



**RTPI**

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# **EXPERIENCED PRACTITIONER ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE (EP-APC) GUIDANCE**

**Experienced Practitioner guide to RTPI  
Chartered membership**

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**The Experienced Practitioner APC (EP-APC) is a route for experienced planners to apply directly for Chartered membership of the RTPI.**

# 1. Overview of the EP-APC

## 1.1 What is the EP-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. Chartered Town Planners are members of an institute whose charitable purpose is to advance the science and art of planning for the benefit of the public, and those values are shared across the diverse membership base.

The Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC) provides a way for experienced planners from all over the world, including those who gained qualifications and experience outside the UK, to become Chartered Town Planners. All routes to Chartered membership require the demonstration of competence relevant to the class of membership: the EP-APC route has been designed to recognise the value of experience (gained through extended practice), combined with educational background and competence.

## 1.2 Who is the EP-APC for?

The EP-APC is designed to enable you to show how you meet the high standards required for Chartered membership through your experience of:

- managing your own learning and career direction;
- demonstrating high standards of professional competence;
- working with others in a collaborative way;
- lifelong learning and continuing professional development.

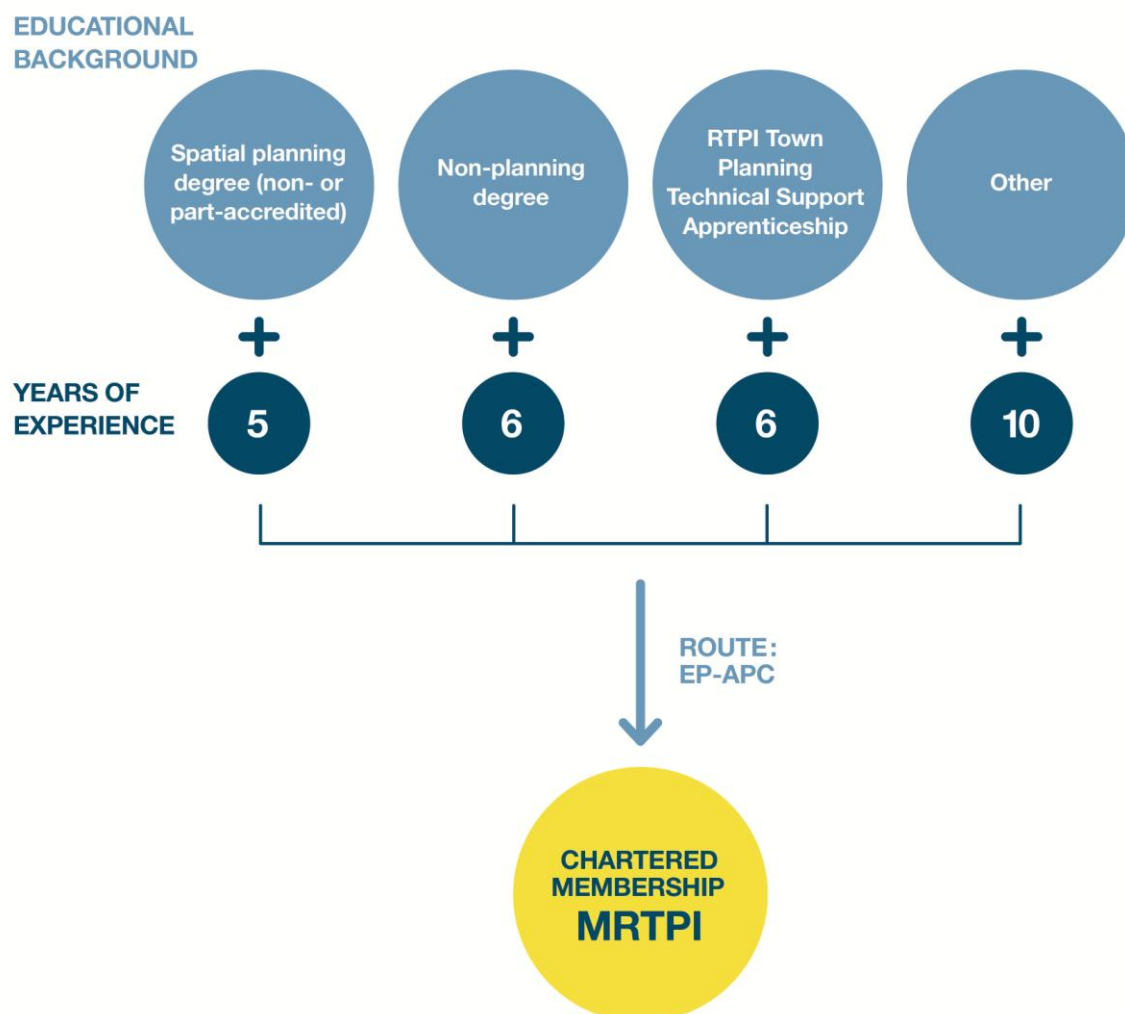
The EP-APC complements your educational background and builds on the considerable skills, knowledge and understanding that you have already acquired as an experienced practitioner. It tests your ability to apply these in a spatial planning practice, teaching or research context through a competency-based written submission.

The Institute is keen to encourage those working in academia (teaching and/or research) to consider taking the EP-APC. This new route has a range of competencies that offer more opportunities for those with academic experience to demonstrate their eligibility for Chartered membership. Guidance on using research and teaching experience in membership submissions is available in our *Advice Note – Academic Experience* available on the [RTPI website](#).

The EP-APC also includes an optional leadership competency for those who can demonstrate significant strategic level spatial planning experience (further details are in [Section 6](#)).

The EP-APC is a valuable yet 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.

