



RTPI

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ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE (APC) GUIDANCE

Licentiate guide to RTPI Chartered membership

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This document replaces the previous APC guidance documents, *Becoming a Chartered Town Planner: A guide for Licentiates* and *Preparing your APC Submission*.

This document must be used for any first time applications submitted on or after APC submission deadline 5 November 2015.

Failure to comply with this document from 5 November 2015 onwards will result in your application not being accepted by the RTPI.

1. Overview of the APC

1.1 What is the APC?

For over 100 years, membership of the RTPI has been the hallmark of professional expertise and integrity. Employers, clients and the wider community recognise the high quality of skills and experience that are held by Chartered Town Planners (MRTPI). They know that they can rely upon the designation MRTPI as a sign of competence and professionalism.

The Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) is the main route to becoming a Chartered Town Planner for all graduates who have successfully completed a fully RTPI accredited degree.

The APC is the third component of your initial professional education and will set you up for a future of lifelong learning and reflective practice. The first component is graduation from a fully accredited course and the second component is completion of the Licentiate period and professional experience. The APC complements your spatial and specialist qualifications and builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding that you have acquired during your accredited qualification. It tests your ability to apply these in a practice, teaching or research context.

The APC is a structured programme of work-based learning concluding in a final **competency-based** written submission. It is designed to:

- foster independent learning and career direction;
- raise standards of professional competence;
- empower graduates to drive their own development;
- encourage networking and participation;
- instil a habit of lifelong learning and continuing professional development as required by the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct.

The APC is a valuable but rigorous process designed to assess your competence. The RTPI aims to support candidates and provide as much guidance as possible. This document sets out in detail what you need to do to complete a successful submission.

NOTE

This document replaces the two previous guidance documents 'Becoming a Chartered Town Planner – A guide for Licentiates 2014' and 'Preparing your APC Submission – Guidelines 2014'.

1.2 Eligibility

To be eligible to submit your APC you must have:

- a **fully** RTPI accredited qualification. To be fully RTPI accredited you must have either (i) a '**combined**' qualification, or (ii) '**spatial**' and '**specialist**' qualifications;
- a minimum of 24 months' (full-time equivalent) spatial planning experience at the relevant professional level, **at least 12 months of which must be gained whilst a Licentiate Member of the Institute;**
- a log book detailing a minimum of 12 months' recent experience (full-time equivalent) as a Licentiate Member.

Queries about eligibility should be directed to the RTPI Membership Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.

1.3 Becoming a Licentiate

Licentiate membership is the class of membership that bridges the gap between Student and Chartered membership. The Licentiate period should be structured, mentored and monitored.

You are eligible to become a Licentiate once you have been awarded a fully RTPI accredited degree¹. Most APC candidates will be a Licentiate for at least 24 months whilst they acquire the minimum 24 months' experience. Candidates who gained eligible experience before they completed their required education may be a Licentiate for less time; the minimum amount of time is 12 months whilst working full time (or equivalent).

To apply for Licentiate membership, you must complete the application form available on the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#). You must provide a copy of your degree certificate(s) or final transcript(s) with your application to confirm that you have successfully completed all elements of the accredited course.

There is an administration fee payable at the time of application and a yearly subscription fee associated with your Licentiate membership.

NOTE

The date from which your period of Licentiate experience is calculated is the date of commencement of your Licentiate membership. It is advisable to become a Licentiate Member as soon as you are eligible in order to ensure you have the most flexible options².

¹ To be fully RTPI accredited you must have either (i) a '**combined**' qualification, or (ii) '**spatial**' and '**specialist**' qualifications.

² Candidates who have previously been a Licentiate for at least 12 months, but who have since let their membership lapse, must wait a minimum of six months from the date of reinstatement before submitting their APC.

1.4 Experience requirements

Before you can apply for the APC, you must gain a minimum of 24 months' (full-time equivalent) spatial planning experience at the relevant professional level, **at least 12 months of which must be gained whilst a Licentiate Member of the Institute.**

'Professional level' is broadly defined as exercising independent professional judgement to make decisions or influence outcomes. The table below outlines the different types of experience that can and can't count towards the APC.

Experience type	Can it count?
Full- or part-time experience or a combination of both (pro rata). To calculate part-time experience you need to pro rata your part-time hours against the 35 hour week. ³	Yes
Paid or voluntary experience.	Yes
Experience gained in the UK or overseas.	Yes
Experience spread over a period of time longer than 24 months. The 24 months do not need to be consecutive, breaks in employment for maternity leave, redundancy or travelling are fine and can just be factored into your spatial planning experience. Once back in planning employment you can just 'pick up where you left off'.	Yes
Experience gained whilst on a sandwich year or vacation placement. Please note that, in some cases, the work undertaken on a sandwich year may not be of a professional level and therefore may be discounted by the assessors.	Yes
Experience gained whilst self-employed. As long as you can demonstrate a consistent period of continuous planning experience at the appropriate level.	Yes
Experience gained prior to the Licentiate period. At least 12 months of your experience must be gained whilst a Licentiate Member, however, experience gained prior to becoming a Licentiate is acceptable as long as it is at the relevant professional level.	Yes
Experience gained whilst undertaking a full- or part-time degree or further studies. You are not, however, allowed to count any experience gained whilst registered as a student on an intensive one year master's degree (see below).	Yes
Experience gained whilst undertaking an intensive one year master's degree. The intensive one year master's degree period is calculated as one calendar year from the date of course commencement e.g. if a candidate commenced their one year intensive master's course on 01 September 2015, they would be able to start counting experience gained from 01 September 2016.	No
Experience less than three months in duration (full-time equivalent).	No
Administrative experience or technical support experience. Experience must be of the relevant professional level, as defined above.	No

³ Please note you can only pro rata part-time experience. You cannot pro rata full-time experience if working more than 35 hours a week. For an example of how to calculate part-time experience, see the note on the next page.

If you are unemployed whilst a Licentiate, or were working part time, you will have to continue as a Licentiate until you have gained the full period of experience. If you let your Licentiate membership lapse, you cannot count the time you were not an RTPI member towards your Licentiate experience.

NOTE

If you do not have 24 months of consecutive full-time experience you must demonstrate how you calculated your eligibility.

For example, if you have 36 months of 4 days a week, you would state:

36 months at 80% of a full-time role is equivalent to 28.8 months' full-time work.

If you worked in a role that was part planning and part surveying for 12 months, then six months' full-time planning followed by 12 months' part-time, you would state:

12 months at 40% of a full-time role is equivalent to 4.8 months' full-time work.

6 months' full-time work.

24 months at 80% of a full-time role is equivalent to 19.2 months' full-time work.

Total: 30 months

1.5 Nature of experience towards APC

Examples of spatial planning work that are eligible towards the APC will include some of the points below. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list of the broad types of work included as spatial planning and candidates do not require experience in all these areas:

The preparation of plans, policies and related documents

Some examples of this type of work include:

- research and analysis of information for policy formulation;
- the preparation of contributory material or actual formulation and monitoring of policy, guidelines and advice;
- spatial development strategies and statutory development plans as well as master, town, village/parish settlement and conservation plans for buildings, urban areas and the countryside;
- development briefs, design guides, environmental, economic and traffic impact assessments;
- sustainability appraisal, transportation and economic assessments and travel plans;
- the associated processes of economic development, viability assessments, community engagement, preparation of materials for Inquiry, advocacy and presentations to clients, which are regarded as integral to plan preparation;
- landscape/biodiversity assessments and appraisals.

Plan implementation

This includes but is not restricted to activities such as:

- statutory development management/control and enforcement are included with the handling of appeals at all stages;
- preparation, submission and following through of planning applications and other consenting regimes;
- implementation of plans or schemes for conservation, environmental improvement, economic development, urban regeneration, traffic and transportation, tourism, minerals, waste disposal, or derelict land reclamation, including funding and delivery options;
- planning involvement in housing and housing management, community development, environmental education and recreation, and urban design;
- site appraisal, feasibility studies, scoping exercises and all forms of study preparatory to the submission of a planning application;
- water and marine planning such as flood risk planning;
- experience gained from involvement in investigation, negotiation and resolution of breaches of planning control, preparation of notices, handling of enforcement appeals and court proceedings.

Monitoring and research

Monitoring and research activities could include:

- research and analysis of information leading to the making of planning policy or planning recommendations and decisions;
- funded research for clients from the public/private/voluntary sectors;
- the monitoring of plans and policies leading to reports and plan revision;
- planning submissions, or research appraisal;
- relevant research undertaken towards a PhD qualification provided that the Licentiate has already completed an accredited qualification (i.e. research undertaken towards an accredited PhD is not eligible, unless the candidate already holds an accredited undergraduate/postgraduate qualification). Be aware that APC assessors 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 spatial planning policy and the delivery of planning outcomes.

Teaching and research

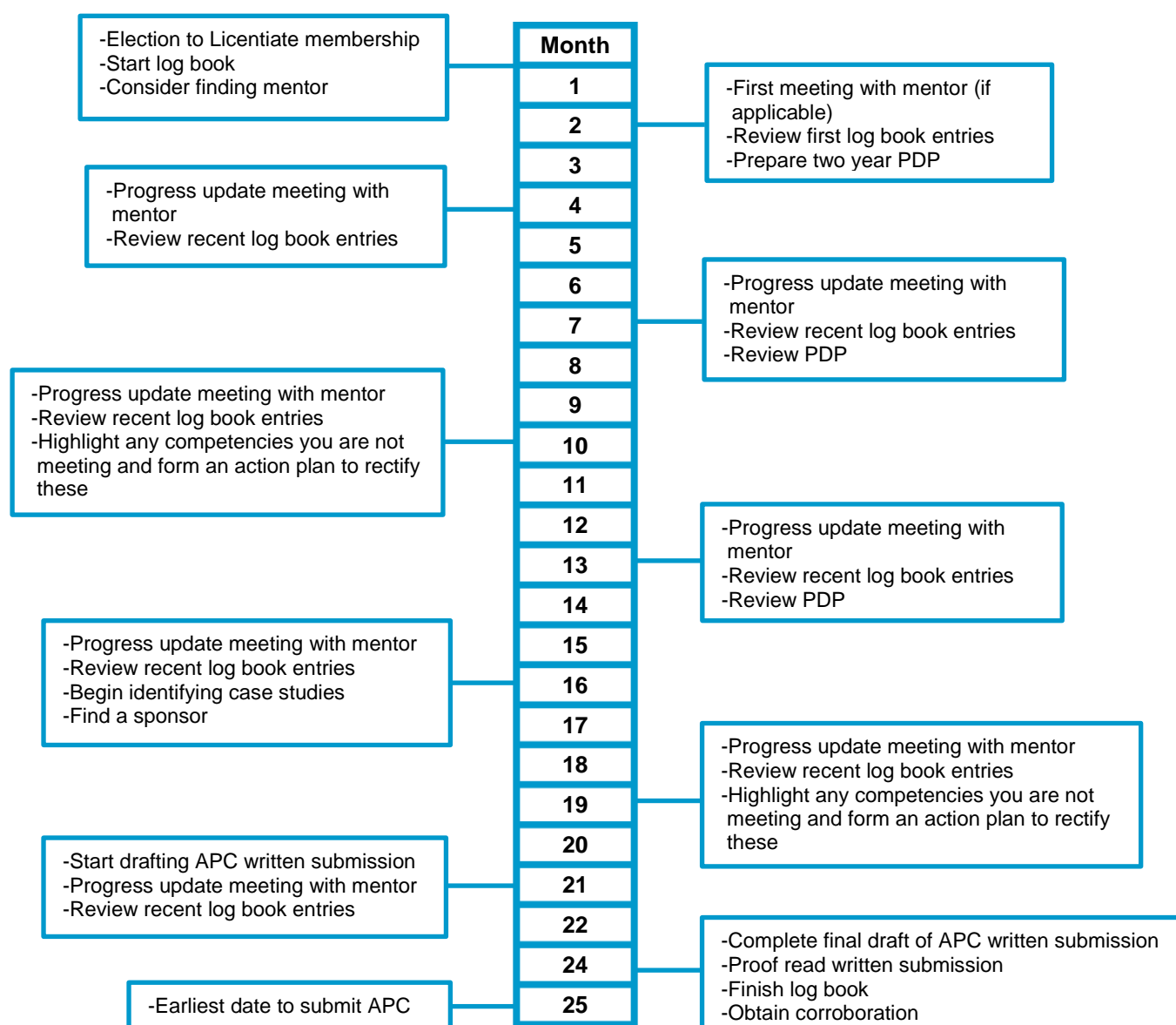
This includes higher education teaching experience linked with the types of activity described in paragraphs above and takes place on courses related to spatial planning. More information about using research and teaching experience is provided in the 'APC Advice Note – Academic Experience' which is available on the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#).

