



香港測量師學會

**ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
IN PURSUANCE OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION IN
BUILDING SURVEYING**

建築測量師專業評核試

GUIDANCE NOTES for ASSESSORS

評核員指引

二零一二年八月更新
Overhauled August 2012

二零一九年二月修訂
Amended February 2019

Guidance Notes for Assessors of candidates pursuing the professional qualification MHKIS

These notes refer to and should be read in conjunction with the Rules and Guide to the Assessment of Professional Competence in pursuance of the professional qualification in Building Surveying, which was overhauled in 2012, and amended in February 2019, to be effective on 1 March 2019.

Background

1. The BS APC 2012 is an overhauled regime of training and assessment for candidates pursuing professional membership (MHKIS) of the Institute. It also provides for continuous advancement of AMHKIS to corporate membership of the HKIS. The 2019 update has beefed up the core competences of Building Surveyors who are also known as Building Doctors
2. BS APC Assessors must be corporate members with at least 5 years post qualification standing. They should familiarize themselves fully and carefully with the Rules and Guide, with unmistakable understanding of the different stipulations. Any queries should be raised with the BS Divisional Education Committee. Ideally, if Assessors could also act as Counsellors, they would appreciate the reality of training and can more effectively conduct the assessments.

Assessors Accepting Responsibilities

3. When Assessors accept the invitation of the Institute to so act, truly the onus is now squarely on Assessors to guard the fort and qualify only those candidates who are up to professional standard.
4. It is of paramount importance that Assessors act honestly and objectively in the course of assessment. When Assessors are invited to sit on assessment panels, they should identify and report any possible conflict of interest with the candidates being assessed. Conflict of interest normally refers to personal knowledge of the candidate, personal and work relationship with the candidate, and other similar relationship with the candidate that might give rise to bias, favouritism, pre-determination, etc. In uncertain situations, Assessors should seek clarification well before the assessment sessions are conducted.

5. The Institute highly appreciates the dedication of Assessors who are senior members of the profession to help maintain standards of qualifications, and to produce competent new blood to meet future challenges and opportunities. Assessors should therefore also keep themselves updated with relevant technological innovations and social changes and advancements, just as they would expect the candidates to do so. Assessors are also encouraged to continually improve themselves in the art and technique of conducting interviews and assessments, which is, after all, not the basic skills of Building Surveyors.

APC Training

6. Based on the different natures of academic achievement, candidates entering the profession will undergo the corresponding period of training. During the course of training, they will select which route to meander for their desired career pursuit.
7. When candidates come forward for assessment, Assessors must receive them at par for their chosen main stream practice, either in Building Control, Projects & Development, or Maintenance & Rehabilitation. The different courses or lengths of training should not mitigate the depth of assessment.

Assessments

8. The assessments leading to the qualifications of MHKIS comprise the Practical Task and the Final Assessment.

Practical Task

9. The Practical Task is normally conducted in November every year. In anticipation of too many candidates coming forward at the same time, another Practical Task may be conducted in May. Assessors should be alert of the relevant dates and be prepared to fully participate in the exercises.
10. The Practical Task is an authentic project requiring substantive building surveying input for a “site” in respect of which the “problem” is set. Normally on day 1, candidates will be allowed to visit the “site” in the morning, while Assessors may visit the “site” in the afternoon. Assessors are encouraged to make every effort to familiarize themselves with the actual site conditions vis-à-vis the “problem” (which will also be disseminated to the Assessors early in day 1) in order that they may realistically conduct the assessment interview when candidates present their findings and solutions in day 4 at the “centre”.

11. In order that the interviews for all candidates may be conducted and completed on day 4, very often as many Assessors as the number of candidates undertaking the Practical Task will be required. Day 4 will normally be a Saturday and Assessors are sincerely requested to set aside the whole day for such exercise as far as practicable. Past experience revealed that, as we will be having veteran and new assessors for the exercise on any such occasion, it is a golden opportunity for BS members to get together to renew acquaintances and to make new friends.
12. The interview panel will normally consist of a chairman and 3 assessors. The panel chairman conducts and controls the interview sessions while the assessors will take turn to evaluate the performance of the candidate normally in pre-set areas of knowledge and practices. They will be issued the Individual Assessment Forms to be used by Assessors and a Panel Assessment Form to record the consolidated assessment.
13. In order to maintain consistency in approach and emphases, notes on the “problem” will normally be handed out to panel chairmen and assessors, normally, and as far as practicable, during a briefing session conducted immediately before the start of the interviews. Assessors must therefore be punctual and arrive at the “centre” on time. As a guide, the relevant marking scheme for the task will be provided.
14. It is expected candidates will assume the role of consultants in working out the solutions, where they may seek expert advice from different other consultants on specific issues, or assistance from juniors in preparing their solutions. In any event, Assessors must ensure that the candidates understand their scripts well and be able to present and defend their solutions with their own thoughts and ideas.
15. Candidates will be required to prepare handouts for distribution to the assessors at the start of their presentation. It is permissible if several candidates collaborate as a team (as in joint ventures) to work out a common solution, but they must declare their teammates in their handouts. Identical or very similar handouts without such declaration should trigger the Assessors’ attention and such submissions could be disqualified as in the case of plagiarism or forgery.
16. Candidates are also allowed to be equipped with notebook computers, tablets and similar information technology as their aide-memoire and for intermittent illustrations of their proposals as in real life situations. However they cannot contain any animation or audio-visual elements. To ensure a fair playing field, electronic projections are strictly forbidden for presentation.