### 1.3 Eligibility



You will need to demonstrate a balance of educational background and experience to show how you meet the requirements for the EP-APC route. You must have:

- between **5-10 years'** spatial planning experience at the relevant professional level, gained after qualification (Sections 1.4-1.6 describe this further). The exact amount required varies according to your educational background, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Educational background	Experience required (after qualification)
a. Spatial planning degree (specialist or spatial RTPI accredited <sup>1</sup> )	5 years
b. Spatial planning degree (non RTPI accredited)	5 years
c. Non-planning degree	6 years
d. RTPI Town Planning Technical Support Apprenticeship	6 years
e. Other	10 years

<sup>1</sup> If you have both of these, or a combined RTPI accredited qualification, you are eligible for the Licentiate APC (L-APC) route to Chartered membership. The L-APC route applies to candidates who graduated in or after 2005 only: if you graduated before 2005, the EP-APC is the appropriate route.

You will also need to submit:

- examples of your professional work.

## 1.4 Type of experience required

Experienced planners can apply directly for Chartered membership as long as they meet the required years of spatial planning experience at the relevant professional level. '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 EP-APC.

Experience type	Can it count?
<b>Full- or part-time experience or a combination of both (pro rata).</b> To calculate part-time experience you need to pro rata your part-time hours against the 35 hour week. <sup>2</sup>	Yes
<b>Paid or voluntary experience.</b>	Yes
<b>Experience gained in the UK or overseas.</b>	Yes
<b>Experience spread over a longer period of time.</b> The years of experience required do not need to be consecutive, breaks in employment for parental leave, caring, redundancy or travelling are fine and can just be factored into your spatial planning experience.	Yes
<b>Experience gained whilst self-employed.</b> As long as you can demonstrate a consistent period of planning experience at the appropriate level.	Yes
<b>Experience gained whilst undertaking a full- or part-time degree or further studies.</b> 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
<b>Experience gained whilst undertaking a fully RTPI accredited one year master's degree.</b> This one year intensive 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 2016, they would be able to start counting experience gained from 01 September 2017.	No
<b>Experience less than three months in duration (full-time equivalent).</b>	No
<b>Administrative experience or technical support experience.</b> Experience must be of the relevant professional level, as defined above.	No

<sup>2</sup> 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.



**NOTE**

If you do not have 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 40% planning and 60% non-planning work for 12 months, then did six months' full-time planning, you would state:

12 months at 40% of a full-time role is equivalent to 4.8 months' full-time work. Plus 6 months' full-time work. **Total: 18 months**

### 1.5 Demonstrating *Leadership in spatial planning* (optional)

The Institute welcomes candidates who have significant strategic level experience to demonstrate their competence in spatial planning leadership. The EP-APC route therefore includes an optional competency in *Leadership in spatial planning* which may be taken as an alternative to some of the standard competencies. Further information on the eligibility requirements for *Leadership in spatial planning* is at [Section 2.4](#) and the actual competency is at [Section 6](#).

### 1.6 Nature of experience towards EP-APC

The RTPI recognises the variety of backgrounds held by experienced practitioners. Candidates could be employed in the public or private sectors, be employed by charities or NGOs, or running their own businesses.

The RTPI welcomes candidates who are engaged in teaching and/or academic research in an area of spatial planning, and has produced a specific advice note with content shaped and reviewed by academics who have already achieved RTPI membership. It provides targeted guidance on using research and teaching experience in membership submissions. The *Advice Note – Academic Experience* is available on the [RTPI website](#).

Examples of spatial planning work that are eligible towards the EP-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, despite their experience, it is not suggested that candidates should have worked 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. EP-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**

Candidates with teaching and research experience are encouraged to apply for Chartered membership. Their experience is likely to include higher education teaching experience linked with the types of activity described in paragraphs above and taking place on courses related to spatial planning. More information about using research and teaching experience is provided in the *Advice Note – Academic Experience* which is available on the [RTPI website](#).

## **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 EP-APC process, from start to finish, is about you. You are responsible for demonstrating how you meet the requirements based on your experience, skills and knowledge.
- **Your colleagues or contacts within your professional networks:** They can offer advice, share their experience and act as critical friends. Some organisations have already demonstrated a commitment to supporting and developing their staff through the RTPI Learning Partners scheme.
- **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 2.5](#).
- **Your corroborators:** A corroborator is 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. There are various options for seeking a corroborator, depending on the nature of your work. For example, if you work as a sole practitioner your client may corroborate your work, if you work at a strategic level this may be a colleague or fellow professional, otherwise this may be your manager. 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 2.6](#).
- **The assessors:** Chartered Town Planners who review your final submission and examples of professional work. 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 EP-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](mailto:membership@rtpi.org.uk).

## 1.8 Mentors

Mentors are not compulsory, and may well not be required by those practitioners who have extensive experience. However, a mentor can help you get the most out of your membership submission and provide you with additional support.

Mentors can fulfil a variety of different roles: a coach, a counsellor, a facilitator of networking opportunities, or simply a friend. 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 the production of a Professional Development Plan (PDP);
- offer advice, where appropriate, on the final written assessment;
- 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.

If you feel that you would benefit from having a mentor, it is your responsibility to find one as this is part of your professional development. Your mentor does not have to be a Chartered Town Planner and could be someone you know already from your own professional networks. Other avenues for finding a mentor include networking through RTPI networks or at RTPI regional or national events.