1.6 APC timelines

At the beginning of your APC journey, you should start your log book and prepare your first Professional Development Plan (PDP). You should also consider finding a mentor. Ultimately, you are responsible for your day-to-day activities. However, regular reviews of your log book and PDP are important. You should also be reflecting on whether you are meeting the relevant competencies throughout your time as a Licentiate.

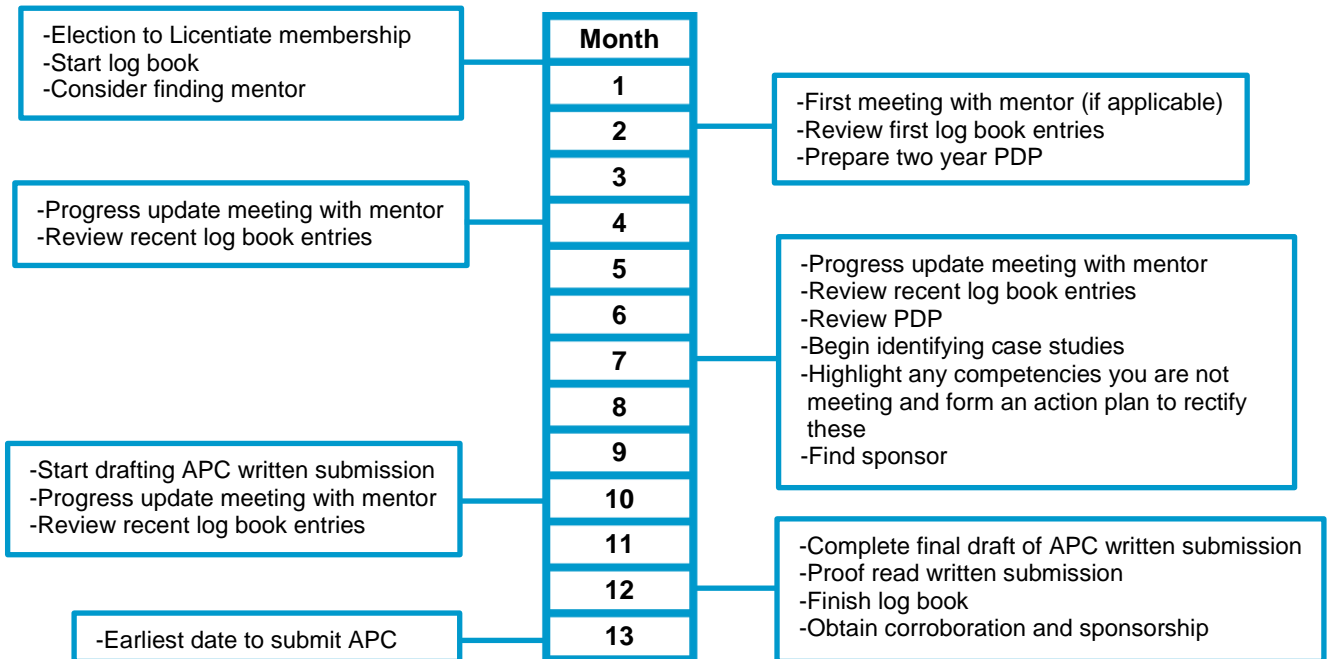
The RTPI has put together a suggested timeline of the minimum activities a Licentiate might do to complete the APC process.

Licentiate with no previous experience – minimum suggested timeline





Licentiate with at least 12 months’ previous experience – minimum suggested timeline



1.7 The people involved

Many people will assist you in attaining Chartered status. The roles these people will play are explained below.

- **You:** The APC process, from start to finish, is about you. You are responsible for developing your professional competence and will need to do so independently of others. Ultimately, it will be up to you to set aside time each month to log and reflect on the work you have done.
- **Your employer:** They play a key role in supporting you to meet the APC competencies. If you are not meeting the competencies you need to address this with your employer and form an action plan to gain the required experience. Some organisations have already demonstrated a commitment to supporting and developing their staff through the RTPI Learning Partners scheme.
- **Your mentor:** Acts as a critical friend who will help you throughout the APC process. Having a mentor is not compulsory; however, they can be a useful tool and resource. Mentors can provide you with career advice, planning related advice and specific APC advice. More details on the role of the mentor can be found in [Section 4](#).
- **Your sponsor:** A current Chartered Town Planner who will sponsor your application for membership. Your sponsor must sign the Sponsor Declaration Form. More details on the sponsor declaration can be found in [Section 2.3](#).

- **Your corroborators:** This is your line manager or employer, someone who has first hand knowledge of the work you have done and will confirm, in writing, the accuracy of your claims. All the work experience used to support your application for membership must be corroborated. The number of corroborators you have will vary depending on your employment history. More details on what a corroborator needs to provide can be found in [Section 2.4](#).
- **The assessors:** Chartered Town Planners who review your final submission and log book. Our assessors come from a range of different backgrounds and sectors, and are based in the UK and internationally. Our assessors work in pairs and receive training on an annual basis.
- **The RTPI Membership Team:** Any specific queries about the APC process can be directed here. The team can also provide additional support to candidates who are resubmitting. You can contact the Membership Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.
- **The RTPI Professional Development Team:** Any specific queries about the PDP can be directed here. The Professional Development Team can provide targeted advice on how to structure a PDP and how you might achieve your personal, professional development goals. You can contact the Professional Development Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.

Some of these roles may overlap (e.g. your mentor may also be your sponsor if they are Chartered). Please note that assessors are unable to act as mentors.

2. The APC process

2.1 What do I submit?

Your submission must consist of the following:

- a completed application form;
- a personal details and payment form;
- a written submission of 5,500 words (+/- 10%) comprising:
 - i. [Practical Experience Statement \(PES\)](#) – approximately 1,000 words;
 - ii. [Professional Competence Statement \(PCS\)](#) – approximately 3,000 words;
 - iii. [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#) – approximately 1,500 words;
- a [log book](#) detailing a minimum of 12 months' recent experience (full-time equivalent) as a Licentiate Member;
- a [sponsor](#) declaration;
- declarations from [corroborators](#) which cover the whole period of your employment history;
- scanned copies of any relevant degree certificates or academic transcripts;
- a proof of payment of the APC assessment fees either online or by cheque.

Each of these components should be submitted as a separate Word or PDF file and labelled as indicated in [Section 2.5](#). If you are using a Mac computer please save your document in a Word compatible format.

Top tips on how to prepare your submission can be found in [Section 9](#) of this document.

2.2 The written submission

The written elements of your submission are all interrelated. You should cross reference between them and ensure that each section is consistent with the others. **Please ensure you proof read your submission.**

Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this document provide information on each of the elements of the submission and on how to best prepare your submission.

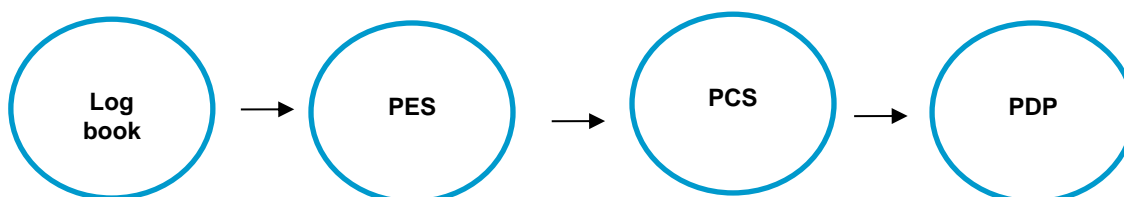
Relationship between the log book, PES, PCS and PDP

The log book is a reflection on your work and professional development and must link to the PES and PCS

The PES sums up your experience and should relate to your log book

PCS reflects on the experience in the log book and leads into the PDP

PDP reflects the learning in the PCS and looks forward at your long term goals and how you will continue to develop over the coming two years



2.3 The sponsor declaration

Your application for Chartered membership must be sponsored by a current Chartered Town Planner. You must have known your sponsor in a professional capacity for a minimum of six months. There is an APC Sponsor Declaration Form which you can download from the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#). Alternatively your sponsor can provide a letter or email from a work address supporting your application. Evidence of sponsorship must be included with your application.

Your sponsor must declare that they support your application and that they consider you to be a professional who reflects the values of the RTPI.

Your corroborator or your mentor can also be your sponsor; however, they must complete the sponsor declaration as well as providing corroboration.

2.4 Corroborating your submission

It is important that you have your log book, PES and PCS corroborated by the relevant supervisor or employer. This is, in part, to ensure the integrity of all submissions. It is also for your benefit. Having someone review your submission will assist you in your reflection. This process will also ensure that your employer is aware of the claims you are making and the work that you have put into your submission. Please note that the RTPI does not require you to have your PDP corroborated.

You should maintain relations with previous employers when you change jobs. This will make it easier to obtain corroboration at a later stage, when you have finalised your written submission and log book⁴.

Any experience that you rely on in your submission must be corroborated.

Corroboration must come in the form of a letter or email from each employer or manager referenced in your submission. Within the letter or email, the corroborator must state:

- your name;
- your role within the organisation;
- their relationship to you;
- dates that you were employed; and
- that they have read the relevant parts of your submission and agree with your claims.

