

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS

Rules and Guide to the

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Quantity Surveying Division

SEPTEMBER 2002

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The Rules and Guide to the Assessment of Professional Competence are laid down by the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors.

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CANDIDATES' RULES AND GUIDE TO
THE ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
QUANTITY SURVEYORS

1. **OBJECTIVES**

- 1.1 Through its Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Scheme the HKIS seeks to satisfy itself that only those whom it considers able to carry out competently the work of a Professionally Qualified Surveyor on behalf of clients or an employer are admitted to corporate membership of the Institute.
- 1.2 In deciding whether you meet the requirements for Corporate Membership, the Institute will seek, through the Assessment of Professional Competence, to establish that you:
- a) are learning to apply your theoretical knowledge through professional training and experience to attain practical skills;
 - b) 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 recognise your duties to clients, employers and the community;
 - c) are aware of the need to pay particular attention to accuracy and essential detail to safeguard the interests of employers and clients; and
 - d) can communicate effectively and prepare reports which are well structured, grammatical and correctly spelt.
- 1.3 In addition, you are expected to develop so that you:
- a) are good ambassadors for your profession, Institute and employer;
 - b) are professionally and commercially aware;
 - c) understand your clients' and employers' thinking and objectives;
 - d) have an up-to-date knowledge of legal and technical matters;
 - e) are able to play a role in a team and build up experience in client contact; and
 - f) have developed the confidence to work unsupervised.

2. **THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES**

- 2.1 Achieving these objectives to the satisfaction of the Institute will involve a partnership between several essential parties and, if you are not to be delayed unnecessarily, their co-operation. (*revised Sep 02*)

You

You will need to enter into the scheme with enthusiasm and commitment and to follow the procedures described in this document precisely and by the deadlines.

Your Employer

Your employer will be expected to provide you with the required training and experience, encourage you, make facilities and time available to you and complete certain parts of forms at the right time.

Your Supervisor

Your supervisor will be appointed by your employer and is responsible for giving guidance on training and for overseeing your day to day work. The supervisor should be a professional quantity surveyor (of not less than 2 years standing and working in the same organization with you) or, if none be available, a responsible professional person approved by the Institute. (*revised Sep 02*)

Your Counsellor

Your counsellor will also be appointed by your employer and must be a professional quantity surveyor of the Institute of not less than 2 years standing, but not necessarily within the same organisation as yours. The counsellor is responsible to your employer and to you for ensuring that you receive appropriately supervised professional training and experience, and that you are allowed to develop an appropriate level of confidence and professional independence. You will not be able to enter the final assessment until your counsellor has certified that you have fulfilled all the training requirements. The counsellor is also responsible for certifying the documents which you have to submit to the Institute and for ensuring that you are given the opportunity to undertake any structured training which may be provided by your employer. You should discuss any problems with your supervisor or counsellor. The supervisor and counsellor can be the same person. (*revised Sep 02*)

The Institute - represented by:

The Assessors - Assessors are qualified surveyors and are corporate members of the HKIS in the QS Division. They will undertake the final stage of the assessment (see section 7).

The Institute - The Institute will provide opportunities for structured learning and may be able to help you gain some of the training and professional experience you need.

2.2 YOU SHOULD STUDY THIS BOOKLET WITH GREAT CARE. ANY DEVIATION FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHEME MAY DELAY YOUR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION.

3. **THE FORM OF THE SCHEME**

3.1 In outline the scheme comprises:

- a) a Minimum Training Period of 600 working days of approved professional training and experience recorded within a minimum period of 33 calendar months from date of registering for the Assessment of Professional Competence;
- b) a requirement, to submit your Diary, Log Book and a “Record of Experience” Report to enable the Institute to make a judgement on your progress and approve your application for final assessment;
- c) a requirement on completion of the Minimum Training Period for you to make a written response to a practice problem; and
- d) a requirement to undertake, before the application for final assessment, at least 40 hours of pre-qualification structured learning (to prepare for post-qualification professional development). (See also paragraph 6.2)

3.2 For further details of requirements see Sections 5, 6 and 7.

4. **ENTERING FOR THE ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The points at which you are eligible to register for the Assessment and to start to record your Diary and Log Book are detailed in Annex B.