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

## 2. The EP-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 6,750 words (+/- 10%) comprising:
  - i. [Practical Experience Statement \(PES\)](#) – approximately 1,250 words;
  - ii. [Professional Competence Statement \(PCS\)](#) – approximately 4,000 words;
  - iii. [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#) – approximately 1,500 words;
- scanned copies of any relevant degree certificates or apprenticeship completion certificate (for educational backgrounds a, c or d) or academic transcripts (for educational background b only)<sup>3</sup>;
- statement of planning content of your degree (educational background b only) – 500 words (+/- 10%);
- examples of your professional work<sup>4</sup> (maximum 10);
- a [sponsor](#) declaration;
- declarations from [corroborators](#) which cover the whole period of your employment history;
- a proof of payment of the EP-APC administration fee 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 2.7](#). 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 8](#) 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.**

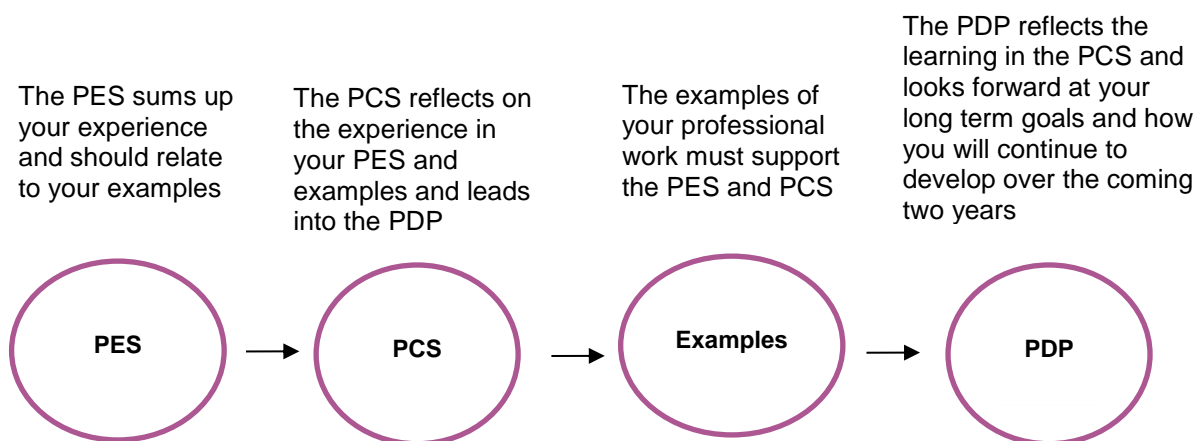
Sections 5, 6 and 7 of this document provide information on each of the three elements of the submission (PES, PCS and PDP) and on how to best prepare your submission.

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<sup>3</sup> If your degree certificate or transcript is in a language other than English, you will need to provide a certified translation.

<sup>4</sup> Further information on what can be included is at Section 4.

## Relationship between the examples of professional work, PES, PCS and PDP



## 2.3 Statement of planning content of degree

Candidates wishing to apply on the basis of educational background must provide the following:

- a full degree transcript; and
- a written statement (500 words, +/- 10%) explaining how their degree covered the following broad principles that govern planning operations<sup>5</sup>:
  - Social science as an analytical framework
  - The interplay between land use and transportation
  - Design and the realisation of place
  - Economic issues relating to development
  - Environmental challenges
  - Legal and institutional frameworks

Candidates whose degree covered a specific aspect or area of planning (such as urban design, regeneration) will need to show how it relates to the topics listed above. Candidates must demonstrate that 100% of their degree was spent on these topics.

If you have more than one degree, you only need to describe the one that is relevant to your application.

## 2.4 Taking the *Leadership in spatial planning* optional competency

There is an optional competency which enables those who have significant strategic level experience to demonstrate their experience and competence in spatial planning leadership. If you take this competency, you do so as an alternative to competencies 3-6 (see [Section 6](#)), which test the ability to identify and analyse issues, gather information, identify and evaluate a course of action, and initiate and implement a course of action. These competencies are important, particularly for those in the early stages of their professional careers, but may be less directly relevant to those with greater experience who are using these skills at a strategic level.

“Strategic” level experience is defined as:

- having a high-level overview of the entire organisation, its vision and objectives;

<sup>5</sup> These are taken from the RTPI’s Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education.

- determining long-term (working in timeframes of 3 years or longer) or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them;
- being responsible for long-term complex and strategic problem solving; and
- leading and integrating the spatial planning function at a very high level in the context of the whole organisation.

It is not about having a specific job title or role, or something obtained automatically after having spent a certain amount of time working in planning.

To be eligible to choose this competency, candidates must:

- meet the experience requirements as set out in [Section 1.3](#);
- demonstrate that this experience includes **at least 5 years' experience at a strategic level** as defined above; and
- demonstrate this experience within the PES, clearly identifying which parts of the candidate's experience are at strategic level.

#### NOTE

If you are not sure whether your experience makes you eligible to take the optional *Leadership in spatial planning* competency, you are advised to take the standard EP-APC route and competencies C1-C14.

## 2.5 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. The Sponsor Declaration Form is available on the [RTPI website](#). Evidence of sponsorship must be included with your application.

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

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

## 2.6 Corroborating your submission

It is important that you have your PES and PCS corroborated by the relevant person. This is to ensure the integrity of all submissions. 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 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.



**NOTE**

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

Corroboration must come in the form of a letter or email from the corroborator 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;
- comment specifically on the work you have undertaken; 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. (For corroborators' convenience, a form has been produced to help them gather the required information and is available on the [RTPI website](#)). It is not adequate to provide a generic letter.

There are various options for seeking a corroborator, depending on the nature of your work. For example, if you work as a sole practitioner you should include statements from clients or other professionals who have direct knowledge of your work, if you work at a strategic level this may be a colleague or fellow professional, otherwise this may be your manager.

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

## 2.7 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, PES, PCS, PDP, examples of professional work, sponsorship and corroboration must be submitted as separate files. Please label each file using the following convention:

**Contact reference number<sup>7</sup> – last name – EP-APC – description of file (e.g. 00000 Smith EP-APC PDP)**

Email your submission to [membership.applications@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:membership.applications@rtpi.org.uk). 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. **Please also include your contact reference number and 'EP-APC application' in the header of your email.** (If you are not sure what the number was please contact [membership@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:membership@rtpi.org.uk).)

You can pay your administration 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

<sup>7</sup> If you have ever been an RTPI member (e.g. Student, Affiliate), this will be your current or previous membership number. If you have never been a member please use "00000".



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'. Submissions will only be accepted electronically in the required format detailed above.