The corroboration must be on letterhead or sent from a work email. It is not adequate to provide a generic letter. Self-employed applicants should include statements from clients or other professionals who have direct knowledge of their work.

Your corroborators do not have to be members of the RTPI. Your corroborator can also be your sponsor if they are a Chartered Member. Your mentor can corroborate your statement if they are also your employer.

⁴ If your previous employer has changed jobs or retired, or the organisation you worked for no longer exists, you should ensure that they declare this within their corroborating statement.

2.5 How to submit your application

You must submit your application electronically as either a Word document or a PDF file. Submitting as a PDF file will ensure that your formatting, such as page layout, will not change so you may prefer to convert your files to PDF. Any letters or emails of corroboration are also best submitted as a PDF file. If you are using a Mac computer, please save your document in a Word compatible format.

Your application form, personal details and payment form, submission, the log book and your statements of sponsorship and corroboration must be submitted as separate files. Please label each file using the following convention:

Membership no – last name – description of file (e.g. 00000 Smith PDP)

Your submission should be emailed to membership.applications@rtpi.org.uk. It is likely that your application will be quite large, so please ensure you have the capacity to email the application before the due date. Many businesses place a file size limit on staff email so please check. The RTPI will accept files up to 10 MB. If your application is larger than this, you will need to divide the application over several emails. Please ensure each email is properly labelled so that RTPI staff can identify all elements of your application. **Always include your membership number in the header of your email.**

You can pay your submission fee online, by accessing the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#). Please include a copy of the receipt with your application. If you are paying by cheque or your employer is paying, please submit a copy of the application form with your cheque. Cheques should be payable to 'Royal Town Planning Institute'.

2.6 Submission deadlines and results dates

The RTPI takes APC submissions four times a year. You can check the latest submission deadlines on the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#).

Submissions will only be accepted electronically in the required format detailed in [Section 2.5](#). The date you will receive your results is also published on the website. Your results will be posted to your primary address to arrive by the published date. The RTPI will not provide results before the published date.

2.7 How the submission is assessed

Once you have submitted your application:

1. The Membership Team will complete administrative checks to ensure you have submitted all relevant documentation. Your application may be delayed or rejected if everything is not included, or your fee has not been paid, so please ensure you undertake the checks yourself.
2. The submission will be sent to two RTPI trained APC assessors, who are current Chartered Town Planners. They will consider whether you have demonstrated all the competencies and whether you have acquired the appropriate knowledge, skills and reflective practices to be elected to the RTPI as a Chartered Town Planner.



3. Initially, the assessors will consider the submission independently of each other and then arrange to confer and agree on a recommendation as to whether you have met the requirements.
4. The assessors complete a feedback report detailing the outcome of the assessment and make a recommendation as to whether you have demonstrated the requirements to become a Chartered Town Planner. You are formally assessed on the PES, PCS, PDP and general presentation.
5. The Membership Team review the assessors' report to ensure that due process has taken place.
6. You will be sent your results and the feedback report.
7. If you have been successful, you will be elected as a member of the RTPI. If the assessors feel that some improvements are required for your PDP, you will be elected and enter the PDP support phase (see [Section 2.9](#) for further details).
8. If you have been unsuccessful, you will receive information in your feedback report detailing what you have to resubmit.

2.8 Assessment outcomes

There are two possible assessment outcomes – successful and unsuccessful. A successful outcome means you have demonstrated that you have the required experience and meet all the competencies. If you are successful, you will be elected a Chartered Member. An unsuccessful outcome means that you have not yet met some or all of the competencies. An unsuccessful outcome is not a failure. You are being asked to provide additional information to demonstrate the relevant competencies.

You will receive a feedback report with your results. The report has a summary of your results on the front page and addresses each of the three parts of the submission separately. If you have been unsuccessful, the feedback report will explain the reasons for the outcome. Most importantly the report will give you direction on what you need to do to address the assessors' concerns with your submission. Depending on what you have been unsuccessful on, the assessors will request either a full resubmission of the relevant section or a supplementary statement. Resubmissions are sent to the same assessors who determined the outcome of the original application.

NOTE

If you are required to resubmit, you will not be reassessed on any part of the submission or competencies that have already been considered successful.

2.9 PDP support phase

The assessors may feel that your APC submission is successful, and that you have demonstrated your competence as a spatial planner, but there are elements of your PDP that could be improved. In this event, **you will be elected as a Chartered Member** and you will be required to work with the RTPI in a PDP support phase. You will be informed of this in your results letter and feedback report.

If this applies to you, once you have received your letter:

- you will be referred to the Professional Development Team who will be able to provide you with additional support and guidance;
- you will have one month to submit an updated PDP to the Professional Development Team, addressing the feedback from the assessors;
- once you have produced a successful PDP you will enter Continuing Professional Development (CPD) monitoring. This means that after two years you will be written to by the Professional Development Team and asked to submit:
 - i. Your current PDP
 - ii. PDPs for the two year period
 - iii. A CPD record showing 50 hours of CPD in the previous two year period.

CPD is a requirement under the Code of Professional Conduct. If you fail to submit a PDP or fail to comply with the RTPI's CPD monitoring request, this will constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

The PDP is an important part of being a reflective practitioner and the RTPI will support candidates to ensure they are able to produce high quality PDPs.

2.10 Resubmissions

If you have not met any or some of the competencies you will be asked to resubmit either the full section or provide a supplementary statement. If you are asked to submit a supplementary statement, you will return between 400 – 1,000 words at the assessors' discretion.

If you are asked to resubmit the full section, you should ensure that you maintain the overall word count. You will not be reassessed on any of the competencies that have been successful so you can place less emphasis on these competencies but the section must still make sense as a whole. If you wish to include a new case study for your resubmission please remember to get it corroborated and attach the corroboration letter. You do not need to update and resubmit your logbook, it would, however, strengthen your resubmission to do this if you are using a case study from experience gained since your last submission.

There are three deadlines a year for submitting resubmissions. You can check the latest resubmission deadlines and results dates on the [RTPI website](#).

You will have close to three weeks to resubmit any parts of your application that have not been considered adequate. If you feel you are unable to meet the assessors' recommendations in this period, you can wait for the next resubmission date. You may wait with your resubmission up to two years from the date of your original submission, after this period you will have to submit a new application with at least one recent case study and

updated log book. If the assessors request that you gain more experience before resubmitting you should not resubmit in the current round.

There is a £30 fee for each section of the submission that is to be reassessed (up to £90 maximum for the three sections). That is:

PES – £30

PCS – £30

PDP – £30

The £30 fee applies to each section, irrespective of the number of unsuccessful competencies within that section.

When resubmitting, you should clearly label the submitted files in the following convention:

Membership no – last name – resubmission – description of file (e.g. 00000 Smith resubmission PDP)

2.11 Appeals procedure

You have a right of appeal if you feel that you have reason to presume that the assessment of your submission was not carried out in a thorough and professional manner. You cannot appeal against the judgement of the assessors based solely on the outcome of the assessment. You need to provide evidence that you consider the outcome is based on a flawed assessment. Appeals must be made within 14 days of the date of your outcome letter and are considered by the Director of Professional Standards and Development.

An appeal will not be accepted unless the candidate has revised their application in light of the assessors' comments and resubmitted their APC documentation at least once. You cannot submit an appeal at the same time as a resubmission. If you appeal, you will have to wait until the outcome of the appeal before you resubmit.

Appeals must be sent for the attention of Head of Membership, RTPI, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL or emailed to membership.applications@rtpi.org.uk. An appeal statement must set out the grounds for appeal clearly, cross referenced to the submission. There is no word limit for an appeal statement. An appeal can take up to three months to process depending on the complexity of the issues.

Before making an appeal, candidates are encouraged to contact the Membership Team to discuss their circumstances. The Membership Team can be contacted directly on 020 7929 9462.

3. Format of the APC written submission

3.1 Structure

The submission should be broken down into the three sections:

- [Practical Experience Statement \(PES\)](#)
- [Professional Competence Statement \(PCS\)](#)
- [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#)

There are templates available on the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#) which show you how to set out your log book and PDP. Use of the PDP template is compulsory.

3.2 Professional standard

Candidates should ensure their submission is of a high professional standard. This is a demonstration of the quality of work you would submit professionally and should not be taken lightly.

You must check your submission to ensure:

- it does not contain spelling mistakes (spell check does not always give the right outcome so do not rely on it);
- the grammar and punctuation is correct;
- it is laid out clearly;
- it meets the guidelines on formatting as set out in [Section 3.3](#); and
- it is professionally presented.

Build time into your application process to ask someone to read your submission. Badly presented submissions are likely to be unsuccessful. This is well within your control and a hastily put together submission is not going to get you the outcome you want. Ask a non-planner to read your submission to see if they can understand what you do.

Your submission should be considered as a demonstration of your professionalism and should be to the same standard as your dissertation and a reflection of the standard of your work. This is a professional qualification and submissions that include inappropriate information, or breach confidentiality, are likely to be unsuccessful.

3.3 Presentation

The submission should be Word processed in Arial 11pt font and double spaced for easier reading. The submission should be in English and composed to a high professional standard. Referencing, where required, should be to the Harvard style (e.g. author, date). **Paragraphs and pages of your submission must be numbered.**

Please include your membership number on each page.

3.4 Reference to the log book

You should refer to entries in your log book to emphasise, clarify or elaborate upon an area of experience. When referring to experience in your log book, clearly indicate where the assessor can find the reference. Do not expect the assessor to search through the log book to corroborate your reference. Please note that referencing of the log book is not a way to overcome the word limit. Your log book should provide background information only – the key information and/or argument showing how you satisfy the relevant competency must be fully contained in the submission (e.g. in the Professional Competence Statement) itself.

Where you make reference to the log book, you should ensure the information is of the same standard as the rest of the submission, including standards of presentation and good written English. Pages of your log book should be numbered.

3.5 Additional materials

Licentiates are permitted to include illustrations in their written submission, though this is not a requirement. It is unlikely that more than two illustrations would be needed.

Appendices, including any additional materials including reports, cuttings or diagrams, are not permitted to accompany the written submission. Assessors will not base their decision on the examples of the Licentiate's professional work other than that described and reflected upon within the written submission and will not take into account opinions of a third party (manager appraisals, references, performance reports etc.).

3.6 Confidentiality, plagiarism and ethical consideration

You are required to demonstrate an appreciation of the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, and the APC submission should be written in the spirit of this Code. Therefore, you should be aware of professional confidentiality and ensure you have your employer's consent before disclosing any material that may be considered to be professionally sensitive. In the event that this consent cannot be obtained, you must either omit or disguise this information by anonymising names and locations.

You should avoid specifically naming colleagues or other professionals, regardless of whether this is in a positive or negative light. If that proves to be difficult please contact the Membership Team to seek advice. All submissions are treated as confidential and our assessors are bound by a confidentiality agreement.

Your submission must be all your own work. In the event that a candidate is found to have plagiarised, appropriate action will be taken by the Membership Team.

