



香港測量師學會
**THE HONG KONG
INSTITUTE OF
SURVEYORS**

專業評核試
**ASSESSMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL
COMPETENCE**

建築測量
BUILDING SURVEYING

僱主、督導員及顧問指引
**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF
EMPLOYERS
SUPERVISORS
AND COUNSELLORS**

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Amended December 2001, September 2007, May 2008

**ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
BUILDING SURVEYING
NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF
EMPLOYERS, SUPERVISORS AND COUNSELLORS**

(Effective July 2001)(Amended December 2001, September 2007, May 2008)

*These notes for guidance should be shown to employers, supervisors and counsellors.
Extra copies may be obtained upon request.*

I. Introduction and Objectives

1. To qualify as professional building surveyors, in addition to having acquired a relevant academic qualification recognized by the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (the Institute), the candidates must undergo an approved period of professional training and pass the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) in building surveying before they are eligible for election to corporate membership of the Institute.
2. Candidates entering the APC must be suitably employed in an establishment principally engaged in building surveying or in an organization providing related services in the building industry.
3. The purpose of the APC is to satisfy the Institute that only those candidates considered competent to carry out the work of a professional building surveyor on behalf of clients or an employer are admitted to corporate membership.
4. Through the APC, the Institute will ensure that the candidates:
 - (a) have learned to apply their theoretical knowledge through professional training and experience to attain practical building surveying skills;
 - (b) have achieved a satisfactory level of understanding and application of the skills that form an essential part of the knowledge base of their chosen main stream practice;
 - (c) are aware of the need to pay particular attention to accuracy and essential detail to safeguard the interests of employers and clients;
 - (d) can communicate effectively, orally, graphically and in writing, and can prepare reports which are correct in grammar and in spelling, well structured and well presented; and
 - (e) are aware of and intend to act in accordance with the Institute's Rules of Conduct, possess the highest level of professional integrity and objectivity, and recognize their ethical duties to clients, employers and the community.

5. These notes explain the roles of employers and their experienced staff, which are essential to assist their trainees to fulfil the requirements of the APC.
6. Although it is not formally written into the detailed content of the APC, the Institute places considerable importance on the need to instill in candidates a sense of professional ethics and conduct. Candidates may not have had any such experience during their period of academic training, and it is most important that they should develop a thorough appreciation of these concepts during their period of approved professional training prior to becoming a qualified professional building surveyor.

II. The Assessment of Professional Competence

1. The APC consists of a minimum period of two years comprising not less than 450 working days **approved professional training**. Candidates are required to maintain a diary of their training and to summarize the entries in a log book, both of which are to be submitted for assessment. The object is to demonstrate that their training is of adequate breadth and is well balanced and to identify their main stream practice either in Building Control, Project Management or Maintenance Management.
2. During the period of approved professional training, candidates are required to undertake a minimum aggregate of 40 hours of **structured learning** which may be in the form of short courses, seminars, or conferences, organized by academic or professional institutions, or special training courses organized by employers, to complement the practical experience of the candidates and to enhance their professional development.
3. Immediately after 12 months of training, candidates are required to present themselves for **interim assessment** so that their training may be properly guided by their counsellors.
4. Immediately after completion of 21 months of training, candidates are required to submit a **critical analysis** of three cases illustrating different aspects of building surveying that they have been engaged and demonstrating their competence in written presentation.
5. Candidates are also required to undertake a **practical task**, which will be an authentic professional problem, and they are expected to come up with a solution under normal office conditions within the given time. This is to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to adopt a professional approach to the work of the Building Surveyor and to exercise competent professional judgement.
6. After completion of the minimum period of professional training, candidates are required to attend a **professional interview** to testify their competence before a

panel of assessors when their professional training, their structured learning and general aspects of professional building surveying practice will be discussed.

7. The assessment is carried out by a panel of assessors who are senior members of the profession and candidates must satisfy the assessors in all the elements and at the professional interview, otherwise they may be referred in any one or all elements. If so, they must apply for re-assessment as appropriate.