## 2.8 Submission deadlines and results dates

Submission deadlines and results dates are scheduled in advance and published on the [RTPI website](#). You will be advised of the outcome of your application by email and your full results will be posted to your primary address to arrive by the published date. The RTPI will not provide results before the published date.

## 2.9 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 EP-APC assessors, who are experienced 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 (and, for background b only, the planning content of your degree).
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 Chartered 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 2.11](#) for further details).
8. If you have been deferred, you will receive information in your feedback report detailing what you have to resubmit.
9. If your submission has been rejected, you will receive detailed feedback, advice and guidance (including the availability of other membership options).

## 2.10 Assessment outcomes

There are three possible assessment outcomes – successful, deferral and rejection:

- 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.
- A deferral means that you have not yet met some or all of the requirements. This is not a failure. You are being asked to provide additional information to demonstrate the relevant competencies.
- A submission can be rejected, but only subject to the following criteria:
  - A submission can only be rejected if the candidate's experience, demonstrated in the PES, is short of the experience requirements by two years or more<sup>8</sup>.
  - A submission cannot be rejected the first time it is made. If the assessors think that the candidate's experience does not meet the requirements, the candidate will be given the opportunity to clarify his/her experience in a resubmission.
  - A submission cannot be rejected because the PCS and/or PDP do not meet the requirements. If the PCS and/or PDP do not meet the requirements, the submission will be deferred (see above).

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 deferred 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 deferred on, the assessors will request either a full resubmission of the relevant section or a supplementary statement. Where possible, resubmissions are sent to the same assessors who determined the outcome of the original application.
- If your submission has been rejected, you will receive detailed feedback, advice and guidance (including the availability of other membership options).

### 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, except general presentation.

## 2.11 PDP support phase

The PDP is an important part of being a reflective practitioner. The assessors may feel that your EP-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. You will be informed of this in your results letter and feedback report. In this event, **you will be elected as a Chartered Member** and you will be required, within one month:

<sup>8</sup> See Section 2.12 – candidates have up to 2 years from the date of their original submission to gain more experience.

- to review the online PDP advice and guidance;
- to complete and submit an updated PDP addressing the feedback from the assessors; and
- in some cases, to discuss a revised draft with RTPI officers prior to resubmission.

Once you have produced a successful PDP you will enter Continuing Professional Development (CPD) monitoring. This means that after two years you will be 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 disciplinary action would be taken against you.

## 2.12 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 have not met the experience requirements you can wait for the appropriate future submission 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.

Further details about resubmission are on the [RTPI website](#).

## 2.13 Appeals procedure

Candidates who have resubmitted their application at least once, and are still unsuccessful, can submit an appeal, if they feel that they have a reason to presume that the assessment of their submission was not carried out in a thorough and professional manner. For any queries about appeals and the process, please contact the Membership Team on 020 7929 9462.

## 3. Format of the EP-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 is a PDP template on the [RTPI website](#) and it is compulsory to use this.

### 3.2 Professional standard

As experienced practitioners, candidates will want to ensure their submission is of a high standard and reflects the quality of work you would submit professionally. You are formally assessed on general presentation. You are advised to check your submission to ensure:

- the spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct;
- it is laid out clearly;
- it meets the guidelines on formatting as set out below; and
- it is professionally presented.

This is a professional qualification and submissions that include inappropriate information, or breach confidentiality, are likely to be unsuccessful.

### 3.3 Presentation

Consider how your submission is presented. The submission must be Word processed in Arial 11pt font and double spaced for easier reading. The submission must be in English and composed to a high professional standard.

Referencing, where required, must be to the Harvard style (e.g. author, date). **Paragraphs and pages of your submission must be numbered** – this enables the assessors to provide specific feedback on your submission. Include your full name and contact reference number on each page.

### 3.4 Referencing your examples of professional work

You should refer to your examples of professional work to emphasise, clarify or elaborate upon an area of experience, however you must fully demonstrate the competencies in your submission. When referring to your examples, clearly indicate where the assessor can find the reference. They 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 PCS) itself. Further information on the types of examples to submit is at [Section 4](#).

### 3.5 Additional materials

Candidates 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 in the main body of the submission (this does not include any illustrations that may appear in one or more of the examples of professional work).

Assessors will not base their decision on the candidate's work other than that described and reflected upon within the written submission and will not take into account opinions of a third party (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 EP-APC submission should be written in the spirit of this Code. Therefore, you should be aware of professional confidentiality (for example, when referring to material that may be considered to be professionally sensitive you may wish to anonymise 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 EP-APC submissions is 6,750 words +/-10% (i.e. 6,075 – 7,425 words). The submission itself is indicative of the candidate's research, analysis and report writing skills. You should include the word count at the end of each section of the submission. The PDP template and the examples of professional work are excluded from the word count.

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

PES – 1,250 words  
PCS – 4,000 words  
PDP – 1,500 words

Write the word count for each section after the final paragraph. Introductions, headings and sub-headings must all be included in the word count.

The PDP template (instructions, column headings etc.) is not included in the word count. 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 must only be used for cross referencing (e.g. to your submission or other documents) or explaining abbreviations. Footnotes are not included in the word count.

Footnotes should not normally take up more than the equivalent of four lines of text. Excessive use of footnotes, or using footnotes to include additional information, and therefore increasing your word count, will result in you being asked to review your submission. Competencies or experience demonstrated only or predominantly in footnotes will not be deemed successful.

## 4. Capturing your experience: examples of professional work

### 4.1 Why are these important?

While these are not formally assessed, the examples of your professional work support your written submission. Your examples must be listed in your application form and the Institute can request further information on any examples if required.

The examples of professional work will be used as reference points for the rest of your submission (particularly the PCS) and are an opportunity to demonstrate how your experience and the work you do makes you eligible for Chartered membership.

The examples are important because:

- **They require you to critically reflect on your work.** Choosing the most relevant examples from your professional experience will help you reflect on the work that you have undertaken and on the way in which this has contributed to the development of your professional competence.
- **They will help the assessors see the professional behind the text.** The examples may be used by the assessors to gain more information about the work you have done and the case studies you reference.