4.2 Membership of the Institute

- 4.2.1 Throughout the APC period you must be a Student of the Institute.
- 4.2.2 If you are not already a student member you will be enrolled as a Student member when your application to enter the Assessment of Professional Competence is accepted. You will have to pay the appropriate fee for enrolment in addition to the fee for the enrolment into the Assessment of Professional Competence.

4.3 How to Apply for the APC

- 4.3.1 You have to complete Form APC1 and send it with the necessary fee to the Secretariat. The fee for your APC is payable in full at the time of your application and the amount can be found on Form APC1. If you do not satisfy the assessors with your response to the Practice Problem a further fee will be payable for each successive attempt until either you have successfully completed the Assessment or have withdrawn.
- 4.3.2 You will be required to state on Form APC1 that the requirements of Annex A will be met. Your Minimum Training Period will be 33 months.
- 4.3.3 You may apply by letter to the Institute prior to registering for the Assessment of Professional Competence for an advance opinion on the suitability of your proposed employment and arrangements for obtaining professional training and experience. If the Institute replies that it is not satisfied with the proposed arrangements you may be granted approval for a limited period on the basis that you obtain wider experience at a later date.
- 4.3.4 You must submit your application to the HKIS.
- 4.3.5 The Institute will acknowledge receipt of your application. **YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INSTITUTE IN WRITING IF ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS NOT RECEIVED WITHIN ONE MONTH.**
- 4.3.6 When your application has been approved you will receive a letter of approval from the Institute confirming the date of commencement for your professional training.

Note: If you change your employer, supervisor or counsellor, you must notify the Institute using the latest prescribed form within one (1) month of the change. Otherwise, experience gained after such change and before notification is received by the Institute will not be admitted. (revised Sep 02)

5. **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.1 You have to satisfy the Institute that you have received reasonably balanced professional training and experience by meeting the requirements set out in Annex A.
- 5.2 Research Experience
- 5.2.1 You may offer experience of up to one year of original research activities towards your professional experience. This work must relate to at least one of the areas of experience within the principal areas set out in Annex A, and it must have a practical application, rather than being purely academic in nature. It may comprise either:
- a) research for a single project carried out at an academic institute mainly by yourself but under direction, with the report on the research being your sole work; or
 - b) research carried out as part of a team in a recognised research department of a private firm, company, government department or local authority, in which you, under direction, are mainly responsible for research projects and for reports for clients or your employer.
- 5.2.2 If you wish to offer such a period of research you must submit for prior approval, in the case of (a) above, a detailed synopsis of the research project. You may be called for interview before the proposals are accepted.
- 5.2.3 The research must begin after you have obtained the appropriate fully-exempting qualification. Work carried out during, or submitted for assessment in a first-degree course is not acceptable under 5.2.1 (a). However, work carried out for a higher degree may be acceptable.
- 5.2.4 If your research activities take the form of a single research project undertaken at an academic institute under 5.2.1 (a) above, you must prepare and submit with your application for final assessment a 3000 word report of the research which will be assessed in lieu of the Diary and Log Book for that period. If the research is not complete, a suitably detailed progress report of the research to date must be prepared and submitted.
- 5.2.5 If the research is undertaken as part of a team under 5.2.1 (b) above, and recorded on your log sheet, it should form part of the report required under section 5.4.1.
- 5.2.6 The research report required under 5.2.4 must be signed by the Supervisor/Counsellor, certifying that it is all your own work.
- 5.2.7 You may be questioned at Final Assessment (see Section 7) on the research work undertaken, the relevant experience gained, and its relevance to professional practice.

5.3 Experience Recording

- 5.3.1 You have to maintain a Diary, provided by the Institute, when your arrangements for obtaining professional training and experience have been approved, so that you can compile and justify the entries in your Log Book.
- 5.3.2 You should start recording your experience when you submit Form APC1 to the Institute. The date of receipt of your application by the Institute is deemed to be the date of your enrolment on the APC. You should start recording experience from that date and transfer it into your Diary when you receive it. Experience gained before receipt of Form APC1 by the Institute cannot be counted.
- 5.3.3 Entries in the Diary must describe clearly and concisely the actual work done. Entries in any one week must appear only on the page relating to that week. Further sections of the Diary, if needed, may be obtained from the Institute's Secretariat.
- 5.3.4 If you change employment the diary is to be continued in the usual way, but there must be a clear indication to show the change (e.g. a line drawn across the page together with details of the new employment and the date). The change of employment should also be entered on the first page of the Diary.
- 5.3.5 The Diary must be signed by you and your supervisor weekly.
- 5.3.6 If the Diary is lost you are likely to be required to complete a further period of approved training and experience.
- 5.3.7 You must complete the Log Book issued by the Institute to enable you to present an analysis of your professional experience in chronological order.
- 5.3.8 The Log Book must be signed by you, and countersigned by the supervisor and counsellor every three months.
- 5.3.9 Each time that the Log Book is submitted to the Institute you must total the days spent on each area of experience.