III. The Role of Employers

1. It is appreciated that employers may not be principally carrying on building surveying practices and may not be able to provide structured training to prepare their employees for their professional pursuit. When the work assignments will be attributable to the candidates' professional and technical experience, it is expected that employers make available such opportunities under the supervision of competent persons and, if available, also under suitable mentoring of counsellors.
2. Counsellors should normally be professional building surveyors working in the same organization and they should provide mentoring to not more than three candidates at any one time. Where there is no building surveyor within the organization, or where there are not enough building surveyors in-house to take care of all the trainees, practising building surveyors from other organizations may be invited to act as external counsellors.
3. It is acknowledged that the training obtained by candidates will be in an assistant capacity and that the degree of individual responsibility and discretion given to candidates may not be high, particularly in the early part of their training. Nonetheless employers are expected to allow candidates as much professional involvement as may be possible.
4. It is appreciated that by the nature of their work, which may be highly specialized or centered on only certain aspects of the professional discipline concerned, some employers may not be able to provide the full spectrum of training required by the APC. In such circumstances it is essential that candidates are appropriately warned, and it is suggested that employers explore the possibility of seconding the candidates to other offices for a short period for the missing links, perhaps taking candidates from those offices in exchange.
5. When candidates apply to enter the APC, they are required to complete Form APC1/BS. They are required to state the nature of their employment and the areas of training available. Employers are requested to endorse the form to certify the candidate's employment.
6. If candidates change employment, a supplementary application on Form APC1S/BS is required and former employers are requested to confirm the termination of employment.

7. During the course of the candidates' training, building surveying employers are expected to provide training seminars or to allow the candidates to attend training courses as may be available, during office hours as may be necessary.
8. The practical task will normally be conducted in November every year and for that purpose, it is requested that candidates be released of their office duties for four consecutive days. On the first day, candidates will receive the instructions and the problem, and they are required to present their solutions in the fourth day. It is important that candidates are able to work under normal office conditions with access to reference materials and consultation with authorities they consider necessary. Guidance and assistance may be given by colleagues as if it were a live project but all professional input must be the own work of the candidates.

IV. The Role of Supervisors

1. During their period of training, candidates are expected to work under the direct instruction and supervision of immediate superiors who are competent in their respective professions. Such superiors may be building surveyors, surveyors of other disciplines, architects, builders, engineers of various specialization, or other allied professionals or sub-professionals.
2. The candidates' supervisors, i.e. their immediate superiors in a workplace, are expected to provide within their respective expertise proper guidance to the candidates that they may acquire in adequate depth relevant technical knowledge and practical skill in the various areas of training.

Diaries

3. For control purposes, candidates are required to keep a diary of their daily tasks and supervisors are requested to check the entries and certify their correctness by signing the diaries every week.

V. The Role of Counsellors

1. Counsellors should be professional building surveyors who are corporate members of the Institute of not less than five years standing. Whether counsellors are appointed in-house or invited from other professional practices, once accepted the appointment to act, counsellors should be proactive in guiding candidates in their pursuit of professional qualification. If for any reason a counsellor is unable to act, he should notify the Institute promptly and advise the candidate's employer to appoint another counsellor so that the candidate's training is being continuously monitored.
2. Counsellors are responsible to ensure that the candidates under their guidance acquire the necessary training in breadth and in depth. Each counsellor should

normally be responsible for not more than three candidates at any one time so that adequate personal attention can be provided.

3. It is appreciated that candidates may be transferred from section to section within a large organization or seconded to other offices for supplementary training and they may not always be under the direct supervision of their counsellors. Nonetheless it remains the counsellors' responsibility to provide coordinated and consistent guidance throughout their candidates' professional training.

Diaries and Log Books

4. In order that candidates are properly monitored and guided, counsellors should review periodically what tasks their candidates have performed and what knowledge they have acquired. To assist counsellors in their control function, all candidates are required to maintain diaries and log books, which should be checked by the counsellors regularly to monitor progress. The diaries and the log books should be countersigned by the counsellors every three months.
5. Counsellors are expected to coach their candidates on how they should approach their training in a professional manner and with the proper and ethical attitude. Counsellors should therefore be proactive in ensuring their candidates do come forward every three months to discuss their training progress and present their diaries and log books for endorsement.

Interim Assessment

6. Immediately after 12 months of the approved period of professional training, counsellors are required to conduct an Interim Assessment of the candidates' training. The purpose of the Interim Assessment is to provide an opportunity for the counsellors to critically review the training progress of their candidates and to give objective advice so that the candidates may adequately and suitably prepare themselves for the Final Assessment in the remaining period of training.
7. To assist the counsellors in conducting the Interim Assessment, candidates are required to prepare an Interim Summary of Experience in not more than 1,000 words summarizing and describing the professional training so far received and a self-assessment of their own training progress. They are also required to submit their diaries and log books together with the Interim Assessment Report on Form APC4/BS to their counsellors.
8. When the submission for Interim Assessment is received, the counsellor should evaluate in quantitative terms if the training so far received by the candidate is adequate and balanced. If shortfalls are identified, suitable advice and comments should be given on the Interim Assessment Report.
9. In assessing the adequacy of the professional training, counsellors should consider both the breadth and the depth of the training. However counsellors must bear in mind that the training has been gained in an assistant capacity and that the

degree of individual responsibility and discretion given to candidates would not be high, particularly in the early part of their training.