### 4.2 Choosing your examples

Your examples must support your PES and PCS. The Institute recognises that for reasons of confidentiality it may sometimes be necessary to anonymise examples.

The types of examples that are welcomed include:

- Written work such as reports, planning applications or statements
- Academic work such as dissertations, PhD extracts or research
- Published journal articles
- Presentations, transcripts of webinars or podcasts you have delivered
- Minutes of meetings
- Emails and other correspondence with clients where advice or direction is given (rather than routine email correspondence)

The types of examples that should not be submitted include:

- Descriptions of course modules or degree study<sup>9</sup>
- Entire books or very long academic submissions such as PhDs
- Promotional material such as annual reports or brochures
- Project or development briefs you have responded to
- References or descriptions of your work provided by other people<sup>10</sup>
- Standalone maps, drawings or diagrams
- Videos, recordings etc.

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<sup>9</sup> This is required for candidates applying on the basis of having a non-accredited spatial planning degree, but is not an example of professional work.

<sup>10</sup> These are not needed because you have already had your submission corroborated.

### 4.3 Submitting your examples

The examples are stand-alone and are excluded from word count limit. You must submit a **minimum of five and a maximum of 10 examples** in total. Where documents are lengthy, you are strongly advised to keep the examples focused by directing the assessors to the particularly relevant sections, using page and paragraph referencing, or highlighting.

You must include documents in the evidence section that are directly referenced in your submission. Do not include examples of all the work you have undertaken.

The examples must be sent to the RTPI as Word documents or PDF files along with the submission.

## 5. Practical Experience Statement (PES)

This is the first of the three sections of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 1,250 words.

### 5.1 The purpose of the PES

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 be current up to a month prior to your submission.<sup>11</sup>

In the PES, you are providing an overview of your 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.

### 5.2 How to structure the PES

In the PES, you need to describe the planning experience that you have gained over the time required. You should provide 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 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. 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.

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<sup>11</sup> If you are not currently in employment, please indicate in your PES how you are keeping your planning skills and knowledge up to date.



**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 the required amount of** full-time relevant spatial planning experience.

### 5.3 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 generic management, 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 required amount of experience, given your educational background (see [Table 1](#)).

### 5.4 Demonstrating your specialism

As well as demonstrating the Specialism competency in your PCS, you will need to include a line in your PES stating what your specialism is, so that it is absolutely clear to the assessors. For more details on the Specialism competency and what is required, see [C14](#).

### 5.5 Demonstrating eligible experience for the *Leadership in spatial planning* option

The assessors will use your PES to determine whether you have the right amount of experience at the right level to be eligible to demonstrate the *Leadership in spatial planning* competency as an alternative to competencies C3-6. The experience you need to demonstrate is set out at [Section 2.4](#).

## 6. Professional Competence Statement (PCS)

This is the second section of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 4,000 words.

### 6.1 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 so as an experienced practitioner you will want to demonstrate the level of responsibility you are accustomed to having and your practised ability to make professional judgements.

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**.

There are 14 competencies in total that you will need to demonstrate in the PCS. If you are eligible to demonstrate the *Leadership in spatial planning* competency, you do so as an alternative to competencies 3-6, but you should ensure that you allocate a significant proportion of your word count to the Leadership competency (recommended 1,000 words). Information on how to demonstrate each competency can be found in [Section 6.3](#).

#### IMPORTANT

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.

### 6.2 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 two and four case studies to demonstrate you have met all the competencies.** The most effective way to demonstrate your professional competence is by discussing two to four case studies or projects drawn from your experience over the time covered by your submission. Identify which aspects of your experience demonstrate each of the competencies outlined in [Section 6.3](#). 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.

- **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 parts of your examples of professional work. This provides the assessor with more information should they wish to clarify something. There should be strong linkages between all the elements of the submission.

Keep in mind that:

- **You must 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 was unsuccessful or where the anticipated outcomes were not achieved. The assessors are not judging you on the outcome of the case study project but on your contribution and learning.
- **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.

### 6.3 The EP-APC competencies

Your PCS will be assessed against 14 competencies which are all equally important and integral to being a Chartered Town Planner (if you are taking the optional Leadership in spatial planning competency, you will demonstrate 11 competencies but over the same word count as for those demonstrating 14). The competencies are interrelated and linked to one another.

The Institute has set out the minimum type of evidence you are required to demonstrate for each competency. Given that you are applying as an experienced practitioner, it is highly likely you will have achieved more in your career and can demonstrate these at a higher type. You are encouraged to do so.

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 may be assessed. For more information on each competency, please see Sections C1. to C.15.

**You must demonstrate all competencies for your PCS to be successful.** Please note, 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:

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 of knowledge	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
C12. Sustainability	Application
C13. Engagement and participation	Understanding
C14. Specialist knowledge and its relationship to spatial planning	Application
C15. Leadership in spatial planning ( <i>an optional competency demonstrated as an alternative to C3-6 by those with the required amount of strategic level experience. See <a href="#">Section 2.4</a></i> )	Application

## 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)

To demonstrate this competency, you must link planning theory to your case study, demonstrating that you understand the principles behind your practice, that is, why you do what you do<sup>12</sup>.

Background research and/or reading may be required for this competency (a reading list is provided on the [RTPI website](#) for candidates who would like to do further study in this area before submitting).

### 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.

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<sup>12</sup> The requirement for theoretical understanding as well as experience makes the demonstration of this competency different from the demonstration of *C2 The spatial planning context* as part of the Licentiate APC. Licentiates do not need to demonstrate theoretical knowledge because they already have a fully RTPI accredited degree.

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 must link planning theory to your case study, demonstrating that you understand the principles behind your practice, that is, why you do what you do. For example, you might consider how a particular planning movement or theory has played out in practice.

Additionally, 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 demonstrated your understanding of spatial planning theory and how it underpins your work in practice?

