



The Royal Town Planning Institute

Incorporated by Royal Charter, Registered Charity in England and Wales No. 262865

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS COMPLETING FORM RM1 AND FOR THEIR SPONSORS AND CORROBORATORS

Please read these notes carefully before completing the application form.

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APPLICATION FOR ELECTION TO MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL INFORMATION

These notes give general guidance and information on both the membership requirements and the application process. They also relate to sections in the application form.

The requirements

Applicants must satisfy the Council that, at the time of their application, they:

- have completed an RTPI accredited degree or diploma course (or the Institute's former Final Examination); and
- have had at least two years' relevant town planning experience.

One of the two years' practical experience must have been obtained after qualifying ie. after completing the accredited course (or passing the Final Examination).

Submission of applications

To apply, you should complete Form RM1 (in typescript or on a word processor) and submit this, together with a cheque for the administration fee, to the Membership Department at the Institute. Details of the current fees are included on the enclosed note together with the closing dates for each election point, and some information on current subscription rates. Applications must not be submitted in anticipation of or before you are able to meet both the academic and practice requirements *by the closing date*. Applications submitted prematurely (even by a few days) will not be accepted for earlier consideration.

Applications will be acknowledged as quickly as possible. However, if you would like an immediate acknowledgement, please use the reply postcard. Please do not send a photocopy of your form as all signatures must be originals. Faxed copies are not accepted.

The Council has appointed the Membership Panel to consider and make recommendations to it on the applications for membership. Your application will be carefully considered against the criteria. However, in areas where your experience has been unusual or you have doubts about its acceptability, an 'informal' view service is available to assess the acceptability of experience prior to consideration by the Panel. If you wish to obtain an 'informal' view, please could you provide a letter outlining your academic qualifications and describing your practical experience (bearing in mind the guidance regarding "nature and form of experience" as described in this note) and send it to the Membership Department at the Institute. These views are given without prejudice to any decision the Membership Panel may reach.

Decisions on applications

Successful applicants will be notified of their election, and the amount of subscription due, as soon as possible after this has been confirmed at the Council meeting. A Certificate of Membership will be sent to newly elected Members as soon as possible after the date of election.

Where the Panel has decided that additional information is required, applicants will be notified of this after the Council meeting. In borderline cases the Panel may decide to ask an applicant to attend an interview, at his or her own expense, before a final recommendation is made to the Council. In some cases, the Panel can require an applicant to undertake some further or more relevant practical experience before it recommends election.

The Council does not undertake to state the reasons for its decisions but the Panel does try to give a clear explanation and there are procedures to allow unsuccessful applications to be reconsidered. For example, an unsuccessful applicant may provide the further information requested by the Panel or, preferably as a last resort, may make a formal appeal. Appeals must be made within three months of the notification of the decision and are considered by the Appeal Panel which is independent of the Membership Panel but which also makes its recommendations to the Council.

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

The postal address which you give will be used for all correspondence, and if you are elected it will determine, for UK and Irish members, the local Branch of the Institute to which you will be allocated, unless you advise us otherwise. If you have no objection, your address may also be used for the direct mailing of advertising and other promotional material and your name, address, employer and election date may also be published on the Institute's website.

B. EDUCATION

You have to demonstrate that you have completed an RTPPI accredited degree or diploma course (or have passed the Institute's Final Examination which is no longer available).

In Section B, please indicate the type of course (eg. undergraduate full-time, postgraduate part-time etc.) and give the dates (month and year) when you started and successfully completed the course, including the acceptance of any required thesis.

In the case of undergraduate sandwich or postgraduate block release courses, please also clearly indicate the periods of time spent in both the university and in offices. Please state whether the qualification is a BA, BSc, DipArch, DipTP, etc. and also give the formal description and the name of the university or college concerned eg. BA (2(i)) Town Planning, University of Manchester.

If you have qualified via the Institute's former Final Examination, please give the date (month and year) of passing the examinations.

In this Section, please also list your other academic qualifications. However there is no need to include GCSE or 'A' Level subjects.

C. DATE OF ELECTION TO STUDENTSHIP OF THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE

Please give the date of your election to Studentship, if applicable. If you have been a Student of the RTPPI and allowed this to lapse, you may have outstanding subscription which will have to be paid before your application can be considered. If you have any queries about your former membership status, please contact the Membership Department.

D. CURRENT CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Please indicate your membership giving the appropriate designatory letters, eg, RIBA, MICE etc, with the dates of election.