17. The Task problem will be different from year to year, and often depends on what “site” can be secured for the exercise. Assessors must not presume that it is always a condition survey plus a design and build project. After all, the Practical Task is not an examination that will derive prototype answers. It must be reiterated that the Practical Task is an authentic problem that Building Surveyors may encounter in their daily practices, and solutions may invariably be different amongst different consultants.
18. Assessors must pay particular attention to the Task problem and be alert to how the problem is set, as if they are receiving the same assignment from their clients in real life practice.
19. When candidates present their findings and solutions on day 4, they will act in the capacity of consultants and Assessors must act as if they are the clients. It is reiterated that the Practical Task is not an examination and Assessors are not examiners. Assessors should receive and assess the submissions as presented. While assessors may challenge the validity and appropriateness of the findings and solutions, they should not insist on getting the answers they consider to be correct. It is more important to assess the candidates’ approach to problem solving of the specific assignment, rather than the absolute or final solution to the problem
20. Assessors should confine their assessment within the bounds of the marking scheme and should not go beyond the Task problem. Their comments and adjudication must be task-specific as per the problems set. It must be reiterated that this is not the occasion for comprehensive assessment of the overall competence of the candidates, but more precisely, to adjudicate whether the candidate can discharge the specific assignment set out in the Task problem alone.
21. Candidates always expect to be advised of their performance and how well or how badly they discharge their task duties. Assessors’ comments will therefore be conveyed to the candidates, and such comments and observations should be task-specific, precise and succinct.
22. Immediately after the interview, the Chairman should conduct a panel discussion to arrive at a consolidated verdict. The Chairman should then ensure that his copy of the handout, together with the Panel Assessment Form, and all the Individual Assessment Forms, are clipped with the candidate’s badge, and are handed in for central processing.

Final Assessment

23. Final Assessments are conducted throughout the year as soon as applications are received. In their applications for Final Assessment, candidates will include the Summary of Experience and the Synopsis of Structured Learning. The second copies of the Self Assessment Report submission forms (Form APC3/BS) will also be included. These additional documents are presented as evidence and illustrations. They are not meant to be assessed but just to help assessors realize the training history of the candidates, including their emphases and specialties. The assessment is solely via the viva voce interview.
24. The Summary of Experience is the full record of the candidate's training which should indicate his emphasis in building surveying experience and preparedness for his main stream practice. Assessors may single out interesting episodes and ascertain the depth of the candidate's personal involvements in the projects.
25. The Synopsis of Structured Learning is an account of the candidate's voluntary self-learning. Assessors should ascertain the sufficiency of time spent and the relevance of such learning activities in complementing the core competences. Assessors may also single out interesting episodes and ascertain the nature of the candidate's learning.
26. The copies of the Form APC3/BS will reflect the monitoring of the candidate's training by his counsellor and his advice given throughout the candidate's APC programme.
27. The interview panel will normally consist of a chairman and 3 assessors, preferably from different main stream practices and from different organizations. The panel chairman conducts and controls the interview sessions while the assessors will take turn to evaluate the professional competences of the candidate in all areas of professional practice and in ethics with the aide of the Individual Assessment Forms. The Consolidated Final Assessment Form is to be completed by the Chairman.
28. The Final Assessment is indeed the only opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their overall competences before they are qualified. As required by the Rules and Guide, professional candidates must have a sound knowledge base of the anatomy and physiology of buildings, and they must be conversant in their chosen mainstream practice with sufficient in-depth practical experience and expertise, and they should also have acquired reasonably balanced working experience in all the other non-mainstream areas of the core competences. In addition to the "what" and the "how", Building Surveyors must know the "why" of their core competences.

29. The requisite level of professional expertise in the various core competences have been set out in Appendix I of the Rules and Guide, which can be taken as the benchmark for the assessment of professional candidates.
30. Normally a Final Assessment interview should be conducted within an hour including the making of a decision. Before the interview, the Assessors should have a preliminary idea of the background of the candidates. Time should not be unduly wasted for the candidates to elaborate on their training, as the relevant information is already presented in their submitted supporting documents. The panel chairman should therefore ensure that the evaluation is evenly spread over the various competences and Assessors should aim at finding out how much the candidates know and can perform particularly in their chosen mainstream practice, rather than how much the candidates do not understand and cannot do in a much wider building surveying context.
31. The Assessors need be satisfied that the candidates have the basic knowledge, and expertise, to embark on a career as professional building surveyors. It will be unrealistic that only seasoned candidates, or all-rounders, are qualified and admitted to membership, as expert surveyors are not produced with just a few years of training. It is the duty of the panel of assessors to collectively adjudicate and strike a fair balance in their verdicts.
32. If candidates are found to be short of the desired standard for qualification, they will be deferred a standard period of 9 months for substantiation of their expertise and experience. The purpose of the standard deferral is for candidates to improve their strengths and resolve their weaknesses under the guidance of their Counsellors. Any observation and advice for the candidates to make up their deficiencies should be recorded, and all comments will be conveyed to the candidates when results are announced.
33. When candidates return for re-assessment, it is more important to ascertain how much they have improved over their identified shortcomings during the period of deferment, rather than to explore their further weaknesses.

Conclusions

34. These notes aim at providing general guidance to Assessors in pursuance of the APC so that the Institute may nurture and qualify competent professional Building Surveyors to meet market demands. These notes can never be exhaustive and readers are always welcome to present their views and insight for the continual improvement of the system. Comments including constructive criticism should be addressed to the BS Divisional Education Committee.

This update 6 February 2019