## **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 of knowledge (Application)

### NOTE

This is the only competency that is worded differently for academic applicants to specifically apply to an academic rather than practice context. See the *Advice note – Academic Experience* for more details on this.

### 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. You might describe how your research findings have been utilised and shared (more information on this is in the *Advice Note: Academic Experience*).

## 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?
- How have you communicated and shared your research findings and how might they be applied in practice?

## 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 a colleague'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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 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?

## C12. Sustainability (Application)

### Descriptor

Sustainability seeks to balance economic, environmental and social dimensions and planners need to understand and take into account all three. Planning plays a key role in promoting social and economic development, while conserving environmental, social and cultural and/or historic heritages for transmission to future generations.

Planners need to understand the implications of climate change for places (such as the climate hazards an area may face, and their social and economic costs and consequences) and how planning is critical in responding to the challenges posed by climate change. For example, planning can help to shape patterns of urban and rural development, mitigate against the increased risk of flooding, reduce energy demand and carbon emissions from the built environment, improve air quality and support integrated sustainable forms of transport and energy consumption. Better mitigation and adaptation to climate change is crucial to a sustainable economy and society.

## Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency, you must show how you have applied your knowledge of sustainability and climate change issues in your case study. You must demonstrate, in your case study, how your planning experience relates to all three dimensions of sustainability and in particular how you can address the implications of climate change.

Planning outcomes may have different impacts on different communities so it is important to consider the long term impacts of planning decisions. The costs and consequences of climate change most affect poorer or more vulnerable communities. When considering the effect on different communities, you must also demonstrate how planning outcomes can be designed to address issues of disadvantage.

Some of the ways you could meet this competency include:

- Demonstrating how getting a site in the right place and using the inherent qualities of the site can help achieve sustainability (e.g. drainage, passive solar).
- Demonstrating how you have considered in your work the role of planning in achieving sustainability, not just in terms of the environmental aspects of building design but also the social ones, such as lifetime design, inclusive planning, accessibility and meeting the different needs of the community.
- Developing local planning policies so that they play a role in reducing the need to travel (particularly by private car) and/or in ensuring a high proportion of trips are made by sustainable transport modes (which could include public transport, walking and/or cycling).
- Demonstrating how planning can play a role in cutting carbon or other greenhouse gas emissions at strategic, local/neighbourhood and development site levels.
- Demonstrating how infrastructure planning can address climate change (for example through renewable energy production, energy and transport networks, water and waste).
- Demonstrating how you have considered in your work the role planning plays in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Demonstrating how planners can reduce emissions from existing stock (e.g. through building design, energy distribution networks or the use of energy efficient materials) as well as from proposed development.

## Prompts

- Have you demonstrated how planning decisions affect sustainability and the way they can mitigate against the effects of climate change?
- Have you demonstrated how planning outcomes can be designed to address issues of social inequality?
- Have you explained the challenges that you faced in balancing the three dimensions of sustainability and how you have addressed them?
- Have you demonstrated the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability and the role that planning plays?

## C13. Engagement and participation (Understanding)

### Descriptor

Engagement and participation are integral aspects of good planning. When carried out successfully, they can reduce conflict, result in better development and, most importantly, allow people and communities to have an influence over the shape of the places where they



live. They are also crucial to ensuring planning respects equality and diversity in decision making.

Engagement is generally regarded as a positive process, delivering a range of widely recognised benefits including:

- Better decision making, improved legitimacy and democratic accountability;
- Developing more cohesive communities;
- Aligning the needs of people in an area with the services provided;
- Improving people's understanding of spatial planning; and
- Improving the skills of individuals and communities, which in turn encourages people to engage further.

Given people's different lives and backgrounds, identifying and making effective contact with a wide range of individuals and organisations can be challenging. But for planners, capturing the views of as many people as possible is critical if balanced and informed decisions are to be made. Gaining a balanced and inclusive view is the only way to ensure that a representative voice is heard, one on which good decisions can be taken.

Reaching out to those who do not normally engage or who have difficulty in doing so requires more thought and preparation, but is vital if a balanced response is to be secured. Understanding the need to be inclusive, informing people of how their views have been taken into consideration and why certain decisions were made, and developing an approach which seeks to address the variety of reasons why people do not engage, is the key to success.

### **Guidance statement**

To demonstrate this competency, you should explain your understanding of the principles of equality and equality of opportunity in relation to spatial planning. (This competency relates to engagement with the wider community, not just stakeholders, as in *C2. Spatial planning context*.) You might do this by reflecting on examples, within your case study, of enabling, improving and promoting access and respecting diversity of cultures, views and ideologies.

You should demonstrate your understanding of the potential for spatial planning to have different outcomes for different social groups, whether defined by age, gender, disability, religion or race; and the need to analyse decisions and recommendations, assess how they may affect different groups and make judgements about the impacts you anticipate. (This is sometimes referred to as "proofing" as in "equality-proofing".) When considering the effect on different social groups, you should also demonstrate your understanding of how planning outcomes can be designed to address issues of inequality.

You should show your understanding of engagement and participation issues, by demonstrating your understanding of the difference between engaging with stakeholders (for example, applicants, statutory bodies, landowners) and with other interested parties (for example, local communities), some of whom have to be encouraged to understand that they have an interest.

### **Prompts**

- Have you shown an understanding of why engagement and participation are important in the planning process?
- Have you demonstrated how planning decisions affect different groups and how this can be taken into account in planning decision-making?
- Have you demonstrated how planning outcomes can be designed to address issues of inequality?

- Have you demonstrated how negotiation, consultation and and/or advocacy skills play a part in facilitating effective engagement?
- Have you evaluated some of the obstacles or challenges that might make it difficult for people to engage in the planning process, and how planners can overcome these?
- Have you explained different tools and techniques that you can use to support effective engagement and participation in spatial planning?