3.7 Word count

The word limit for APC submissions is 5,500 words +/-10% (i.e. 4,950 – 6,050 words). The submission itself is indicative of the Licentiate's research, analysis and report writing skills. You should include the word count at the end of each section of the submission. The log book is excluded from word limitation.

The submission should be divided, approximately, in the following proportions:

PES – 1,000 words
PCS – 3,000 words
PDP – 1,500 words

Write the word count for each section after the final paragraph. Exceeding the word limit will result in delay and possible rejection of your submission so please double check the word count before sending the submission.

3.8 Footnotes

Footnotes are not included in the word count. However, if you over use footnotes primarily to increase your word count, you will be asked to review. It is unlikely that competencies demonstrated only or predominantly in footnotes will be deemed successful.

4. The APC mentor

4.1 The purpose of the mentor

Though not compulsory, mentoring can form an integral part of the APC process. A mentor can help you get the most out of your experiential learning and will provide you with additional support during the Licentiate period.

Mentoring schemes have well documented benefits for the recipient, the mentor and the organisation as a whole. Benefits include:

- having advice that is tailored specifically to your own needs;
- assistance in progressing towards the APC;
- increased networking opportunities;
- the opportunity to develop skills and competencies at a faster rate through increased self-reflection and guidance;
- greater encouragement to take responsibility for one's own personal development;
- increased confidence and empowerment to drive one's own career.

4.2 Finding a mentor

It is your responsibility to find a mentor as this is part of your professional development. The first place to look is in your own work environment. Many Licentiates ask their supervisor to assist them. This may, however, create problems for both you and your manager. The mentoring relationship is a confidential one and there may be things about your development that you do not want to discuss with your manager. It also means they may read between the lines when reviewing your submission, unlike someone who is more removed from your daily role (who would be more similar to the assessors).

Many people have a stereotypical view of a mentor, assuming they need to approach a very senior person in their organisation. This is not necessarily so. Your mentor could be colleague at your level who has completed the APC in a recent round. Ask around your organisation. If you are in a large organisation, your Human Resources team might be able to help you find a mentor.

Other avenues for finding a mentor include:

- networking through RTPI networks or forums;
- networking at RTPI regional or national events;
- speaking to fellow graduates in other organisations; or
- contacting large planning organisations.

In some cases, such as where a candidate is working overseas, the RTPI will try to help with the search. While access to a mentor is very useful and desirable, it is not a compulsory element of the Licentiate route to the APC.

There are resources on the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#) to support mentors, including a Mentor Advice Note.

You do not have to register your mentor with the RTPI or register a change of mentor. Your mentor does not have to be Chartered.

Current APC assessors are not able to act as mentors, nor comment on specific APC applications, though they can give general advice on the APC process and principles, as well as general careers advice.

4.3 What your mentor will do

Mentors fulfil a variety of different roles in relation to the individual with whom they are paired. At any one time the mentor might be a coach, a counsellor, a facilitator of networking opportunities, or simply a friend. The relationship will differ between each mentor and Licentiate, however, mentors will generally:

- make themselves available to provide advice and support you either face-to-face, by email or over the phone;
- attend meetings with you at mutually agreed times;
- offer advice in setting specific and measurable objectives;
- offer guidance on recording experience in the log book;
- offer guidance on the production of a PDP;
- offer advice, where appropriate, on the final written assessment;
- help you bridge the gap between your initial education and future professional experience in practice;
- guide you towards becoming more critically reflective of your own practice and progress;
- give you support and advice on professional and professionally-related matters.

Confidentiality is central to the mentoring process.

5. Capturing your experience: the log book

5.1 Why is the log book important?

Your log book forms a fundamental part of the learning and reflection that will develop your competence as a professional planner. While it is not formally assessed, the log book will form the foundation of your written submission and will therefore require a certain amount of commitment.

The log book is important for several reasons:

- **It will make your written submission easier and quicker to prepare.** It will be much quicker if you have done most of the required thinking over the course of your time as a Licentiate, rather than trying to draw on experiences and learning outcomes at the end of the period. Your log book will form the basis of your written submission and should be an accurate record of the experience you have gained during the Licentiate period.
- **It requires you to critically reflect on your work.** Critical reflection is the process of reviewing and analysing your performance and decisions to evaluate their effectiveness and lead you to a practice of life-long learning. To get the full benefit from keeping the log book, you should continually reflect on the work that you have undertaken and on the way in which this has contributed to the development of your professional competence.
- **It will help you identify if you are achieving the required competencies.** You should use your log book to highlight any particular experience that goes towards demonstrating the competencies. This will assist you when you come to select appropriate case studies to use in your submission.
- **It will help the assessors see the professional behind the text.** The log book may be used by the assessors to gain more information about the work you have done and the case studies you reference. The assessors have been known to make a final decision based on a Licentiate's log book.

5.2 Log book requirements

You must submit a log book that covers a minimum of **12 months**⁵ (full-time equivalent) recent experience whilst a Licentiate Member. Experience prior to becoming a Licentiate does not need to be logged.

Candidates who have let their Licentiate membership lapse must submit six months of log book from the date of their re-election, in addition to their previous log books.

⁵Please note that although you only need to submit a log book covering 12 months of your experience as a Licentiate Member, you must have a minimum of 24 months' (full-time equivalent) experience to be eligible for the APC.

5.3 Preparing your log book

The log book should be completed regularly and should contain four key elements:

- description of the nature of professional work/task undertaken;
- competency/skill development;
- knowledge/understanding gained;
- future development of skills/knowledge.

Some Licentiates prefer to complete the log book fortnightly or monthly, while others prefer to update their log book after completion of a task or project. Updating the log book after a large task can make it more difficult to manage and you may be in danger of missing out important sections of your work that you may want to refer to in your APC submission.

Your log book should cover any projects and competencies you reference in your submission. It is essential that you do not simply record work or time; though it may be useful to assist in completing any such requirements by your employer (see [Section 5.4](#)).

Your log book can either be process-led where you include an overview of all your workload with some examples in detail. Alternatively it can be project-led where you cover one or two projects in greater detail. Either way, it must cover the full period and recording must be regular.

It is important that Licentiates improve skills and knowledge together, whether it be through CPD activity or practical experience gained through on the job training. This leads to professional competence. Knowledge refers to learning concepts, principles and information (i.e. theory). Skill refers to the ability of using that information and applying it in a context. In other words, knowledge refers to theory and skill refers to successfully applying that theory in practice. **Skills + knowledge = competence**

Some guidance on what is required in each of the components is provided in [Section 5.5](#).

5.4 The APC log book in the workplace

You may already be keeping a work record or time log as a requirement of your employer. The APC log book should not require work to be duplicated. However, the APC log should include critical reflection on the work undertaken, not simply a work record; and you should ensure that this element is included. You may wish to discuss with your employer or with your mentor how the two requirements can best complement one another.

You should use your log book to assist you at appraisals and to help build your CV. It is a valuable career development tool.

5.5 Log book template outline with guidance notes

The RTPI provides a simple template for your log book which you can download from the [RTPI website](#). It is recommended that you use this as it ensures you cover each of the required elements. Using a work-based template may save you time, but it is unlikely to have a focus on critical reflection which may cause you difficulties when you come to complete your submission.



Nature of Professional Work/Task Undertaken	What skills/competencies has this work developed?	What knowledge/ understanding has been gained/developed as a result of this work?	What skills/knowledge do you feel you need to develop?
<p><i>This column should be a factual note of the spatial planning or spatial planning-related work undertaken. Do not make the headings too generic. Providing more detail will allow you to explore what you have learned. In many log books, it is possible to see the improvement in reflection as candidates put more detail in the nature of the work. For example, you might consider expanding ‘Site Visit’ to include ‘conducting an inspection, recording and identifying relevant data, considering local impacts and evaluating the importance of neighbour representations received’.</i></p> <p><i>Expanding the description of the task also helps to avoid repetition. You might be managing a number of development applications, and providing more information about each one you can reflect more clearly on how each new application contributed to your knowledge and skills, how they differed and how you applied what you learned from one set of circumstance to the next situation.</i></p> <p><i>Try to select interesting examples that have challenged you in skill or knowledge development, or have produced contentious issues to be resolved. This also demonstrates a good understanding of the issues surrounding each experience.</i></p>	<p><i>In this column you should consider the type and level of skills utilised or obtained in order to undertake a particular task.</i></p> <p><i>Skill refers to successfully applying theory in practice and getting expected results.</i></p> <p><i>Describe skills at a suitably detailed level rather than at a broad generic level. For example, Licentiates often refer to improving their communication skills. Consider the context in which the skills are being developed. Ask yourself questions such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Was the communication written or oral?</i> • <i>Was it undertaken in an adversarial climate?</i> • <i>Were you involved in further negotiation as a result?</i> • <i>What worked and what didn’t?</i> <p><i>The more insightful the questions, the more effective the reflection will be.</i></p> <p><i>One example of how you might explain good communication skills: ‘I had to liaise with the case officer to obtain up-to-date information – using telephone and email effectively. I drafted an application response and learned the importance of clear, succinct writing. I also learned how to raise objections in a positive and helpful way, providing guidance on what needed to be done to advance the application’.</i></p>	<p><i>In this column you should reflect on the knowledge/understanding you acquired or developed as a result of the activity.</i></p> <p><i>Some experiences may lead you to readjust the knowledge you have.</i></p> <p><i>Some examples of knowledge you might gain include: knowledge of relevant policies or legislation, knowledge of the RTPI Code of Conduct, or knowledge of political issues/framework.</i></p>	<p><i>In this column you are required to reflect on the work you have undertaken and identify potential training and development needs.</i></p> <p><i>Reflective practice is “the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (Schön 1983).</i></p> <p><i>You should be honest about your weaknesses and areas for development. Ask yourself questions such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What aspects of the task did I find difficult or challenging?</i> • <i>In the future, how could I alter my practice and/or methods to deliver a better outcome for this task?</i> <p><i>Candidates should identify areas for development for each log book entry. Your mentor may be able to help you identify these if you are having trouble.</i></p> <p><i>Assessors will also expect to see how a record about a future development is referenced in future log entries – how the skills were acquired and developed.</i></p> <p><i>There should be strong linkages between the log book and your PDP.</i></p>



What are relevant professional planning skills?

Your experience should help you develop skills and competencies relevant to spatial planning. The following list provides some guidance of the type of skills that your experience could be directed towards developing. It has been drawn from RTPI educational policy documents, and from the government document *Skills for Sustainable Communities* which was contributed to by the RTPI.

Some examples of relevant skills are described in the table below.