E. POSTS HELD

Please give details, in chronological order, of posts held, the employing authorities or firms, indicating relevant Departments and/or Sections of the organisations concerned, eg. Planning Assistant, Department of Architecture and Planning (Development Control Section), giving the dates (month and year) and stating whether your experience was gained full-time, part-time or on a job-share basis.

F. BRIEF SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

Please give brief details of the level of your responsibility, the type of work undertaken in each post that you have mentioned in Section E and the total time spent on each aspect of the work concerned. This information should not be given in such detail as is expected in your detailed statement of experience (Section G). The following is an example of what is wanted:

Post 1. Planning Assistant (Countryside Group)

Fourth position in a team of six under the direction of a Group Leader engaged on recreational studies and implementation of programmes for the development of countryside parks and picnic sites. Particular responsibility for reports on the recreational possibilities of disused gravel pits throughout the county (11 months). Liaison with Development Control Section throughout this period.

G. DETAILED STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE

You will need to demonstrate that:

- you have obtained at least two years' relevant town planning experience, including one year's post qualification experience (ie. after completing the accredited course); or

- if you wish to use an element of teaching experience, you will need to demonstrate a combination of up to two years' relevant teaching experience plus one year's practical experience in town planning. The latter may include relevant planning research/research consultancy as indicated below.

The practical experience requirements for membership reproduced below are based on those for corporate membership which came into operation in September 1973, expressed in the formal wording agreed by the Council:

“Aim of the Practical Experience in Town Planning Requirements

The aim of the practical experience in Town Planning requirements is to enable the Council of the Chartered Institute to be satisfied that a candidate has appropriate experience which, coupled with the separate measure of educational achievement, warrants his/her engaging in and contributing towards the profession of Town Planning as defined in the Royal Charter. The Council will appoint a Committee or Panel to make recommendations to it on each individual application for Membership, in the light of the submission described below, after making such further enquiries as the Committee or Panel sees fit to make.

Nature and Form of Experience

1. Experience may be gained in any part of the world and the following types of activity, whether broad-based or specialist, shall be accepted as relevant planning experience:
 - (a) planning research and analysis of information related to the making of planning policy or planning recommendations and decisions;
 - (b) planning policy formulation;
 - (c) development plans; planning briefs; area plans; control of development (including the submission or receipt of applications); planning appeals; public consultation and similar activities;
 - (d) implementation and realisation of policies and/or proposals including area improvements; economic development; conservation; tourism; traffic and transportation; minerals; derelict land reclamation; and planning involvement in housing and housing management; community development, environmental education and recreation.

The above list is intended to be illustrative but not exhaustive. In considering the relevance of experience regard will be given to:

- (i) whether the experience has been obtained at a suitable professional level;
- (ii) whether the experience is acceptable town planning experience and not experience of another and quite different kind. In this connection it should be noted that while local authority Planning Departments employ, by far, the majority of Chartered Town Planners there is, and never has been, any reason why relevant and acceptable planning experience obtained with, for example, a local authority Housing Department, a Regional Water Authority, British Rail or a Hotel and Catering chain, should not contribute towards the qualifying experience period. In saying this, however, it should be borne in mind that the nature of the planning work undertaken in these circumstances might possibly be rather limited as regards content, variety and substance which, of itself, might not be adequate to ensure election without spending a longer period in the same post in order to accumulate the equivalent concentration and/or variety of experience expected or having to seek further planning experience elsewhere. Applications from academically qualified practitioners in other professions whose experience is of a mixed kind will be considered on their merits. An applicant will, however, be expected to demonstrate that he/she has obtained a total of at least two years' practical town planning experience including, as a general guide, at least two periods of a *minimum of three months continuous planning experience*;
- (iii) the breadth of that experience and whether it has a reasonable measure of substance, compactness and coherence and is not of a fragmented, diffuse or peripheral nature. It should be noted, for example, that while experience gained in an office as part of an accredited sandwich course is eligible for consideration, vacation experience or experience gained as part of, or alongside, a full-time taught undergraduate course, or a postgraduate course completed in two years or less, or time spent on a block release course is not acceptable as contributing towards the practical experience period;
- (iv) the attainments of the applicant;
- (v) whether the experience has been obtained under the supervision of a Chartered Town Planner;
- (vi) whether, in the case of applications containing an element of teaching experience, the combined experience is relevant, sufficiently practical in content and has a reasonable measure of substance, compactness and coherence. The teaching experience should be linked with the types of activity indicated in Section 1 above.”