## C14. Specialist knowledge and its relationship to spatial planning (Application)

### Descriptor

Spatial planning (i.e. managing competing uses for space and creating places valued by people, as described in C2.) is a broad family of activities which sit alongside what are often seen as the core planning activities of planning policy, development management/control and enforcement. Chartered Members can, therefore, be involved in a wide range of specialist activities such as regeneration, economic development, urban design, community or neighbourhood planning, transport planning, environmental planning and many more related fields.

Candidates applying through the EP-APC route may well come from one or other of these more specialist fields of activity. A specialist area of operation should not, however, be seen as something that is too narrow or restrictive. It will be a topic, an area of work, rather than a discrete planning process or series of tasks.

### Guidance statement

Depending on your experience and professional background, there are different ways you could demonstrate this competency. If your experience has been in mainstream planning, you are likely to have developed your understanding of at least one particular area of planning (such as development management/control or enforcement) as your career has progressed. If you are coming into planning from another profession or discipline, it is likely that this background will have provided you with specialist knowledge and skills that you are now bringing to spatial planning.

To demonstrate this competency, you must show in depth knowledge of one area of planning practice. You must explain in your case study how you have practically applied this knowledge. You must also show how your specialist area of operation links with spatial planning in the wider sense.

The RTPI would not wish to restrict what might qualify as a specialist area of operation. Examples you could use if your experience has been largely in spatial planning might include 'environmental management', 'urban design', 'transport planning', 'minerals and waste planning', 'infrastructure planning', 'economic development', 'planning law', 'planning policy', 'development management/control', 'planning enforcement', 'housing planning' 'residential or commercial development' or 'coastal/marine planning'. If you have come from a related profession such as housing or surveying, you could demonstrate how you can apply this specialist knowledge when working in spatial planning. If you are an academic, you might want to demonstrate how you have carried out academic research into, or taught (e.g. specialist modules), one of the above or other topics.

### Prompts

- Have you demonstrated how you use your specialist knowledge and skills?



- Have you demonstrated the relationship of your specialism to other aspects of spatial planning? You might explain the social, environmental, economic and political context for the area of specialism.
- Have you explained how you considered broader spatial planning issues when making decisions?

## C15. Leadership in spatial planning (Application)

### NOTE

This optional competency is aimed at candidates taking the EP-APC who have significant strategic level experience. It is offered as an option in recognition that with the development of your career your work might leave you distanced from the detail covered by competencies C3.-C6., but familiar with them, and often working with and guiding those who rely on competence in these areas.

**If you are not sure whether your experience makes you eligible to take this optional Leadership in spatial planning competency, as an alternative to C3-C6, you are advised to take the standard EP-APC and competencies C1-C14.** (Please refer back to [Section 2.4](#) for advice on whether you are eligible to take this competency.)

### Descriptor

Being a successful leader in the planning profession is about showing clear leadership in a chosen field and being able to develop and deliver a vision. Leadership is not about having a specific job title or role, or something obtained automatically after having spent a certain amount of time working in planning, but is gained through achievements and a demonstrable ability to motivate and inspire others.

### Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency, you must show how you contribute to the delivery of spatial planning at a strategic level. You must demonstrate your leadership specifically in terms of spatial planning rather than by showing generic management skills that could apply to any profession.

You might show how you have developed, at a strategic level, new and creative solutions to existing and/or emerging issues and challenges in your area of spatial planning, and how these have contributed to the welfare, economy and environment of a community. For example, you may have developed, delivered and implemented wide-reaching and long-term planning strategy locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally. You might have demonstrated leadership in the context of client work for example by motivating others to make changes to culture or processes to achieve improved spatial planning outcomes.

Leadership involves inspiring others, so you must show how you mentor, motivate and support other planners and associated spatial planning professionals to enable them to develop their own careers within the planning profession. Academics may do this within a teaching and research environment, showing leadership not just to students within their own institution but through collaborative working with other academics. If you work for an organisation, you should demonstrate how you develop the professional planning capabilities of people for whom you are responsible. If you work as a sole practitioner, you may be involved in mentoring students, graduates or early career planners, or planners in other organisations or you may be influencing those in related professions.

The way that you demonstrate this competency may vary according to the sector in which you work. For example, academics may demonstrate leadership through publication and application of their original research, through leading the discipline and inspiring others through their ideas, or by leading their nation in a new direction in terms of planning. Or, if you work in a strategic role in an organisation, you could demonstrate how you use your leadership skills to achieve corporate goals through the process of spatial planning and how you influence the strategic direction of your organisation.

### **Prompts**

- Have you demonstrated your leadership through interaction with Chartered Town Planners and other professionals?
- Have you demonstrated how you have shown leadership when tackling difficult planning issues and/or making difficult planning decisions?
- Have you demonstrated at what point your spatial planning leadership was critical to the success of the issue at hand?
- Have you demonstrated how your advice, achievements or actions motivated other professionals to achieve shared objectives?

### **NOTE**

Go back over your PCS and check (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.

## 7. Professional Development Plan (PDP)

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

### 7.1 Why is the PDP important?

The RTPI believes that one of the most useful pieces of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) you can do is to carefully prepare a PDP. CPD is the way in which professionals maintain and develop their expertise via an ongoing process of learning through planning and reflection ([Section 7.5](#) contains a list of types of CPD activities).

All members entering the profession are required to begin a habit of lifelong learning and CPD. 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 practitioners to continue to learn, debate, discuss and update skills or knowledge 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.

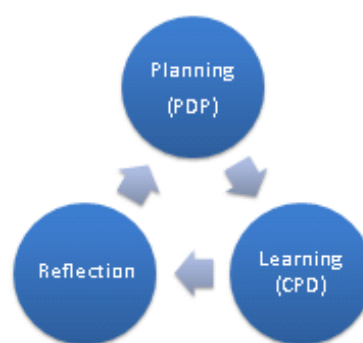
The Code states that members should:

- 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.

It is a requirement to continue the reflective practice of preparing a PDP 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](#).

### CPD cycle



#### 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 candidates 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.

