



**RTPI**

Royal Town Planning Institute

# 2019 Membership Guidance Summary of Changes

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## Supplementary Guidance

For Chartered APC, Associate and Legal Associate  
membership candidates

Published June 2019

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**This supplementary guidance must be read  
alongside main guidance available at:**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/apc](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/apc)**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/associate)**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate)**

**Your application will be rejected or deferred if  
you fail to comply with the main guidance.**

# Contents

1. GENERAL INFORMATION .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 How to use this document .....	1
1.3 Membership guidance review .....	1
2. CHANGES TO GUIDANCE.....	2
2.1 Overview of changes .....	2
2.2 Competency title changes .....	4
2.3 Competency evidence type changes .....	5

# 1. General information

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2018 - 2019 a member-led working group and the Membership Assessment Advisory Panel (MAAP) undertook a review of the candidate guidance used to apply for professional membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The aim of the review was to consider comments which have been raised by candidates and assessors on the existing guidance and associated assessment process.

**Revised guidance** was published in **June 2019** and is applicable to **all new candidates from January 2020**; it **replaces** the following guidance documents:

- Licentiate Assessment of Professional Competence (L-APC) Guidance March 2015
- Associate Assessment of Professional Competence (A-APC) Guidance June 2016
- Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC) Guidance June 2016
- Associate Membership Guidance June 2016
- Legal Associate Membership Guidance January 2017

If a candidate submitted their original application prior to January 2020, any resubmission they submit will be assessed against the guidance they used to prepare their original submission.

Assessors will be provided with advice to assist assessments during the transition period.

## 1.2 How to use this document

This document provides an overview of the changes made to guidance published in June 2019. It should assist you in transitioning to revised guidance if you are making your application from January 2020 onwards.

## 1.3 Membership guidance review

The RTPI would like to thank the members involved in reviewing membership guidance and ensuring its continuing fitness for purpose. The review was only possible due to the expertise and advice volunteered by RTPI members. The Institute would especially like to thank:

- Nick Baker MRTPI
- Heather Claridge MRTPI
- Kieron Hyams MRTPI
- John McCarthy MRTPI
- Natalya Palit MRTPI
- Lorraine Robertson MRTPI
- Ellen Timmins MRTPI
- Keith Thomas FRTPI
- Jane Weir MRTPI

## 2. Changes to guidance

### 2.1 Overview of changes

#### MEMBERSHIP ROUTES

- All three Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) routes to Chartered membership have been retained.
- The Associate and Legal Associate membership classes have been retained.
- The eligibility criteria for each membership route / class remains unchanged; this means that the number of years' experience required to apply for membership has not changed.
- A further route to Chartered membership is currently in development for candidates undertaking the Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship in England. Guidance on this new route is due to be published in 2020. For further details see: [www.rtpi.org.uk/degreeapprenticeship](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/degreeapprenticeship).

#### COMPETENCY TITLES AND STRUCTURE

- There are changes to the titles of competencies (see section 2.2 for further details).
- All competencies have been restructured and now include criteria and examples to make requirements more explicit. **All competency criteria must be demonstrated for a candidate to be successful.** These replace the competency Guidance Statement and Prompts in previous guidance.

#### EVIDENCE TYPES FOR COMPETENCIES

- The four evidence types required for competencies will be retained (Awareness, Understanding, Application and Core) but the definitions have been amended to clarify the level of demonstration required.
- There are changes to the evidence type required for some competencies (see section 2.3 for further details).

#### NEW MERGED COMPETENCY – C1 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE RTPI CODE OF CONDUCT

- Two competencies have been **merged**, 'C1 Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct' and 'C8 Ethical challenges' and replaced with 'C1 Professional ethics and the RTPI Code of Conduct'. This is in response to the basis on which many candidates typically present evidence to demonstrate these competencies.

- Candidates who submit their original application under guidance published in 2015-2017, but resubmit in 2020 will continue to be assessed against the competency 'C8 Ethical challenges'. However, if they do not meet this benchmark, the candidate will be assessed against the following criterion from the revised guidance: "Reflect on **how** your action has minimised reputational risk to the profession, and **why** this built trust in the profession".

## CORROBORATION

- The corroboration requirements have been streamlined. Candidates no longer have to show that corroboration has been sent from their employer's email address or printed on their employer's letterhead paper. Instead, the RTPI will contact a random sample of corroborators each round to ensure authenticity of the documentation submitted.
- The Corroborator Declaration Form **must** be used when submitting corroboration. A letter or email is no longer accepted.

## PDP SUPPORT PHASE

- The Professional Development Plan (PDP) Support Phase has been streamlined. Candidates who now enter this Phase will continue to be required to resubmit their PDP within one month of their election to membership, but they may not be selected for further monitoring after two years. A smaller random sample of these candidates will be monitored instead. For further details on the Phase see: [www.rtpi.org.uk/pdp-support-phase](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/pdp-support-phase).

## RESUBMISSIONS

- Assessors have been given more flexibility to set word limits for supplementary statement resubmissions. This means that candidates may be asked to submit a supplementary statement where previously a complete section resubmission was required.