5.4 Submission of “Record of Experience”

5.4.1 You must together with your application for final assessment, submit to the Institute’s Secretariat, recorded professional training and experience:

- a) a typewritten report of 2000 words, prepared by you, detailing a project with which you have been involved for at least 30 working days. The report must include a detailed description of the project, a full description of your involvement and responsibilities and an analysis of the experience and knowledge you have gained as a result of your involvement; and
- b) a further typewritten report of 2000 words, prepared by you providing a resume of other works in which you have been involved during training period to date.

(**Note:** To ensure that your employer consents to the disclosure of the matters featured in your report, you must obtain his endorsement on the reports.)

5.4.2 The reports must be certified by your supervisor and counsellor as being your own unaided work and a true and faithful reflection of your training and experience.

5.4.3 You are expressly reminded that the submission of the reports will affect your eligibility to attend Final Assessment (see Section 9 below).

6. PRE-QUALIFICATION STRUCTURED LEARNING

6.1 In addition to the required Minimum Training Period and experience obtained as part of normal work, you must undertake pre-qualification structured learning (in preparation for post-qualification Continuing Professional Development) of at least 40 hours structured education and training before you apply for final assessment. This may consist of any of:

- a) courses or technical meetings organised by
 - (i) the Institute;
 - (ii) universities, polytechnics or vocational training institutes;
 - (iii) other professional bodies; and
 - (iv) other relevant course-providers;

- b) special courses, training events or discussion meetings on technical topics or topics affecting the profession organised by your employer;

(**Note:** there should in this instance be a competent person in charge of the proceedings, the subject should be announced in advance and the meetings should have some formalised structure).

- c) structured reading;

(**Notes:** i) Prescribed pre-course reading may be counted as structured reading.

ii) Regular reading of professional journals may **not** normally be counted as structured reading.

iii) Time recorded under this item shall not exceed one-third of the total required time).

- d) correspondence courses, or other supervised study packages, being a programme of reading or recorded lectures;

- e) research or post-graduate studies; or

- f) authorship of published technical work.

(**Notes:** i) Basic training on topics like measurement rules and techniques would not be admitted for PQSL as this should be the routine part of your normal work. CPD video sessions should not be more than 80% of the total time for PQSL. (*added Sep 02*)

ii) You are encouraged to record more than 40 hours just in case some of the hours are not accepted.) (*added Sep 02*)

- 6.2 The education and training in paragraph 6.1 above should either relate to the work of Quantity Surveyors as defined in Annexes A and B or be designed to develop your management skills.

(**Note:** If you are undertaking a part-time route to qualification your final year will constitute half the requirement for structured learning.)

- 6.3 You are required to keep a separate record of all structured learning undertaken and submit such record to the Institute at the time of submitting the Application for Final Assessment (See Section 9 below). Such record shall include dates, type of learning, duration and other relevant details.

7. **THE FINAL ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 On satisfactory completion of your Minimum Training Period you will be required to complete a Final Assessment.
- 7.2 The Final Assessment comprises:-
- a) Two half days' work in an examination hall responding to written questions; and
 - b) A professional interview (see section 8).
- 7.3 Your response to the Final Assessment must satisfy the Institute:
- a) that you have achieved the objectives set out in section 1;
 - b) that you can demonstrate your understanding of the principles which underpin the work that you have undertaken during the Minimum Training Period, and that you have a broad perception of the role and responsibilities of the profession; and
 - c) that you can express yourself clearly.
- 7.4 The Assessors will make a judgement on whether you meet the criteria described in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 and are able to carry out competently the work of a professionally qualified surveyor on behalf of a client or employer.
- 7.5 The Assessors have also to be satisfied that you have received reasonably balanced professional training and experience in your chosen option by meeting the requirements set out in Annex A.
- 7.6 Successful candidates will be eligible for transfer to the class of Professional Associate of the Institute.