<p>Creative vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing creative and innovative strategies and solutions. • Making lateral connections. • Aesthetic and design awareness and critique. 	<p>Collaborative and multidisciplinary working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working - engaging with all professionals employed in the creation of sustainable communities and the built environment. • Creating an environment where information is shared. • Effective networking.
<p>Project management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining objectives. • Delivering - making it happen given constraints. • Resource management, including financial and personnel management and use of information technology. • Process management and evaluation. 	<p>Professionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating the characteristics of a reflective practitioner, and an ability to learn from prior practice. • Upholding standards of ethical behaviour. • Commitment to lifelong learning and maintaining professional competence.
<p>Problem solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem definition. • Data-collection, investigation and research. • Quantitative and qualitative analysis and appraisal. • Weighing evidence and evaluation of alternative solutions. • Decision making. • Mediating between the different requirements and expectations of other professionals, consultees and stakeholders, clients and regulators, communities and lobbying groups to deliver an equitable planning solution. 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written, oral, graphic and multi-media communication. • Listening actively. • Using appropriate communication methods tailored to the audience. • Managing misinformation. • Internal communication and information sharing. • Community involvement and facilitation. • Understanding and accommodating the role of various types of media.
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring and motivating others at all levels. • Leading by example – displaying enthusiasm, tenacity, flexibility and self-motivation. • Embracing and leading through change. • People and organisational management. • Coaching and mentoring. 	<p>Stakeholder management & conflict resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying stakeholders and customers, and awareness of how these groups can change. • Relationship building. • Negotiation, mediation and advocacy. • Understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to achieve mutual agreement. • Demonstrating the ethics of good practice, including respect, tolerance, confidentiality and honesty.

5.6 Log book examples

Example of good log book entries

The following example is a good, detailed, entry which clearly outlines the Licentiate's role and the rationale behind the work including past problems. The Licentiate has been able to explain the new skills and knowledge developed within the context of each piece of work and has managed to draw out specific areas for improvement.

Nature of Professional Work/Task Undertaken	What skills/competencies has this work developed?	What knowledge/ understanding has been gained/developed as a result of this work?	What skills/knowledge do you feel you need to develop?
<p>Planning Future Service Provision in (Location) seminar – I organised this event as part of my role is to coordinate responses from internal service providers to borough Local Plan and now LDF consultations. In the past it has been difficult to extract information from these providers and opportunities for DCC services to benefit from development have been missed. At the start of the new era of spatial planning we explained the new system and how and why service providers should get involved right from the start. DCC service providers and DC Planning Policy Officers were invited. Themed group meetings will be set up to deal with the service provider's more detailed aspirations for the County and individual districts for input to LDFs.</p>	<p>Creating an environment where information is shared between County Council and District Councils (two way process), effective networking, partnership working, improving internal communication, identifying customers.</p>	<p>Greater understanding of the views and issues other service providers have, greater knowledge of the way they can input to this new system and how planning can bring service providers together to create better services for the public.</p>	<p>Negotiation, mediation and advocacy, ongoing communication with these groups.</p>
<p>Planning history search and letter of advice to a client in relation to forthcoming proposals for an extended foodstore in city centre. The proposals have the potential to have a damaging effect on our client's consented proposal for a retail development nearby.</p>	<p><i>Problem solving skills</i> – by identifying the relevant planning applications within the planning history and projecting what the forthcoming planning application may comprise, and researching the planning policy position.</p> <p><i>Communication skills</i> – by preparing the letter of advice and giving oral advice to the client.</p>	<p>An understanding of the planning history attached to the foodstore identified and knowledge gained on how any forthcoming proposals may have a detrimental impact on competing retail developments nearby.</p>	<p>Need to give both written advice to clients to improve by competency and confidence.</p>

Example of poor log book entries

The following example reflects many of the poor practices in putting together a log book. Fortunately, this is not a genuine example of a log book, but has been put together to include many areas of bad practice that Licentiates should seek to avoid.

Nature of Professional Work/Task Undertaken	What skills/competencies has this work developed?	What knowledge/understanding has been gained/developed as a result of this work?	What skills/knowledge do you feel you need to develop?
Processing planning applications	Research, delivering – making it happen, communication	Planning Law	Further knowledge of planning law
Regional CPD event – Development Control	Effective networking	Knowledge of development control policies	To apply information from CPD event to my daily employment
Contacted consultant with regard to listed building regulations	Research – finding a consultant; communication skills	The limits of my own responsibility for specialist applications	More knowledge of listed building regulations
Site visits	Data collection, investigation and research; quantitative and qualitative analysis and appraisal	That it is useful to have first hand knowledge of a site involved in an application	None – successfully achieved all elements
Answering telephone calls from the public	Negotiation, mediation and advocacy; relationship building; ethics of good practice	Knowledge of the relevant areas of planning law	Telephone skills
Preparation and submission of representations objecting to a draft SPD relating to developer contributions at the borough council.	<i>Problem solving skills</i> – via the research and collection of data in relation to the draft SPD. <i>Communication skills</i> – via the preparation of written representations in the form of a letter to the Local Authority.	Knowledge of the written form required for the submission of written representations.	Further practice of submitting representations to improve my competency and efficiency.

In the examples on the previous page, the headings are too general, and don't give the Licentiate an opportunity to explore the different skills and knowledge that might be related to each case. Greater detail on the specifics of each application/type of application might be more useful, as this would give greater opportunity to explore what they have learned.

Relevant knowledge development might cover applicable areas of planning law etc. but it is the **specifics** that will be most helpful.

Licentiates should avoid simply listing the competencies from the APC guidance but rather use these competencies as a guide for what skills might have been developed. Key themes (e.g. communication, research) seem to occur repetitively, but a more careful reflection on the exact nature of the skill involved will alleviate this. For example, did the communication take place in writing or orally? How was written communication produced? Was there any antagonism when communicated orally? This might then lead to another key theme of negotiation.

Within your log book, it is essential that you:

- use page numbering;
- include your membership number on each page; and
- date your entries.

5.7 Style

There are no restrictions on the style you use for your log book. Make the style something that you are comfortable with rather than using a format that you think an external reader may prefer. You may prefer bullet points or be happier with a more conversational style as in the example below.

One example of conversational style: 'I was also reminded once again of the importance of the pre-application advice, this was an instance where the XXXX had given misleading and inconsistent advice, leading to an awkward path for the application and a difficult situation for me'.

5.8 Submitting your log book

The log book is a stand-alone document excluded from word count limit, it is not assessed but it supports your submission. It should not include extraneous materials such as cuttings, plans etc. It should note clearly where extended breaks in experience have occurred that are not associated with standard annual leave or occasional sickness.

The log book should be sent to the RTPI as a Word document or PDF file along with the submission and will be used to support an assessment of whether the work experience conforms to the RTPI's practical experience requirements. The written submission may refer to the log book for detailed examples of particular types of work undertaken.

Some log books will become quite a large file. If you need to save your log book in several files please make sure the title of the file includes to and from dates. The easier you make it for the assessors to find something in your log book, the more likely they are to consider it.

6. Practical Experience Statement (PES)

This is the first of the three sections of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 1,000 words.

6.1 The purpose of the PES

In this section, you are providing an overview of your minimum 24 months' eligible experience and you must demonstrate that you have the right amount of experience at a suitable professional level. 'Professional level' is broadly defined as exercising independent professional judgement to make decisions or influence outcomes. It is generally accepted that most new graduates will have some experience at a junior level, however, the assessors expect to see a **progression** in responsibility and accountability.

Candidates with the bare minimum of experience are often unable to demonstrate that they have worked at an appropriate level over the 24 months or more of eligible experience. In these cases, candidates are usually asked to wait another three months before resubmitting. It is best to make a professional judgement yourself about your experience.

The PES is used to assess whether you have undertaken sufficient practical experience at a relevant professional level to justify your election to Chartered status. It must cover all your experience as a Licentiate, as well as any relevant experience prior to the Licentiate period, and be current up to a month prior to your submission.

6.2 How to structure the PES

In the PES, you need to describe the planning experience that you have gained over the period of practical experience. You should provide comprehensive coverage in chronological order. For each position you have held, the statement must include:

- the name and type of employer;
- the nature of the business (mainstream planning, local planning authority, multi-disciplinary practice etc.);
- the size of the organisation and where you sit within the organisation;
- your own job description: a summary of the main role and responsibilities, including any line management responsibility;
- the nature of the work you undertook in the role; and
- dates and time periods covered.

The PES must focus specifically on your **own** professional responsibilities. It is a factual description of roles and responsibilities and does not need to focus on competencies. Where you have been involved in group tasks or projects, you must describe your own role and responsibilities and how you personally contributed to the project as a whole. It is not expected that you will have been managing entire projects or been involved in a project in its entirety. Some projects you have been involved in may not have reached completion when you are finalising your submission.

You need to describe the type of spatial planning work that you undertook. If your job has changed or evolved within a single organisation over the period of practical experience, you should clearly indicate this. If some of your experience was gained in areas that were not solely planning related, you need to estimate the proportion of your time that was devoted to spatial planning responsibilities.



NOTE

If you do not clearly articulate what **you** did in your roles, you may be asked for a supplementary statement or to resubmit a section of your submission which will delay your election. Spending the time defining your contribution in the PES will make preparing your PCS easier.

Your PES must show that you have **gained a minimum of 24 months'** full-time relevant spatial planning experience.

6.3 What do the assessors look for in the PES?

The assessors will use this part of the submission to determine whether you have the right amount and the right type of experience. Assessors may disregard parts of your experience if:

- you only describe the function of your organisation or department rather than the work you have done;
- they have difficulty identifying what part of the work outlined was done by you;
- you have described roles that are predominantly administrative or managerial and not spatial planning;
- they feel a significant proportion of your work is more aligned to another aspect of the built environment such as surveying or architecture; or
- they are not convinced you have gained the minimum 24 months' full-time spatial planning experience.

If you are concerned that your experience is not sufficiently robust to meet the minimum 24 months' professional level spatial planning experience, you may prefer to wait until you have more solid experience before you submit your APC. Please see [Section 1.4](#) and [Section 1.5](#) for more information on experience eligibility.

7. Professional Competence Statement (PCS)

This is the second section of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 3,000 words.

7.1 The purpose of the PCS

Planners rarely encounter standard problems needing standard solutions and it is thus the ability to learn in a reflective manner, through taking action, that is the hallmark of the true professional. A reflective practitioner grows and develops through experience and you must demonstrate that you are now working at a higher level of responsibility and able to make more professional judgements than you did when you completed your education.

All planners operating at a professional level must be able to critically assess a problem, research the issues and select an appropriate response after considering a number of options. This work is undertaken in an environment complicated by multiple stakeholders with different expectations, complex legal guidelines and political objectives.

In the PCS, you must demonstrate that you are a reflective professional and a competent spatial planner. You are not only trying to show what skills you have, you are trying to show that you learn and grow in your work by thinking about the context in which you operate, you are aware of the factors that impact on your work and that you can analyse and criticise your work to understand how you have developed and how you can improve your performance. It is not only about what you did, but also **why you did** it in a particular way and **how you went about it**.

One of the main errors Licentiates make in this section is to be **too descriptive** and **not sufficiently analytical/reflective**.

There are 11 competencies in total that you will need to demonstrate in the PCS. Information on how to demonstrate each competency can be found in [Section 7.3](#).