You will be expected to demonstrate in your statement of experience, in not more than 1,000 to 1,500 words, that you have spent the equivalent of two years' full-time in professional work directly related to Town Planning. One of these years must have been obtained post qualification. You are asked to write the statement in such a way that the experience can be judged in its totality, eg. what percentage of work was directly related to town and country planning as opposed to work of another nature. You should clearly describe your personal contribution in both breadth and depth, in accordance with the "Nature and form of experience" as outlined above. Please describe the posts held and their direct relevance to the work of a planning team. Your statement will have to be fully corroborated (see Note H).

The nature of the practical experience you are offering should be of such a kind that you can demonstrate a competence to undertake some aspect, or aspects, of professional work. The experience can be generalist or specialist; it can be broad-based or contributory to one particular field; it can be gained in team work or in an individual capacity; it can relate to public service, private practice, research and, in certain circumstances, to teaching. Where your experience is limited to one particular field you will have to indicate why you feel your narrower experience justifies your election.

In your statement of experience, you should also refer to your management competence, by demonstrating, briefly, where your work has included some elements of the following: management of operations; processes, people; other resources; information; or personal time management. You are not expected to concentrate on management as an isolated subject, but rather to show how your management competence relates to and is an integral part of your planning experience. You should also address these points within your Professional Development Plan (Section I).

H. CORROBORATION OF THE STATEMENT

Your statement of experience (Section G) must be certified by one or more Corroborators who have personal knowledge of the work you have described. Your Corroborators should be in senior positions and preferably, but not necessarily, Chartered Town Planners. Each Corroborator should countersign your statement in the margins provided and sign the relevant spaces of Section H. Should you require more than five Corroborators, please attach a separate sheet with the additional details and signatures. Your corroborators may also act as your Sponsors.

I. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Your Professional Development Plan (PDP) needs to cover the following two years, identifying your personal professional development needs during that time. Your Plan must be approved and signed, in Section J, by one of your Sponsors. Your PDP should also refer to your management competence (see Section G above).

Clause 1(a) of the RTPI's Code of Professional Conduct requires that:

"Members shall take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence throughout their working lives and shall comply with the Council's continuing professional development (CPD) regulations as amended from time to time.....(and)....at least once a year prepare a professional development plan for the next two years identifying his or her personal professional development needs."

The Institute's policy is outlined in Professional Conduct Advice Note No. 1 (PCAN1). Copies of this are available from the Institute and on the website (www.rtpi.org.uk). To access PCAN1 on the website: click on "The RTPI & the planning profession", then on "Continuing Professional Development" and then on "Professional Conduct Advice Note 1". The document is supplied as a PDF file for you to download. In order to read the PDF file you will require Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have this on your computer, you can download it free of charge direct from Adobe's own web site on www.adobe.com. A copy of the Note is sent to all new members on election. To assist you in completing this part of the form, the advice overleaf has been extracted from the Note:

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(Extract from PCAN No.1)

3.1 The Institute believes that one of the most valuable single pieces of CPD you can do is carefully to prepare a professional development plan (PDP), having reflected on your current and anticipated needs. You will need to identify clear objectives in order to identify relevant CPD activities and to monitor the extent to which they meet your needs.

What's the plan for?

3.2 A PDP is first and foremost an analysis of your current CPD needs, having regard to your present circumstances, to any anticipated changes to your circumstances in the foreseeable future, and to your longer term aspirations.

3.3 Secondly, it is an attempt to identify how those needs might best be met.

3.4 Thirdly, it is an attempt to plan (so far as it is practicable to do so) what CPD activities you will actually undertake during the period of the plan.

3.5 It thus identifies an anticipated course of action, designed to focus and accelerate the learning process.

3.6 It will be unique to you.

3.7 It is not an inflexible blue-print. It does not prevent you from taking advantage of (and recording) valuable but unexpected, and therefore unplanned, CPD opportunities. But it does enable you to evaluate all your CPD activities against carefully identified needs.

What will it look like?

3.8 This will depend on you and your circumstances.

3.9 It can be a short, succinct statement – perhaps no more than half a page in length – of where you are at, and what you need to do to stay there.

3.10 Alternatively, it can be a detailed analysis of your personal and professional circumstances, aspirations and needs and the steps you have identified to meet those needs.