8. **PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW**

- 8.1 If you pass the written questions or if the assessors consider it necessary, the Institute may call you to an interview in order to discuss your approved professional experience and/or your submission to the Practice Problem.
- 8.2 The maximum possible amount of notice will be given to you and you are expected to meet any travel or other personal expenses.

9. **APPLICATION FOR THE FINAL ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 You are not eligible to attempt the Final Assessment until you have passed your exempting course, and the Minimum Training Period.
- 9.2 The Final Assessment is normally held in September each year.
- 9.3 Application Forms will be available for you to collect from the Institute starting from the first week in May each year. Results will normally be issued within 4 months after the Final Assessment. No results will be available over the telephone. By the time you attend the Final Assessment you must have recorded a minimum of 600 working days professional experience.
- 9.4 Applications must be made on Form APC6/QS.
- 9.5 Applications for Final Assessment must be submitted to the Institute's Secretariat by hand or by post on or before 15 June each year. Postal applications must be by registered mail and you must ensure that you obtain from the Post Office a certificate of posting.
- 9.6 The Institute will acknowledge receipt of your application. **YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INSTITUTE IN WRITING IF ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS NOT RECEIVED WITHIN ONE MONTH.**
- 9.7 Applications not received by the Institute by the specified date will **NOT** be entertained unless you are able to produce the proof of posting specified in paragraph 9.5 above.
- 9.8 The following shall be submitted together with the application for Final Assessment:
- a) A "Record of Experience" as described in paragraph 5.4.1;
 - b) A record of "Pre-qualification structured learning" as described in paragraph 6; and
 - c) Diary and Log Book up to the date of submission.
- 9.9 The Institute will not approve any application for Final Assessment if the documents referred to in paragraph 9.8 are not submitted and/or the Institute considers that you have not achieved the required depth of professional training and experience.

10. **REFERRED CANDIDATES**

10.1 If the result of Final Assessment is unfavorable, you will be required to make good any deficiency in respect of training and experience and may attempt Final Assessment on a future occasion on a date to be decided by the Assessors.

10.2 Referred candidates may normally apply to attempt another Final Assessment the following year. Applications must be accompanied by the appropriate re-assessment fee which will be payable for each successive re-assessment.

11. **APPEALS**

11.1 There is no right of appeal against the Assessors' decisions made during any part of the Assessment process and no correspondence with you will be entered into in respect of any request for explanation of such decisions or appeals against such decisions. (*revised Sep 02*)

12. **FEES**

12.1 The re-assessment fee paid pursuant to paragraph 10.2 will be refunded if the candidate is not admitted by the Institute for re-assessment. Under all other circumstances, any fees paid in connection with the APC will not be refunded. (*added Sep 02*)

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ANNEX A

Note 1 The experience requirements detailed in this Annex apply to all candidates. The Minimum Training Period is 33 months.

1. RECORDED EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 You must demonstrate that you have received experience in either the building industry or engineering construction.
- 1.2 Areas 2.1 to 2.4 cover activities fundamental to quantity surveying, and candidates will be expected to gain the larger proportion of their experience in these areas with a reasonable involvement in each.
- 1.3 Area 2.5 covers more specialised activities, some of which may not be undertaken by every type of organisation in which candidates are employed. While you will be expected to obtain some training and experience within this area, you will not be expected to cover more than a few sub-areas.
- 1.4 When classifying training and experience for recording in diaries, you should attempt to equate your activities with the sub-areas listed. It is accepted that some operations may be classified under more than one heading and you should enter such periods to achieve the best balance. Assessors will exercise some flexibility when examining such entries.
- 1.5 If you are unable to obtain sufficient experience in a particular area it is acceptable to simulate such experience, either by undertaking a task that has previously been undertaken within your office, or by sitting-in when more experienced surveyors are engaged in such tasks.
- 1.6 If you wish to count any quantity surveying experience which does not fall within the areas specified in paragraph 2 you must seek the Institute's prior approval.
- 1.7 If you wish to change employment, this must be notified in accordance with the note on page 6.

