



RTPI

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RTPI Assessment of Professional Competence Guidance Notes for Mentors

Note 4: Written Submission

1. What is the written submission?

The written submission is the document sent to the RTPI describing and reflecting on the Licentiate's experience, and is essentially the application for Chartered Membership. Although the log book is sent as a supporting document (see Note 3: APC Log Book), the submission is the only document that is formally assessed, and it is thus essential that Licentiates follow the guidance available to them in order to make a strong application.

It is important to note that the decision whether or not to submit for any given deadline is taken by the Licentiate. Licentiates may seek advice from their mentors – or indeed from others - on whether they feel they are ready, but ultimately the decision whether or not to submit is the Licentiate's own. Similarly, while Licentiates may seek advice on the content of their submissions, they are ultimately solely responsible for the documentation they submit to the RTPI in terms of its content, order and presentation, and ensuring it arrives to meet the appropriate deadline.

All Licentiates are made aware of this responsibility through the Guide to the APC, but mentors may wish to emphasise this in any advice or guidance they give on the written submission.

2. How should the written submission be structured?

Detailed guidance on compiling the written submission is available in the Guide to the APC, but broadly speaking the submission is comprised of:

The Practical Experience Statement (PES) (approximately 1,000 words)

- A factual, chronological, descriptive account of the whole period of experience.
- Covers where the Licentiate was employed, when (accurate dates are very important), which department, and what position was held within the overall organisational structure.
- Includes the Licentiate's main roles and responsibilities.
- Also includes any key projects/areas of work the Licentiate wants to (briefly) describe (bearing in mind the guidance on the professional competence statement, below).
- If the Licentiate has experience over and above the minimum requirement, it is advisable to include all experience in order to demonstrate breadth and depth of experience to Assessors.

The Professional Competence Statement (PCS) (approximately 2,500 words)

- Provides a more detailed, reflective account of specific examples of the Licentiate's experience.
- Concentrates on one or two (or a small number of) projects, activities or examples of work.
- Must address, either through each example or using a combination of examples of work, each of the assessment criteria (see below).
- Focusing on specific examples in detail, and drawing out the professional competence developed as a result, should mean that the professional competence statement is not simply a repetition or extension of the practical experience statement.

The Conclusion (approximately 1,500 words)

- Includes a SWOT analysis and Professional Development Plan (previous PDPs are not required to be submitted).
- Reviews progress, looks ahead, sets objectives and identifies how they will be met – see Note 3: Professional Development Plan.
- In order to show that it is the candidate's own work, and in order to show an ongoing period of learning, there should be a strong thread running through the log book, the submission, the SWOT and the PDP. Assessors will remark on it if, for example, areas for development that are frequently mentioned in the log book, or weaknesses that are mentioned in the SWOT analysis, are consistently not picked up in the PDP.

3. What other things should be considered?

Mentors may wish to use the following questions to help Licentiates interrogate their work and ensure they put together a strong submission. It can therefore be useful for Licentiates and mentors to meet during the submission drafting stage, before the documentation is finalised and corroborated.

- ***Is the Licentiate's own contribution clear?*** Assessors are looking for evidence of the Licentiate's specific responsibilities, experience and competence. While it is expected that in many cases Licentiates will be working as part of a team, or reporting to another individual, Licentiates must make clear their own contribution to a piece of work, even if they also show the wider context, in order for Assessors to accurately assess their work. Assessors cannot work from inference, and in such a situation a submission may be referred pending further clarification. Licentiates are therefore strongly encouraged to write in the 1st person active voice ('I wrote... I decided...') rather than passively ('A report was produced...') in order that Assessors can be clear on their specific contribution.
- ***Is there a clear difference between the practical experience and professional competence statements?*** These sections each have a different purpose, and should not be a repetition of one another (see above).
- ***Is there a clear link between the log book and the practical experience statement?*** Log book entries should back up information contained in the practical experience statement, not be contradictory.
- ***Has the Licentiate selected the best examples to illustrate his or her experience?*** In the professional competence statement, Licentiates need to select the areas or examples of their work that best meet the assessment criteria (see below, and Note 5: Meeting the Assessment Criteria). While Licentiates do not have to only use one case study example of their work if they feel there are a number of examples they wish to use to best meet the criteria, we recommend that they restrict themselves to a small number of examples – generally no more than three. This is because, in using more examples, Licentiates tend to spend a great deal of the word count setting out the context of each project or area of work, at the expense of addressing the other assessment criteria.
- ***Is the Professional Competence Statement (PCS) reflective rather than merely descriptive?*** The PCS should display mature reflection on the Licentiate's experience, highlighting what was learned (see Note 1 for discussion of 'reflection').
- ***Is the report produced to a high professional standard?*** Reports can and have been referred or even failed if presented in an insufficiently professional fashion as befits an application for professional membership. Proof reading, spell- and grammar-checking are therefore paramount, and Licentiates should also ensure that pages and paragraphs are clearly numbered.
- ***Has due account been taken of confidentiality issues?*** Licentiates must not specifically name colleagues in their report, whether in a positive or negative light, and should take care to ensure that no sensitive information is disclosed (employers corroborating reports will also be mindful of this). Licentiates must also avoid unduly criticising or assigning blame to other colleagues or their employers.
- ***Is the report fully corroborated?*** Without at least one employer signature per page to confirm the accuracy of the submission it will not be possible to assess the Licentiate's submission.
- ***Has the submission been sent in anonymously?*** While Licentiates are encouraged to include their membership number on their submission documentation, names must be kept off the documentation in order to ensure an equitable assessment process.
- ***Have all the assessment criteria been addressed?*** The assessment criteria detailed in Section 7 of the Guide to the APC and shown on the sample Assessor Feedback Form in the Guide are those used by Assessors, so it is essential that Licentiates clearly address each one of these within the context of their professional work. Note 5 in the mentor guidance series deals specifically with meeting the APC assessment criteria, including pitfalls to avoid.