## NEW RESOURCES

- There is a new Corroboration Advice Note which provides advice to candidates on how to obtain corroboration for their application in different scenarios.
- There is a new Reflective Journal Advice Note which provides advice to candidates on how to structure and complete the Reflective Journal.
- There are new Case Study Indicative Outline resources to aid candidates in structuring their Professional Competence Statement (PCS) for each route.
- There is a new Planning Theory Advice Note which provides advice to EP-APC and A-APC candidates on how to demonstrate the theory element of competency 'C13 Specialist knowledge and planning theory'. This new resource incorporates a suggested reading list which was previously listed on the RTPI website.

- There is a new Planning Degree Statement and Matrix template which is compulsory for EP-APC and Associate (educational background b candidates only).
- The following resources have been updated; Academic Experience Advice Note, Mentoring Advice Note, Assessor Handbook, RTPI Learn Introduction to Professional Ethics online module.

### LOG BOOK (L-APC AND A-APC)

- Retitling the L-APC and A-APC 'log book' as a 'Reflective Journal' so that candidates are encouraged to place more emphasis on critical reflection.
- The log book / Reflective Journal template remains unchanged.

### STATEMENT OF PLANNING CONTENT OF DEGREE (EP-APC AND ASSOCIATE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND B CANDIDATES ONLY)

- The Statement of Planning Content of Degree has been retitled Planning Degree Statement and Matrix (PDS and Matrix). The PDS and Matrix template is available online and is compulsory.
- The threshold of planning content required for a planning degree (educational background b) has been revised down from 100% to 75%. Candidates are also now permitted to demonstrate the 75% threshold over two degrees if applicable to their circumstances.
- The word limit for the PDS and Matrix has been increased from 500 words to a maximum of 1,000 words.

### WORD LIMIT FOR WRITTEN SUBMISSION (EP-APC)

- The word limit for EP-APC and A-APC written submissions has been increased from 6,750 words to 7,000 words. It is recommended that the additional word limit be used on the Professional Competence Statement (PCS). The +/-10% allowance continues to apply.

### EXPERIENCE (LEGAL ASSOCIATE)

- There are changes to the nature of experience required to apply for Legal Associate membership (List A and List B).

## 2.2 Competency title changes

Table 1 sets out the changes to certain competencies and the route or class the change is applicable to. If a competency is not listed, this means that the competency title has not changed. However, all competencies have been restructured and now include **criteria**, so it vital that candidates **review all the competencies in the revised guidance**, regardless of whether the title has changed. For a full list of competencies, please refer to the main guidance available at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/apc](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/apc), [www.rtpi.org.uk/associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/associate), [www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate).

**TABLE 1 – COMPETENCY TITLE CHANGES**

Competency in 2015-2017 Guidance	Class applying for	Change in June 2019 Guidance
'C1 Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct' <b>and</b> 'C8 Ethical challenges'	Chartered, Associate, Legal Associate	Competencies now merged into 'C1 Professional ethics and the RTPI Code of Conduct'
'C5 Identifying and evaluating a course of action'	Chartered	Title changed to 'C5 Identifying and assessing alternative courses of action'
'C9 The political framework'	Chartered, Associate, Legal Associate	Title changed to 'C8 Politics in planning'
'C10 The economic context'	Chartered, Associate	Title changed to 'C9 Economics in planning'
'C12 Sustainability'	Chartered, Associate	Title changed to 'C11 Sustainability and climate change'
'C13 Engagement and participation'	Chartered	Title changed to 'C12 Community engagement, participation and equality'
'C14 Specialist knowledge and its relationship to spatial planning'	Chartered	Title changed to 'C13 Specialist knowledge and planning theory' (note: requirement to demonstrate theory was previously under 'C2 The spatial planning context')
'C15 Leadership in spatial planning'	Chartered (EP-APC only)	Title changed to 'C14 Leadership in planning'
'C16 Identifying and analysing legal issues and risks, and recommending a course of action'	Legal Associate	Title changed to 'C15 Identifying and analysing legal issues and risks, and assessing alternative courses of action'

## 2.3 Competency evidence type changes

Evidence types describe the minimum level of evidence a candidate needs to demonstrate to be successful on a competency. The four evidence types are: Awareness, Understanding, Application and Core (Core is the highest level, with repeated demonstration required). These are described in more detail in the main guidance.

Table 2 sets out the changes to the evidence types required for certain competencies and the route or class the change is applicable to.

If a competency is not listed, this means that there is no change to the evidence type for that competency. For a full list of competencies, please refer to the main guidance available at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/apc](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/apc), [www.rtpi.org.uk/associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/associate), [www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate).



**TABLE 2 – COMPETENCY EVIDENCE TYPE CHANGES**

Competency in 2015-2017 Guidance	Class applying for	Change in June 2019 Guidance
'C8 Ethical challenges'	Associate	Evidence type was Awareness but is now Core as part of 'C1 Professional ethics and the RTPI Code of Conduct'
	Chartered	Evidence type was Understanding but is now Core as part of 'C1 Professional ethics and the RTPI Code of Conduct'
'C12 Sustainability'	Associate	Evidence type changed from Understanding to Awareness
	Chartered	Evidence type changed from Application to Understanding



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**Access all resources including  
main guidance at:**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/apc](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/apc)**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/associate)**

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/legal-associate)**

**Contact the Membership Team:**

**[membership@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:membership@rtpi.org.uk)**

**+44(0)20 7929 9462**

**Thank you for reading this  
supplementary guidance.**