2. **AREAS OF APPROVED EXPERIENCE**

2.1 **Cost Advice and Cost Planning**

- 2.1.1 Preparing and using cost data.
- 2.1.2 Preparing estimates.
- 2.1.3 Undertaking financial feasibility and comparative design studies.
- 2.1.4 Preparing and using detailed budgets and cost plans; cost checking during design development; compiling and using cost limits.
- 2.1.5 Preparing and applying cost-in-use studies; life cycle costing.
- 2.1.6 Preparing and interpreting turnover/cash flow projections and profit/loss forecasts.
- 2.1.7 Cost control and reporting during pre-contract period.

2.2 **Contract Documentation**

- 2.2.1 Preparing bills of quantities (or measured schedules of quantities and rates) for main or sub-contracts or contracts of supply including the measurement and description of work, and the drafting of preliminaries preambles and contract conditions. The use of either manual or computer methods is acceptable. (*revised Sep 02*)
- 2.2.2 Preparing bills of measurement for final accounts if measured from drawings.
- 2.2.3 Preparing specifications and/or schedules of rates (without quantities). (*revised Sep 02*)
- 2.2.4 Data processing (not data entry), whether manual or computerised, associated with the preparation of documentation, including working up dimensions.
- 2.2.5 Pre-contract correspondence.

2.3 **Tendering and Contractual Arrangements**

- 2.3.1 Formulating or implementing procedures on tendering and contractual arrangements for main or sub-contracts or contracts of supply.
- 2.3.2 Advising on selection of tenders; evaluation of and reporting on tenders.
- 2.3.3 Preparing tenders including compilation of rates for work and preliminaries.

2.4 Contract Services

The following are applicable to main or sub-contracts or contracts of supply:

- 2.4.1 Advising on cost during progress of the works, estimating final costs and reporting on the financial effects.
- 2.4.2 Monitoring proposed construction methods or sequences and reporting on actual requirements; preparing cost benefit reports on alternative construction methods.
- 2.4.3 Cost control during progress of the works.
- 2.4.4 Preparing valuations for interim certificates.
- 2.4.5 Analysing contract prices relative to cost recording methods.
- 2.4.6 Preparing and agreeing final accounts and contra charges.
- 2.4.7 Reporting on, evaluating and negotiating contractual and extra-contractual issues; post contract correspondence, attending site meetings.
- 2.4.8 Preparing or interpreting cost/value and other reconciliation statements for management purposes.
- 2.4.9 Surveying, measuring and recording site information.

2.5 Specialisations

- 2.5.1 Taxation allowances and grants.
- 2.5.2 Planning or programming of contract works.
- 2.5.3 Resource determination, scheduling and purchasing.
- 2.5.4 Procurement of plant and materials.
- 2.5.5 Production cost/quality control, time standards and operational methods.
- 2.5.6 Productivity methods and evaluation.
- 2.5.7 Project management.
- 2.5.8 Insurance.
- 2.5.9 Litigation and arbitration.

2.5.10 Bankruptcy, liquidation, determination and termination. (*revised Sep 02*)

2.5.11 Planned preventative maintenance.

2.5.12 Schedules of dilapidations.

2.5.13 Technical audits (excluding checking and bulk checking which are an essential part of a service). (*revised Sep 02*)

2.5.14 Office management including resource allocation, fees and budgets (excluding clerical work such as filing, packing, office relocation, etc.). (*revised Sep 02*)

Details of any other specialisation which you may wish to include must be submitted for prior approval on Form APC1. If it is wished to substitute different specialisations during the period of recorded experience, details must be supplied to the Institute for acceptance.

ANNEX B

ENTRY PATHS TO THE ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

<u>Degree/Diploma</u>	<u>Min. training period</u>	<u>Apply by</u>	<u>Final Assessment</u>	<u>Final Ass. Application date</u>	<u>Min. recorded experience at date of application for Final Assessment</u>
Candidates completing a fully- exempting (Full time; Part-time, distance learning (CEM) or Sandwich) course	33 Months	31st December after receiving Degree/ Diploma	September 3 years later	Before Mid . June (Together with “Record of Experience”)	30 months

NOTE: Candidates must be in suitable employment before applying for Registration.
Candidates may apply for admission to the HKIS APC at any time during their training period (on payment of fee, and admission as student member)