IMPORTANT

Do not treat your submission in the same way you would frame a job application. They are not the same. You are expected to be **analytical and critical** of your performance, of the environment in which you operate, of the processes you have used and of the outcomes you have achieved. You are to demonstrate what you have learned and how you have become a better planner as a result of that experience. You must also demonstrate your personal professional contribution to the tasks you describe.

7.2 Using case studies

The PCS is not simply an extended PES. You are expected to go into considerably more detail through the use of case studies and you should:

- **Use between one and three case studies to demonstrate you have met all the competencies.** The most effective way to demonstrate your professional competence is by discussing one to three case studies or projects drawn from your experience over the minimum 24 months covered by your submission. Identify which aspects of your experience demonstrate each of the competencies outlined in [Section 7.3](#). In some projects, you may have had a major role in researching and monitoring and in another you may have dealt extensively with other professionals or with a complex group of stakeholders. Alternatively, you may have been involved in one project which required you to use all your skills. Carefully select your case studies and determine how you will divide the word limit.
- **Use your log book to identify case studies.** If you have maintained your log book effectively you will already have most of the material for your submission. Go through the log book with your mentor or line manager and a list of the competencies. Look for projects in which you demonstrated some of the competencies. For example, look for work you undertook that involved gathering and analysing information or evaluating options. Your log book should contain your reflections at the time and provide valuable analysis.
- **Explain how you used your professional judgement in your case studies to contribute to outcomes.** You should not expect the assessors to presume anything from the tasks you describe in your PCS. Consider your decision making process and how you approached the task in question. The PCS is not only about what you did, but also why and how you achieved it.
- **Use language that shows your contribution in moving the case study forward.** Use language such as: “I contributed to this by...”; “I was responsible for...”; “this project helped me to understand...” or “the tensions resulted in...” “this was a challenge for me because...” or “as a result of changing circumstances, I...”. Please note that the use of language such as “we decided...” or “the project team agreed...” or “the decision agreed in the meeting was...” **does not** demonstrate your own role.

NOTE

While your case studies should be self-sufficient and self-explanatory, you should also cross reference your case studies to the relevant entries in your log book. This provides the assessor with more information should he/she wish to clarify something. There should be strong linkages between all the elements of the submission.

Keep in mind that:

- **You should not structure your submission around the competencies.** You will not be able to present an effective submission if you adopt a tick-box approach using a short example of how you met each competency or if you use the competencies as sub-headings. The competencies are interrelated and describe what you would do to manage an activity within the planning environment.
- **You do not need to only use case studies where the outcome was successful or where your decisions and actions were successful.** It can sometimes be easier to show reflective thinking when something went wrong (e.g. when the application was not approved). The assessors are not judging you on the outcome of the case study project but on your discussion of it.
- **You are not being judged on the size of your case study.** It is better to choose a smaller case study where you have had considerable involvement and input, over a larger case study where your contribution may have been limited.

One way to structure a case study is to include the following elements:

- problem definition – briefly describe the issue and provide enough background to provide the assessors with the context of the situation;
- the challenges and issues that arose and how you addressed them; and
- a conclusion which summarises what you learned from the experience and how it relates to the competencies.

NOTE

You should ensure your submission only refers to information in the public domain and does not breach professional confidentiality. Your submission should not refer to individuals by name or make references which could make individuals easily identifiable.

7.3 The APC competencies

Your PCS will be assessed against 11 competencies which are all equally important and integral to being a Chartered Town Planner. The competencies are interrelated and linked to one another.

Whilst all competencies need to be demonstrated to a high standard, the RTPI recognises that some Licentiates may only have the minimum 24 months' eligible experience. The Institute has therefore provided clarity to candidates on the minimum type of evidence you are required to demonstrate for each competency. Some candidates will have achieved more in their career and are encouraged to demonstrate this.

The definitions below explain the different types of evidence required to demonstrate the competencies. The types of evidence required range from 'understanding' to 'core' and are defined below:

1. **Understanding** – Demonstration of how the competency applies to your case study from a theoretical or observational viewpoint. Whilst your personal experience of the competency is not essential, your understanding of how and why the competency applies to your case study should be apparent.
2. **Application** – Demonstration of how the competency applies to your case study from a personal practical viewpoint. Your personal experience and evidence of depth of knowledge of the competency are essential.
3. **Core** – Demonstration of how the competency is integral to your actions as a professional planner. This is more than just the application of your knowledge, it should be core to how you operate and be imbedded throughout your case study.

For each competency there is an accompanying descriptor, guidance statement and prompts to aid your thinking. The descriptor defines the competency, the guidance statement explains how to demonstrate the competency and the prompts are an indication of how you will be assessed. For more information on each competency, please see Sections C.1 to C.11.

You must demonstrate all competencies to be successfully recommended for election. Please note, if you use more than one case study, you do not need to demonstrate all of the competencies in all of the case studies. You are free to select those case studies you consider best demonstrate your achievements.

The assessors will assess your PCS against each of the competencies ensuring that you have demonstrated the **minimum** type of evidence required stated below:

Competency	Type of evidence
C1. Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct	Core
C2. The spatial planning context	Application
C3. Identifying and analysing issues	Application
C4. Gathering appropriate information	Application
C5. Identifying and evaluating a course of action	Application
C6. Initiating and implementing a course of action or (for academic applications) dissemination and application of knowledge (research experience)	Application
C7. The legal framework	Understanding
C8. Ethical challenges	Understanding
C9. The political framework	Understanding
C10. The economic context	Understanding
C11. Reflection and review	Core

C1. Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct (Core)

Descriptor

Chartered membership of the RTPI is the gold standard for planning practice. The highest levels of professionalism should be exhibited by professional planners. In line with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, Chartered Members should demonstrate their commitment to good practice, including respect, tolerance, confidentiality and honesty.

Part of being a professional includes liaising and cooperating with others and may require the use of different communication methods tailored to the audience. This should come through in recognising the need to act in the public interest. Members should also show an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusive planning in all their activity. Negotiation, mediation, influence and advocacy are also key attributes.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency, professionalism and adherence to the Code of Professional Conduct must be evident throughout your case study. You must also provide a specific example in at least one of your case studies as to how the Code of Professional Conduct applies to your work. You should evidence a clear sense of professional responsibility for your own actions and how your performance impacts on others. This may be in relation to conflict of interest, disclosure, professional conduct, discrimination, fees or any other issue covered by the Code of Professional Conduct.

For example, you might show an understanding of equality and diversity by explaining how you adapted a consultation process. Or if you work in the public sector, you might explain how you responded to a request to represent the council at an appeal following a refusal against your recommendation.

Just mentioning the Code without explaining the context and its implications will not result in a successful application. While demonstration of this competency may overlap with other competencies (in particular ethical challenges), you are still expected to demonstrate this competency separately.

Please remember, professionalism also relates to the standard of your submission and quality of your work as set out in [Section 3.2](#). This will be formally assessed under 'general presentation'.

Prompts

- Have you demonstrated professional characteristics including the importance of upholding the highest standards of behaviour?
- Have you demonstrated how the Code of Professional Conduct impacts on your work in professional practice and why it is important?
- Is this competency integral to your approach throughout your case study?

C2. The spatial planning context (Application)

Descriptor

The work planners do will impact on other professionals, have wider spatial implications and will affect a number of stakeholders. Professional planners need to have an understanding of the broader environment in which they work and an appreciation of the frameworks within which they operate. Planners also need to understand the inter-relationships that operate across national, regional, sub-regional and local spatial scales; as well as an ability to focus on site specific issues where appropriate.

Spatial planning (i.e. managing competing uses for space and creating places valued by people) embraces regeneration, urban design, community or neighbourhood planning, transport planning, environmental planning, economic development and many more specialist planning activities.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you should reflect on how your work relates to local communities, the natural environment, the profession and other professionals. You should also demonstrate your understanding of the spatial element of planning and the relationship between a site or area and the surrounding areas, and how this relates to other local and strategic activities such as infrastructure provision.

For example, you might explain the impact of your project on planners in other sectors, or other built environment professionals and how you engaged with them. Or you might explain how you gave consideration to broader spatial planning issues such as environmental, social, economic or design issues and inclusive planning; or explain how community input affected a project. You might explain how you considered issues beyond traditional land-use planning such as inequalities in health, education and access, energy policy, urban design or the rural economy.

Prompts

- Have you set the scene and background for your case study succinctly?
- Have you identified the stakeholders and who was affected by your decisions? Who did you need to consult and why?
- Have you explained how you considered broader spatial planning issues when making decisions?

C3. Identifying and analysing issues (Application)

Descriptor

A professional planner is rarely presented with a problem with clearly defined issues. Planners should therefore be able to identify and analyse problems and challenges themselves rather than under instruction from others.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you must show how you used your judgement to identify and analyse issues within your case study. You need to demonstrate effective research, analytical, evaluative and appraisal skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions.

For example, you may want to think about any technical, administrative/procedural, political, legal, ethical or other factors you took into consideration as part of your case study. You must clearly explain what the issues were, how you weighed them up and how this affected the direction of your case study in question.

It is vital that you explain your thinking here and do not rely simply on a narrative of what the team or department did during a project. If you are using a team example, give a critical analysis of how the project was undertaken, how you approached your role in this and what factors you personally considered.

Prompts

- Have you clearly explained the process you used to define the problem and how you considered it?
- Have you demonstrated your personal contribution in defining the problem?
- Have you explained what critical factors you took into account and why they were relevant?

C4. Gathering appropriate information (Application)

Descriptor

The decisions a professional planner makes can have a significant impact on individuals and whole communities. To make good decisions, planners need to have the right information to hand and a robust evidence base to draw on.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show how you engaged in a range of information gathering strategies within your case study, whether desk or site based. You should demonstrate that you are capable of reviewing relevant information and can articulate why the methodologies were appropriate to the case in question.

For example, you might explain what data sources were available for a project – such as plans, statistics, demographics, site visits, and public consultations or desktop research. You could also explain why you used particular research methods and not others; whether there were difficulties you had to overcome; how you analysed and assessed the information you gathered and the impact it had on your project.

Prompts

- Have you demonstrated more than one information gathering strategy?
- Have you demonstrated how you weigh up and evaluate information?
- Have you analysed the appropriateness of certain information gathered and the strategies used?

C5. Identifying and evaluating a course of action (Application)

Descriptor

It is important that a professional planner has the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions and to appraise all options with potential solutions in mind. Once planners have a full understanding of a project, supported by appropriate information, they will begin to develop plans or recommendations to address the issues and to achieve the outcomes they are looking for.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you should briefly outline the solutions you considered and then explain **why** you chose a certain course of action. You should also articulate the thought processes that supported the selection of a particular course of action, explain how you evaluated the alternatives and reflected on the relative merits of your plan of action in the immediate and wider spatial planning context; and explain the rationale for rejecting other strategies.

If you were not responsible for the overall direction of the project, you should demonstrate how the tasks that were directly in your control contributed to the overall outcome.