10. It is inevitable that some candidates may be receiving a broad span of training in a general building surveying practice while some candidates in specialist institutions may be receiving concentrated training in specific areas in sequence. Counsellors should therefore bear this in mind when they are identifying any shortfalls.
11. Counsellors should not only look at the Log Books in numerical terms but also check through the diaries to determine whether the works undertaken are relevant and appropriate.
12. If a candidate's training is clearly of restricted scope or grossly inappropriate in the professional sense, the effort the candidate has spent would have been rendered abortive and the counsellor should signal appropriate warning so that the candidate may consider changing his course of training before it is too late.
13. After the desktop assessment, the counsellor should interview his candidate and discuss with him how he should make up any shortfall and suitably conduct himself in pursuance of professional qualification. The interview should be recorded in the Interim Assessment Report in duplicate countersigned by both the counsellor and the candidate. All documents for Interim Assessment may then be returned to the candidate who is required to file in one copy of the Interim Assessment Report and his Interim Summary of Experience to the Institute
14. It is important that counsellors conduct the Interim Assessment as soon as it is submitted, as any delay in filing in the Interim Assessment Report will prejudice the candidate's Final Assessment.
15. In order to provide continuous guidance to slow achievers, this process should be repeated in the form of supplementary interim assessment 18 months after the initial interim assessment if the candidates are not yet ready for final assessment by then, and again at 18 months interval thereafter until the candidates are satisfactorily assessed.

Critical Analysis

16. When candidates prepare to submit their critical analysis immediately after their 21st month of training, counsellors are required to certify that the submissions are the works of the candidates. Counsellors should also verify that the cases selected are based on experience acquired within the approved period of training and that the cases illustrate different aspects of building surveying practice.

Practical Task

17. When candidates apply to undertake the practical task, before endorsing their applications, counsellors should satisfy themselves that the candidates are well

prepared to attempt the task meaningfully. It should be noted that a bad failure would be damaging to the candidates' pursuit of professional qualification, let alone the waste of the effort of the assessors.

18. In attempting the practical task, candidates will inevitably seek advice from their counsellors as in everyday practice. While there is no objection to counsellors offering professional advice, counsellors should be careful not to pre-empt the candidates' originality in formulating solutions to the task.

Final Assessment

19. When candidates apply for final assessment, before endorsing their applications, counsellors should satisfy themselves that the candidates are in all respect ready to take up the challenges of professional building surveyors.
20. It is incumbent upon the counsellors, being members of the Institute, to ensure that the candidates under their mentoring are appropriately and adequately prepared to qualify as professional building surveyors. The counsellors should also ensure that apart from the technical knowledge and skills the candidates have acquired in their training, they have also developed a sense of professional ethics and conduct.

Diligent Observance of the Rules and Guide

21. Counsellors should ensure their candidates do observe the requirements of the Rules and Guide diligently and make timely submissions, noting that any undue delay will not only prejudice the candidates' pursuit of professional qualification but also cause unnecessary complications to the Institute's smooth administration of the APC. Counsellors should therefore endeavour to so prepare candidates that they may be satisfactorily assessed upon first attempts of all elements of the APC.
22. The Institute counts very much on counsellors to assist in the bringing up of young building surveyors who:
 - (a) are good ambassadors for the profession, the Institute and their employers;
 - (b) are aware of the professional and commercial implications of their works;
 - (c) understand their clients' and employers' thinking and objectives;
 - (d) have an up-to-date and developing knowledge of legal and technical matters relevant to the work of building surveyors in Hong Kong;
 - (e) are able to play a role in a team and build up experiences in client contact;
 - (f) are aware of the operation of general economic principles;
 - (g) have the confidence to work independently and unsupervised; and

- (h) are able to demonstrate motivation, initiative, administrative ability and leadership potential.

VI. Conclusion

1. It is only with the unfailing support of employers and supervisors, and the dedication of counsellors, that the production of adequately qualified professional building surveyors can be guaranteed. The Institute hopes that the APC will not cause too much disruption and inconvenience to the employers and their supervisory staff and that they recognize the importance of the APC and give all available assistance to the candidates in their offices.
2. The Institute will be pleased to answer any queries on these notes which should be addressed to the Chairman, Building Surveying Divisional Education Committee, Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, Suite 801, Jardine House, 1 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong, or via e-mail to <edudept@hkis.org.hk>.

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