3.11 Examples of each are given in the appendix to this advice note. (*One example only is given below*)

How do I do one?

3.12 You should allow yourself at least an hour to complete your PDP.

3.13 Begin by writing down all the jobs you are currently expected to do, the areas you have to be knowledgeable about, the skills you need to possess, and changes that are likely to occur in the next two years.

3.14 Seriously consider any short or longer-term ambitions you might have for developing or adapting your career. Be realistic, both about your ambitions and about the time needed to achieve them.

3.15 Next, start to develop ideas about what areas of CPD you need, and what priority each has.

3.16 Don't necessarily restrict yourself to thinking about your current professional responsibilities. Think about your career and its development, and consider whether this is a time to strengthen existing skills, develop new skills or broaden your understanding of the planning process.

3.17 Now list your priorities for the next two years.

3.18 The resulting document will be your PDP.

3.19 It will need to be reviewed and updated regularly, responding to changing needs or circumstances.

EXAMPLE OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name: A. Planner

Age: 28

Family: Single, no dependants

Job: Senior Planner, Policy, Small semi-rural Unitary Authority. Answerable to Team Leader

Current job details

Progressing UDP towards Public Local Inquiry. Have been involved with the plan from its instigation, including formulating policy, public consultation, and preparing for the Inquiry. Particularly involved in the Environmental Appraisal of the plan policies

Current strengths

- Good organisational skills
- Basic computer skills – use of word processing and database packages
- Good at dealing with the public

Current weaknesses

- Bad at speaking at meetings/in public – potential problem giving evidence at Inquiry
- Not assertive enough
- Time management sometimes a problem

Next career move

Ideally Principal Planner/Team Leader post in Policy section within larger rural Local Authority

What do I need to do to get there?

Long term (5 years):

- Management training. Investigate possible courses available, especially ones with a recognised qualification at end

Medium term (2 years):

- Improve time management skills
- Improve assertiveness
- Possible sources of material to be investigated:
 - Short Courses
 - Distance Learning Packages
 - Publications

Short term (1 year):

- Improve public speaking techniques
- Look out for any training relating to Public Inquiries, particularly on giving evidence

On-going:

- Keep abreast of good practice relating to the environmental appraisal of policies
- Find out more about the Council's GIS system and how the Local Plans section could benefit from its use
- Follow the progress of other UDPs in similar Local Authorities
- Find out more about countryside strategy and its relation to the UDP

J. SPONSORS

Your application must be supported by two Sponsors. They must be Chartered Town Planners and should wherever possible include your Head of Department or practice. Your Sponsors can also corroborate your statement of experience. As indicated in Note I above, one of your Sponsors will also have to approve and sign your Professional Development Plan.

The Membership Panel has agreed that the names of Sponsors can be made known, on written request, to other corporate members. All other information within your form remains confidential to the application process.

K. OTHER INFORMATION

The completion of Section K of the form is not obligatory but the information is very helpful to the Institute in monitoring the profile of the profession. You are assured that the information given will not affect your application in any way.

L. APPLICANT'S DECLARATION

The Membership Panel will assess your application only on the basis of the information given. Therefore, it is important that you provide the Panel (and, beforehand, your Sponsors and Corroborators) with all of the necessary information, and present it clearly and precisely. You need to make sure that the correct signatures have been obtained and that official positions are given with dates (month and year), together with the names of employing authorities or firms clearly indicated.

Please ensure that all signatures, including your own, are original.

Queries

If, after reading this guidance note, you have any queries about any aspect of the application process, please contact the Membership Department (Tel: 0207 929 9454/ 9464/ 9467/ 9484).

Finally, remember that consideration of your application could be delayed if you submit incomplete forms or provide unclear information.

THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE

Supplementary guidance to Note RM2

This guidance has been prepared by the Membership Panel to help applicants, corroborators and sponsors to complete Form RM1. It is hoped that it will also help:

- a) applicants, by describing the type of “relevant” planning experience that is being sought for membership; and
- b) advise corroborators and sponsors as to what areas of experience are regarded appropriate for membership and what competencies the Institute expects candidates to have developed since graduating.

In 2001, the Institute's Council agreed that a *New Vision for Planning* was required which seeks to build the capacity within society and its institutions to take effective and relevant decisions. It agreed that this *New Vision* should see planning as being about people and places, the natural and the built environment, immediate requirements and long-term stewardship. The *New Vision* will be developed through its members and through extensive consultation and dialogue with all potential partners and will, therefore, be a living and evolving document.