Prompts

- Have you identified and evaluated more than one possible course of action?
- Have you clearly articulated your thought process and explained why you chose the course of action you did?
- Have you explained why you rejected the alternatives?
- Have you explained how you used your professional judgment in this situation?

C6. Initiating and implementing a course of action or, for academic applications, dissemination and application of knowledge (Application)

Descriptor

The practice of good spatial planning requires clear thinking, reflection on the available evidence base, determination of appropriate solutions and strong project management skills to ensure delivery. This includes the ability to understand and communicate the link from researching and evaluating options, to implementing solutions in a proactive and professional manner.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you will need to outline in detail your own role in actually implementing a project or activity and the extent of your responsibilities.

This competency aims to appraise how you put ideas into practice, what steps you have taken to realise delivery and how you communicated the proposed solution. The particular course of action or strategic direction could have been determined by senior management, politicians or a client. What we are seeking, however, is how you take responsibility for its implementation.

For example, you might describe a situation where you engaged with other built environment professionals to seek their input; negotiated agreements or mediated between stakeholders and developed relationships. You could also explain a situation where you took recommendations back to the client and explained their implications, faced any particular barriers or objections to your original course of action or responded to issues arising from consultation.

Prompts

- Have you explained why the action was necessary?
- At what point was your involvement critical to the success of the issue at hand?
- How did you keep track of activities and ensure critical paths were achieved?
- What were your or others' objectives in implementing the course of action?
- Given the resources, what options were available or were there any constraints to delivery?
- How did you achieve the objectives by working with others?

C7. The legal framework (Understanding)

Descriptor

Planning operates in a highly regulated environment. Over time, there have been different proposals for reform to planning in different administrations within the UK and beyond. However, even when Planning Acts have been passed, it is often the case that changes happen on an incremental basis, when legal judgements are made by the courts, or policy is revised by central or local government. A successful planner must therefore ensure their understanding of the legal framework is current.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of the legal framework within which you operate and how it can impact on your work. It is not sufficient to simply state the title of a relevant Act or other statute in your submission to demonstrate this competency.

Instead, you need to show that you understand the implications of the law on your case study. You will need to demonstrate you understand the decisions that have been made and actions taken in the context of the legal framework you must operate within.

For example, you might explain how you have been involved in the delivery of, or have delivered yourself, a planning solution that met relevant statutory and regulatory requirements. You might also explain what you had to do to understand and, if necessary, translate for others, certain legal requirements; and any changes that needed to be made as a result.

Prompts

- Have you demonstrated how a relevant Act or other statute informed your approach to the case study?
- Have you explained the purpose of the specific legislation within the context of your case study?

C8. Ethical challenges (Understanding)

Descriptor

The nature of planning work means that professional planners are faced with ethical challenges. They must understand and act appropriately given the sometimes conflicting requirements of their employer, the needs of the individuals affected, the collective needs of the community and their own personal views. All planners need to understand how to behave in situations where their ethical and moral behaviours are tested.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of ethical challenges and how these can impact on your work. You should either consider a situation where you have observed and reflected on, or have experienced, an ethical challenge within your work and have acted appropriately. Ethical behaviour is, of course, closely aligned with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct and professionalism but it is also a very distinctive trait of the accomplished practitioner and one which builds trust in the individual. You do not necessarily need to reference the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct for this competency.

You may want to consider a situation where you had to balance your personal and professional views and navigate the situation using purely your professional judgement. Most importantly, you need to explain why this was an ethical dilemma for you and how you overcame the problem.

For example, it could be a situation where you or a colleague has been asked to disregard the outcome of a consultation process or ignore a consultation response; or may have been offered a personal inducement to support a particular outcome on a planning application. Or how might you deal with a situation where you uncover technical errors in your line manager's work prior to client submission/committee approval?

Prompts

- Have you clearly explained why the situation you observed or experienced was an ethical challenge for you?
- Have you explained how your personal views came into conflict, or could come into conflict, with your work?
- Have you explained how the situation was resolved?
- If you observed, rather than experienced a situation relating to your case study, have you explained what you would have done if you were in that situation?

C9. The political framework (Understanding)

Descriptor

The planning process and its outcomes often come under scrutiny, nationally and locally, on account of the level and range of impact and what it can achieve. New jobs, additional housing, or an alternative use for a plot of land whose openness is valued by members of a community are examples of this. Whilst professional planners apply technical skills to inform judgements, ultimately, they have to balance a range of conflicting demands in the use of land, including differences between varying public opinions. Consequently, any practitioner should see the need for a clear and ongoing understanding of the political framework in which planning operates.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of the political environment within which you operate and how this can impact on your work. This does not simply mean engagement with elected officials but you should refer to the role and impact of the political framework that can influence and shape planning policy and its outcomes. You should show an understanding of how particular influences on your organisation and on the case study you have been involved in, may have affected the outcome. The public profile of your organisation and relative impact of its activities might also be a factor for consideration.

For example, you might explain a situation where you had to weigh up local concerns or reservations, perhaps contrary to wider national or regional policy. Or you might explain how you might adapt an argument to suit a particular political audience.

Prompts

- Have you explained the political nature of the area of planning you have been working in?
- Have you explained how planners, and you in particular, work effectively within this structure?
- Have you demonstrated how the political framework informed your approach to the case study?

C10. The economic context (Understanding)

Descriptor

In order to deliver social and environmental objectives, the 21st century planner needs to understand the economic context of planning decisions. Professional planners need to recognise the range of ways in which they can add value to development activity and other planning decisions. Planners thus use their understanding of how markets operate, including the economics and financing of development, to ensure that development adds value by being economically sustainable.

The financial implications for public, private and other sectors thus need to be taken into account to avoid raising local expectations or forming unachievable planning strategies; and to maximise the value from investments whilst balancing this against wider sustainability

objectives. This is not the same as always being ‘pro-development’ or prioritising development interests. The ultimate aim should be to generate added value for the whole community by looking at the long term contribution of planning options as well as at their immediate impacts.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of the economic and financial issues relating to spatial planning decisions and how you have balanced these against other considerations. You should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of how different planning approaches can affect delivery and viability. You need to show how you have understood that development needs to be financially viable for those promoting it.

For example, how might density or design requirements affect a development scheme? What could the implications be if specific infrastructure is required up-front? You might also show how you have had to take into account the economic and financial context in which a client, applicant or other stakeholder operates, whether public, private or not for profit. You may have attended meetings where the economics of a situation were considered, how did this help your understanding and what was your contribution to these discussions?

Prompts

- What were the economic and financial factors that had to be considered in a particular situation and why?
- Have you explained the economic and financial context of your example?
- Have you shown an understanding of the inter-relationship between these economic and financial factors and wider planning (including sustainability) issues and how they were all balanced?
- Have you shown an understanding of how planning influences and affects delivery of development?

C11. Reflection and review (Core)

Descriptor

Reflective practice is a distinguishing feature of a professional and is defined as “the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (Schön 1983, p26). A process of reflection and review ensures that professionals evaluate their work outcomes, are aware of how their work can be affected by external changes; and use that reflection to influence the success of future practice. It also means taking a critical look at your own learning as well as performance. The RTPI requires Chartered Members to regularly reflect on learning through the Code of Professional Conduct and its CPD requirements.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you must reflect on and review your work throughout your case study. You must provide a specific example of how critical reflection impacted on subsequent practice or how, as a result of your reflection, you might do things differently in future. You need to explain how you reflect on and review both your professional practice



and your own personal development. This is not about demonstrating that you are a perfect planner but rather highlighting what you may do differently and areas for development.

Prompts

- Have you evaluated how successful a project or course of action was?
- Have you explained how critical reflection on a piece of work impacted on subsequent practice, or how you would do things differently in the future?
- Have you demonstrated the benefit of reviewing your behaviours, actions and performance?
- Have you demonstrated a commitment to continuous reflection in your ongoing development of professional skills and knowledge?
- Is this competency integral throughout your case study?

NOTE

Go back over your PCS and mark (for your own reference) where you have addressed each of the competencies. If you can't find the reference, don't expect the assessors to.

8. Professional Development Plan (PDP)

This is the third section of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 1,500 words.

8.1 Why is the PDP important?

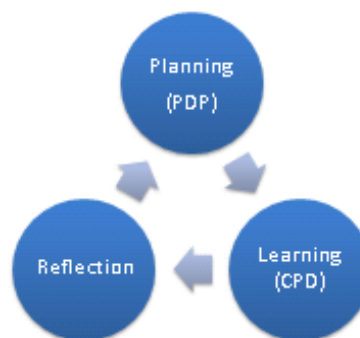
The RTPI believes that one of the most useful pieces of CPD you can do is to carefully prepare a PDP. All members entering the profession are required to begin a habit of lifelong learning. Qualifying to enter a profession does not mean that you remain competent to practice for the rest of your life. All professions change, requiring all professionals to continue to learn, debate, discuss and keep up-to-date on an ongoing basis. The PDP represents the planning stage of the CPD cycle.

Your profession, your clients and the general public must have confidence in the position of Chartered Town Planner. It is a designation that implies a standard that you will be required to uphold. This focus on lifelong learning that leads to a reflective and analytical professional is embodied in the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct.

The Code states that members should:

- a) at least once a year prepare a PDP for the next two years identifying his or her personal professional development needs;
- b) in any two year period undertake a minimum of 50 hours' CPD activity related to the undertaking or managing of town planning;
- c) maintain a written record of his or her CPD activity.

CPD cycle



The purpose of the PDP is for you to demonstrate the ability to analyse your professional learning needs and develop a plan to cover any gaps in your knowledge and skills. It is a requirement to continue this reflective practice throughout your career as a Chartered Town Planner and the assessors are looking to see that you understand this process.

Please note that every year we carry out an audit of PDP and CPD records from a randomly selected sample of our membership. For more information on CPD monitoring please visit the [RTPI website](#).

NOTE

Don't treat your PDP as a last minute add-on to your submission. It is as important as the PES and PCS and more Licentiates are asked to resubmit this section than any other. Give this part of your submission equal consideration. The Code states that members should prepare a PDP at least once a year, however, it is recommended that during the Licentiate period you review your PDP at least bi-annually to support your professional development as you go through the APC process.

8.2 Checklist for the PDP

Your PDP will be assessed on the following elements:

- There is a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis) which can be seen to be clearly connected in the main to the PES/PCS. However, this does not mean that every item in the SWOT must be linked to the PES/PCS.
- The majority of weaknesses identified in the SWOT should be addressed in the Action Plan, however, it is recognised that not all weaknesses can be addressed in the timescale of the PDP.
- One to three goal(s) have been identified that relate to the PES/PCS. Each goal should have two to four objectives which focus on skills and knowledge and two to three SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) actions per objective.
- Objectives may be directly related to planning skills or knowledge. However, they do not have to be exclusively focussed on planning skills. Improvements in professional skills such as negotiation, presentation or management are acceptable as long as these are within the context of your planning career aspirations.

There is an Action Plan which must be SMART (explanation in the template in [Section 8.3](#)).

