and objectivity, and recognise your duties to clients, employers and the community

In addition, you must also demonstrate that you:

- Are a good ambassador for the profession, RICS and your employer (if applicable)
- 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

Choosing your competencies

A 'competency' is a statement of the capabilities required to perform a specific role and is based upon APC behaviours, knowledge, skills and attitudes. RICS competencies, detailed in the 'APC requirements and competencies' guide (available in 'Key APC documents/templates' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu), 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 competency:

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

In addition, **candidates for this route must demonstrate competence in leadership, managing people and managing resources to level 2.** This will form an important component of your pre-interview documents and the final assessment.

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.

What you have to do

Once you have been accepted for this route you will be asked to attend an interview at which a panel of RICS members will discuss your experience and form a judgement on whether you are competent to practise as a member of RICS.

Contrary to the other RICS routes to membership, in the Senior Professional route it is not mandatory for the candidate to nominate a 'counsellor'. However, to help you prepare in the best possible circumstances for the final assessment, we recommend that you consider nominating a counsellor. A counsellor must be a chartered surveyor and is usually (but does not have to be) appointed at your workplace.

Prior to the interview you will be asked to submit the following:

- Details of the professional development you have undertaken during the last three years
- A CV of experience relevant to the technical and mandatory skills required by RICS

- Three 500-word case studies. Alternatively you may substitute up to a maximum of two case studies with published articles or presentations before the interview. You should limit each document, wherever possible, to 500 words

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

In preparation for the interview the panel will consider your submissions. These will form the basis of the discussions. The objective of the interview is to allow the panel to decide whether you are competent to practise as a member of RICS.

Section three - The requirements

CV

The CV you submit at application will form part of your final assessment submissions. It will include details of your academic qualifications, membership of any relevant professional organisations and a brief career history. You will need to demonstrate your experience relevant to the technical and mandatory skills required by RICS.

You can bring an updated version to your final assessment interview if necessary. For the CV template please go to 'Key APC documents/templates in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu.

Your 10-minute personal introduction at the final assessment interview will be based on your CV.

Case studies

You are recommended to select projects **in which you have played a leading role** in terms of strategy, management, decision-making, problem-solving and client relationship management. These projects should have an underlay of detailed technical work aligned to the competency requirements of your pathway but this is more likely to have been dealt with by employees or contractors under your supervision.

You are recommended to adopt the following format for each case study:

- A brief overview of the key issues
- **Your** role / personal involvement
- An outline of some of the problems faced and the experience you have used to resolve these problems
- A note of the outcome and successful delivery with emphasis on the role you played

These reports will add to and enhance the information provided in your CV.

It is a compulsory requirement that one of the projects demonstrates leadership and management skills. However in practice it is anticipated that these competencies will form a major element in all of them.

You may substitute up to a maximum of two case studies with published articles or presentations that have been undertaken in the five year period before the interview. You should keep, wherever possible, to 500 words for each document.

Professional development

Professional development is the systematic updating and enhancement of skills, knowledge and competence that takes place throughout your working life. It should be closely linked to your current work and most likely will focus on management or management-type training.

The ongoing requirement for RICS members is 60 hours over a three year period. During the interview, part of the discussion will focus on professional development that you have been involved in during the last three years.

Professional development can include attending conferences, meetings, seminars or reading trade journals.

Ethics, professional identity and accountability

There will be a major emphasis on professional practice in the interview.

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

The panel

During the interview you will spend 60 minutes with a panel, made up of minimum two RICS members who are trained to assess senior professional route candidates.

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

Structure of the interview

The interview will last for 60 minutes and will follow this structure:

- Chairman's opening and introductions *5 minutes*
- Your personal introduction where you will be given the opportunity to brief the panel on your background and career history, based on the CV you submitted *10 minutes*
- Discussion of your case studies or published articles/presentations and wider experience to include leadership, managing people and resources, and particularly professional ethics *40 minutes*
- Panel's closing remarks where you will be given the opportunity for any final comments or clarification. *5 minutes*

During the interview you will be expected to demonstrate that you:

- Have wide experience as an experienced professional at a senior level
- Meet the competency requirements of your chosen pathway, with an emphasis on leadership, managing people and resources
- Have a high level of understanding of professional ethics

If you satisfy the panel on the above you will be deemed competent to become a member of RICS (MRICS).

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.

Outcome of the interview

Following the interview the panel will review your experience and will reach a conclusion. In broad terms the weighting placed on the various components of the final assessment is as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Mandatory competencies (of which 25% should be applied to leadership, managing people and resources) | 50% |
| • Technical competencies | 25% |
| • Ethics, professional identity and accountability | 25% |

Notification of the outcome

You will be advised of the outcome by the panel chairman. This will be followed by formal confirmation from the relevant National Group within 21 days.

If you are successful, you will be able to apply to become a Fellow of RICS (FRICS). For further information about Fellowship, see the 'Fellowship by achievement' in the 'How to join' section of www.joinricsineurope.eu

Referral (not succeeding the final assessment)

In the event of a referral (not succeeding 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 provide the following documents:

- the original record of professional development and any CPD undertaken since final assessment
- the original resume
- the 3 case studies (redrafted or updated if required in the referral report)
- the referral report
- a report stating what you have done to address the shortcomings identified in the referral report

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 Senior Professional 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 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 RICS Europe office, who will respond within 15 days.

Section five – 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