The *New Vision* is built around the core ideas of a planning that is:

- *Spatial* – dealing with the unique needs and characteristics of places
- *Sustainable* – looking at the short, medium and long term issues
- *Integrative* – in terms of the knowledge, objectives and actions involved
- *Inclusive* – recognising the wide range of people involved in planning.

In all these matters planning is:

- *Value-driven* – concerned with identifying, understanding and mediating conflicting sets of values
- *Action-oriented* – driven by the twin activities of mediating space and making of place.

This provides the context within which the Membership Panel and the Council consider applications for membership.

1. The following guidance is intended to augment the paragraph on the *Nature and Form of Experience* in section G of Note RM2:

- (a) **The preparation of plans and policies:** is taken to include research and analysis of information for policy formulation as well as the actual formulation and monitoring of policy, guidelines and advice; statutory development plans as well as master, town, settlement and conservation plans for buildings, urban areas and the countryside, development briefs, design guides, environmental and traffic impact assessments. The associated processes of economic development, public participation, advocacy and presentation to clients are regarded as integral to plan preparation;
- (b) **Plan implementation:** statutory development control and enforcement are included with the handling of appeals at all stages; the preparation, submission and following through of planning applications. Implementation of plans or schemes for conservation, environmental improvement, economic development, urban regeneration, traffic and

transportation, tourism, minerals, waste disposal, derelict land reclamation; and planning involvement in housing and housing management, community development, environmental education and recreation;

- (c) **Research:** research and analysis of information leading to the making of planning policy or planning recommendations and decisions. (The Membership Panel will consider the prime purpose of the research; the stage of the research; the organisational context of the research; and how it relates to the making of planning policy etc.); and
 - (d) **Teaching:** teaching experience should be linked with the types of activity described in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.
2. Corroborators and sponsors should find it helpful to have a list of competencies which new entrants to the profession are expected to have developed, to be borne in mind when supporting an application for membership.

The following information, extracted from the Institute's education policy statement "*The Education of Planners*", indicates the skills expected to be acquired whilst undertaking an RTPI accredited course, and which should be further developed and enhanced during young planners' post-graduation experience:

(b) **competence** in the following range of skills:

(i) **key planning-related skills** in:

- producing strategies, policies and plans for sustaining and shaping the spatial/physical environment and the activities it supports
- managing change in the spatial/physical environment and its component activities and facilitating the implementation of development
- communicating spatial and planning-related information

(ii) **planning-related transferable skills** in:

- problem definition
- data-collection, investigation and research
- quantitative and qualitative analysis and appraisal
- aesthetic and design awareness and critique
- postulating and evaluation of alternative futures
- collaborative and multidisciplinary working
- weighing evidence, problem solving and decision making
- negotiation, mediation and advocacy

(iii) **generic transferable skills** in:

- project and resource management
- people and organisational management and leadership
- creativity
- flexibility and adaptability
- written, oral, graphic and multi-media communication
- using information technology;

Many of these skills take time to acquire and are likely to be developed across programmes as a whole, particularly through a range of coursework and practical work. Although it is a matter for individual Schools to determine how they best incorporate skills acquisition into their programmes, development of the skills specified above should be related to the acquisition and application of knowledge and to the value and ethical implications of how skills are applied. Ways in which these might be incorporated in planning programmes are through individual and group project work (where possible using real information and real-world situations as the context), through practical experience with or involving practitioners, and with opportunities to make presentations of various kinds. The development of the generic transferable skills is likely to permeate all aspects of a programme but explicit attention should be given as to how and where students can acquire and develop skills in the management of time, workload, resources, people and organisations, as well as written, oral, graphic and multi-media communication skills. Opportunities for developing creative skills and demonstrating flexibility and adaptability may be related to project work associated with key planning and related skills but need not be limited to these. Skills in using information technology and computers are an essential requirement in planning practice and these would be expected to be developed from the outset as an integral part of appropriate coursework and project work.

These competencies are intended to be illustrative but not exhaustive. Applicants for membership are specifically asked to refer to their management competence by describing in their Statement of Experience where their work has included some elements of management of operations; processes, people; other resources; information; or personal time management.

3. Applicants, corroborators or sponsors who have queries about any aspect of the application process are encouraged to contact the Membership Department at the RTPI (Tel: 0207 929 9454/ 9462/ 9467/ 9484).