- The PDP does not have to be corroborated but actions should either be agreed with your line manager or employer; or there should be an appropriate back up plan in place.
- The APC PDP template which is available on the ‘Membership’ pages of the [RTPI website](#) **MUST** be used.
- The PDP covers the two year period from the date of your submission.
- The PDP is within the word limit for the APC submission (guide of 1,500 words)⁶.

Each of these points must be met for the PDP to pass.

Goals can be career aspirations, like getting a promotion, as long as the planning context is clearly explained and the associated objectives are focussed on furthering skills and knowledge. It is better to explain what level you expect to be working at in terms of the level of responsibility you will have and the type of work you will be doing.

NOTE

You are not required to get your line manager to corroborate your PDP although you should indicate that you have line manager support for any actions which require it (e.g. attendance on a training course in work time).

⁶ The word count for the PDP **only** includes the text you enter into the template.

Some of your objectives may be the same as those identified in any work-based staff development scheme. However, your overall ambitions are likely to be wider than meeting the requirements of your current role and you should use your PDP to plan your own professional development. Your PDP is not inflexible and should not prevent you from taking advantage of (and recording) valuable but unexpected CPD opportunities. However, it does allow you to evaluate all your CPD activities against carefully identified needs.

8.3 PDP template outline with guidance notes

In this section, a copy of the APC PDP template is provided along with guidance notes.

PART ONE – SWOT ANALYSIS

NOTE

You do not need to give an overview of your role at the start of the PDP, this has already been covered in the PES and PCS.

Develop a SWOT analysis based on your written submission. Your written submission looked back at your achievements over the past few years while the SWOT analysis is looking forward.

<p>Strengths</p> <p><i>Be confident about what you're good at – use them to inform your goals in part two.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area of strong planning knowledge and understanding • strong transferable skills and competencies • commitment to personal and professional development • good contacts/successful networking 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p><i>Most “weaknesses” that you identify should be used to form goals, objectives and actions in part two.</i></p> <p><i>There should be a clear link between your “weaknesses” and the goals, objectives and actions identified.</i></p> <p><i>List only 3 – 5 weaknesses – this is enough. You need to justify which weaknesses you are taking forward into the action plan and why.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas of weakness in planning knowledge and understanding • underdeveloped transferable skills and competencies • poor commitment to personal and professional development • understanding that there is more to planning than your current experience
<p>Opportunities</p> <p><i>Consider what opportunities can be integrated into a goal in part two.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities within the industry • opportunities within your organisation • training & professional development opportunities • support of RTPI (Regions & Nations, Young Planners, Networks etc.) • opportunities to volunteer 	<p>Threats</p> <p><i>What threats could affect your ability to meet your career goals?</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry downturns • negative changes within the organisation e.g. downsizing/restructuring • better qualified competitors • limited training opportunities

Please use the information from your SWOT to identify goals and objectives for Part Two.

PART TWO – GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTION PLAN

For each goal you intend to achieve, you need to develop objectives and an Action Plan which must be SMART.

Please complete one to three goals; two to four objectives per goal; and two to three SMART actions per objective. *You may delete the goals, objectives and actions in the template as necessary.*

You are not expected to get your line manager or mentor to corroborate your PDP but you should gain their support for actions beforehand, if required.

GOAL

Where do I want to be professionally?

Your goal should be a high level strategic statement of what you want to achieve. Your goal should be clearly set in the context of furthering planning skills and knowledge. It should specify the end result.

Consider the question: as a professional planner, what direction do you want your career to move in over the next two years?

For a goal, you might like to think about where you would like to be working (perhaps in terms of organisation, sector or even country); the nature of the work you would like to be doing (e.g. types of spatial planning role/specialism) and/or the level you would like to be working at. Be aware that a goal such as 'to obtain a promotion' is, by itself, too broad. Instead, identify what type and level of work you will be doing.

You must identify between one to three goals.

OBJECTIVE

What outcome will help me achieve this goal?

Objectives are sub-goals with measurable outcomes that you expect to help you achieve your goals. They are therefore a way of breaking down your longer term goals so that you can begin to work towards or prepare for it. They must relate to your goals and/or the areas of development identified in your SWOT.

Achieving your long term goal might depend on improving your performance in certain ways/addressing areas of weakness identified in your SWOT.

While you are encouraged to set a goal that reflects a longer time frame, objectives should be more focused and contribute to your overall long term goal and are likely to be addressed in the next 6-18 months. It is therefore important also to break down the longer term goal into shorter term objectives, and in turn identify realistic Action Plan activities (see next page) to achieve these in a set time-frame.

For each goal, you must identify two to four objectives.

ACTION PLAN:

You must ensure that your actions are specific, measurable, time-bound steps that can be taken to meet your goal.

S – specific (be precise in the ‘Action’ column below)

M – measurable (see examples under ‘How will I know if I have achieved it’ below)

A – achievable (can you achieve this or is it an unrealistic goal, given time and other pressures?)

R – relevant (to you in your work setting)

T – time-based (specific dates)

Include constructions such as:

In order to..., With a view to ..., So that I can..., Which will allow me to....

Your Action Plan shows a list of actions you will take to achieve each objective. They will answer questions such as:

- *What will be done?*
- *How will it be done?*
- *Who will do it?*
- *When will it happen?*
- *Do I need senior officer approval?*
- *Is there a budget for this training?*
- *Do you have permission to work shadow someone?*
- *Does it impact on your existing role?*

Activities and tasks do not need to be sequential. You can carry out two or more activities concurrently. While your PDP is a two year plan, the majority of actions can take place within the first year of the plan, if appropriate. An indication of a good Action Plan is if it is detailed enough for someone else to implement.

For each objective, you must identify two to three SMART actions in the columns below.

Action	How will I know I have achieved it	When will it commence and finish?
<i>Clearly identify what action (CPD activity) you will undertake to achieve your objectives in order to achieve your goal.</i>	<i>Some examples of how you might measure your learning are listed below:</i>	<i>Give specific months and years.</i>
<i>The actions listed will vary with each person. Try and identify a minimum of three actions to achieve your objectives (and therefore goal).</i>	<i>I will discuss results of my research with colleagues at a team meeting and ask for feedback.</i>	<i>Be more specific than simply “ongoing”.</i>
<i>Ensure that you have done the relevant research into your actions (e.g. what further reading can you access, what volunteering opportunities will be available).</i>	<i>I will feel more confident doing X and this will be noticed by my manager.</i>	
<i>Link your action to your awareness of lack of knowledge/skills identified in part one/the APC log book, if appropriate.</i>	<i>I am able to use my new knowledge of X to advise clients on Y.</i>	
<i>If you are listing a course, be specific about which course, where, who is paying for it, what you hope to learn from the course and what you will do with this learning. Consider if you need your manager’s approval/your organisation to fund the action.</i>		

8.4 Sources of CPD

The RTPI accepts an extensive range of activities as appropriate CPD, which can be free or very low cost. This means you have a great opportunity to select activities that are appropriate to your needs. Some examples of valid development activities include:

- formal qualifications;
- attending Examinations in Public, Public Inquiries or Neighbourhood Forums;
- formal events such as conferences, seminars or workshops;
- short courses;
- online learning modules;
- structured targeted reading on a particular topic e.g. journals, online, policy papers;
- volunteering;
- work-shadowing or placement;
- mentoring or coaching;
- supervised academic research;
- preparation of materials for training courses, technical meetings or the technical press;
- involvement in a professional group;
- secondments;
- project work (beyond your day-to-day work);
- involvement in RTPI branch, chapter or network.

8.5 PDP support phase

The PDP is an important part of being a reflective practitioner and the RTPI will support candidates to ensure they are able to produce high quality PDPs. In some instances, candidates will be required to enter a PDP support phase. Please see [Section 2.9](#) for further details.



9. Tips for a successful application

9.1 APC Commendations

In recognition of the hard work and commitment shown by our Licentiates, the RTPI asks its assessors to nominate high quality submissions each year. These candidates are awarded an APC commendation.

Some of the tips in this section have been provided by our commended candidates. These tips will help you achieve success in your application. For more top tips from these young planners, please visit the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#).

9.2 Read the guidance

One of the most important factors in a successful application is reading and understanding this guidance and what is expected of you. You need to understand the competencies so that you can effectively address them in your submission. Discuss the competencies with your mentor, your line-manager and your colleagues so that you have a thorough understanding of how you might demonstrate them in your work environment.

9.3 Use the resources available to you

You should establish a support network of work colleagues, your mentor, past candidates and others who might provide guidance. Use the resources at your work to extend the scope of your experience if you feel you are not getting broad experience in your routine work.

Attend an RTPI APC event and take your mentor with you. Sessions are often advertised on the 'APC' pages of the [RTPI website](#). Young Planners in the regions and nations also organise events.

Check the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#) regularly for updated APC resources, advice notes and templates.

9.4 Check off all the competencies

Use a checklist like the one on the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#) to identify where you have addressed each competency in your submission. Make a note in your log book where you have demonstrated the competencies. This will help when you are selecting case studies.

9.5 Keep on top of your log book

Although it might seem hard at the time, working on your log book regularly will help you prepare your submission. You will not be able to remember the details of all your work over the year. Use your log book to practice reflective and analytical thinking.

9.6 Select your case studies carefully

Careful selection of your case studies will help you address all the competencies within the word limit. The case study does not have to be the biggest or most impressive project you worked on during the years. You should select the case studies which best demonstrate how you met the competencies. A small project on which you had significant control and authority is likely to better demonstrate your skills than a large project in which you only played a small part. Marking each competency in your log book will help you identify a good case study.

9.7 Be critical

Evaluate your performance and don't be afraid to explain how you would do it differently if you were doing the task again. Reflect on what you learned and how you would improve the outcome.

9.8 Focus on your PDP

This section is often left until last and is rushed. You should be writing PDPs throughout your time as a Licentiate and reviewing them bi-annually.

You should refer to the PDP checklist to make sure you meet all of the requirements.

9.9 Start early

Don't leave your log book and APC until the last minute. Work on the submission over the period and make sure you leave plenty of time for checking your work and getting others to give you some feedback. Rushed submissions are very clearly identifiable.

9.10 Check your submission

You must check your submission before you submit it. Proof read it. Give it to a non-planner to read. Most importantly, you should have someone from outside your workplace read your submission. It is not unusual for people who are familiar with your work and your projects to read more into the text than is on the page. Remember, the assessors will only read what is written and bring no prior knowledge of you to the process.

All files (except the personal details and payment form and receipt of payment) are sent to the assessors. It doesn't look professional when you scan a document upside down or hand write and scan a document in a sloppy manner or fail to fill in all the sections. Make sure your corroboration is labelled in an intelligent manner so the assessors can easily identify what they are looking for.

9.11 Don't submit before you are ready

One of the most common reasons for unsuccessful applications is because the applicant does not have sufficient experience at the right level. You might be able to count up the right number of days, but if you have not developed as a professional planner over the period you will not be successful. Critically evaluate your experience against the competencies before you submit.



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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Thank you for taking the time to read this document and good luck with your submission.

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