## 7.2 Structure and scope of the PDP

The PDP structure starts with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis looking at your current personal strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats that could impact on your ability to meet your career goals. The SWOT is followed by an Action Plan that consists of a hierarchical structure of a goal, objectives and actions:

- A goal is the overarching, long-term and strategic outcome for the plan. The goal should outline what you will be able to do or be as a professional in two years' time, as a result of carrying out your plan.
- The objectives then narrow down and identify the developmental areas of knowledge and skills you will need to gain to achieve your goal.
- The actions are the specific details of the CPD activities you will carry out to gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet your objectives. They need to include what you will do, where, when, why and how, what you will gain from it and how you will measure that development (meeting the SMART model outlined in [Section 7.4](#)).

The RTPi has produced a PDP template (explained in detail in [Section 7.4](#)) that you must use to ensure that your PDP follows the correct format.

Goals can be career aspirations, like developing a specialism, moving sector or gaining a promotion, as long as the planning context is clearly explained and the associated objectives are focused on furthering skills and knowledge.<sup>13</sup> 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.

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. Note that your PDP must focus on your own professional development and not on developing the business or organisation. 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.

## 7.3 Checklist for the PDP

Your PDP will be assessed on the following elements:

- That 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.
- That the majority of weaknesses identified in the SWOT are addressed in the Action Plan, however, it is recognised that not all weaknesses can be addressed in the timescale of the PDP.
- That one to two goal(s) are identified. These must relate to the PES/PCS. Each goal must have two to four objectives which focus on skills and knowledge and two to four

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<sup>13</sup> Updating your CV or applying for jobs would not be appropriate actions or objectives as they are processes and do not directly result in you furthering your skills or knowledge.

SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) actions per objective.

- That the PDP has a balance of planning and non-planning skills, with at least 50% being planning. 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 7.4](#)).
- That the PDP template which is available on the [RTPI website](#) has been used.
- That the PDP covers the period two years onwards from the date of your submission. It must be forward-looking. For example, if you submit at the end of April 2017 your PDP should run from the start of May 2017 to the end of April 2019.
- That the PDP is within the word limit for the EP-APC submission (guide of 1,500 words)<sup>14</sup>.

**Each of these points must be met for the PDP to pass, otherwise you may be asked to resubmit your PDP or be required to enter a supplementary support phase.**

#### NOTE

You are not required to get your PDP corroborated although you should indicate that you have the relevant support for any actions which require it (e.g. budget in place for attendance on a training course).

## 7.4 PDP template outline with guidance notes

In this section, a copy of parts of the PDP template is provided, in order to give examples, along with guidance notes. The full template is on the [RTPI website](#).

### 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.

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<sup>14</sup> The word count for the PDP **only** includes the text you enter into the template.

<p><b>Strengths</b></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"> <li>• areas of strong planning knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• strong transferable skills and competencies</li> <li>• commitment to personal and professional development</li> <li>• good contacts or successful networking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p><i>Most “weaknesses” that you identify should be used to form goals, objectives and actions in part two. You are expected to address the majority of the weaknesses you have identified.</i></p> <p><i>There should be a clear link between your “weaknesses” and the goals, objectives and actions identified and the majority should be based around planning knowledge, skills or experience.</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"> <li>• areas of weakness in planning knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• underdeveloped transferable skills and competencies</li> <li>• understanding that there is more to planning than your current experience</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></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"> <li>• opportunities within the industry</li> <li>• opportunities within your organisation</li> <li>• training and professional development opportunities</li> <li>• support of RTPI (Regions &amp; Nations, Networks etc.)</li> <li>• opportunities to volunteer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></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"> <li>• industry downturns</li> <li>• negative changes within the organisation e.g. downsizing or restructuring</li> <li>• better qualified competitors</li> <li>• limited training opportunities</li> </ul>

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 fully SMART. Please ensure you are familiar with SMART planning before starting your action plan.

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

<p><b>GOAL</b></p> <p><i>Where do I want to be professionally?</i></p> <p><i>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, the output of completing the action plan. What will you be able to do or be as a result?</i></p> <p><i>Consider the question: as a professional planner, what direction do you want your career to move in over the next two years?</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p>
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*spatial planning role or 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 two 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. The objectives should define the areas of knowledge or types of skills that you will need to gain to meet your goal. 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. Every action must conform to the SMART model, failure to do so will result in an unsuccessful plan.*

*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 four SMART actions in the columns below.

Action	How will you measure your learning?	Start and end dates
<i>Clearly identify what specific 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>Work based learning is acceptable, but you must highlight what it is you will learn from it (e.g. how taking on a new area of work will develop specific knowledge and skills).</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 am able to use my new knowledge of X to advise clients on Y.</i>	
<i>Link your action to your awareness of lack of knowledge/skills identified in part one, if appropriate.</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 organisation to fund the action.</i>		

## 7.5 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:

- online learning modules;
- attending planning enquiries or hearings;
- formal events such as conferences, seminars or workshops;
- short courses;
- formal qualifications;
- 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 Nation or Region, chapter or network.



## 8. Tips for a successful application

### 8.1 Showcase your experience

This is your opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism and expertise, and to show how as an experienced practitioner you meet the standards required for Chartered membership. Think carefully about your choice of case studies and make sure you give yourself sufficient time to craft a submission that demonstrates your experience, competence and skills to the best of your ability.

### 8.2 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. Discuss the competencies with colleagues or other practitioners who know your work so that you have a thorough understanding of how you might demonstrate them.

### 8.3 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 have worked on. 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.

### 8.4 Check off all the competencies

Use a checklist like the one on the [RTPI website](#) to identify where you have addressed each competency in your submission.

### 8.5 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.

### 8.6 Remember your PDP

Spend time to show that as an experienced practitioner you are able to produce a successful PDP and are accustomed to planning your learning and professional development. Refer to the PDP checklist to make sure you meet all of the requirements.

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

**For more information:**

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