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*Brunei Darussalam Board of Architects Professional Engineers and Quantity Surveyors*

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## **GUIDELINE NO. 11**

**ARCHITECTS, PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND QUANTITY SURVEYORS, ORDER 2011  
AND  
ARCHITECTS, PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND QUANTITY SURVEYORS, RULES 2016**

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### PART II – SECTION 6 (b)

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE EXAMINATION  
FOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS

-COUNSELLOR HANDBOOK-

**QUALIFICATION AND EXAMINATION COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2017**



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## Introduction

All candidates pursuing registration with BAPEQS must appoint a counsellor, who is a registered quantity surveyor of BAPEQS, to support them, to guide them and to sign them off as competent to sit their final assessment interview.

This handbook provides an overview of the counsellor (and supervisor) role for all PCE candidates. It is essential that as a counsellor you familiarise yourself with the PCE candidate handbook and the PCE requirements and competencies handbook.

As a counsellor you will support any of the following PCE candidates:

- **BAPEQS recognised degree** – At least 24 months' structured training and a minimum of 50 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit points.
- **BAPEQS recognised degree with a minimum of 5 years' relevant experience** – At least 12 months' structured training and a minimum of 25 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit points.
- **BAPEQS recognised degree with a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience** – Demonstrate a minimum of 25 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit points. over the preceding 12 months. No structured training period required.

**Please note:** Candidates who have a recognised degree and over ten years' experience will be able to submit for final assessment as soon as you feel they are competent to be assessed.



## Section 1

# Providing support to candidates following a structured training programme

- **BAPEQS recognised degree + up to 5 years' relevant experience**
- **BAPEQS recognised degree + 5-10 years' relevant experience**

The structured training is in place to enable the candidate to demonstrate how they have gained the skills and abilities needed to perform specific tasks or functions as required by the competencies.

In this case your role as a PCE counsellor is to: plan the training programme, monitor the progress and guide the candidate throughout their training period. It is also recommended that the candidate appoints a PCE supervisor ideally selecting someone who has day-to-day responsibility for the candidate and knows their work well, to provide a regular assessment of progress against the competencies of the candidate.

**Note:** Preferably, both roles should be undertaken by registered members of BAPEQS and from the same area of professional practice as the candidate.

## What tasks would you need to complete to support your candidate?

- Read the PCE candidate handbook and PCE requirements and competencies handbook
- Help the candidate choose the appropriate competencies on enrolment
- Support, guide and encourage the candidate
- Plan and monitor their continuing professional education – CPE
- Discuss whether they need additional experience or training and agree who will organise it and how they will gain it
- At six monthly reviews use both their diary and logbook to assess them against their competencies and review their overall progress



- At six monthly reviews work with your candidate to update the summary of experience template and review the logbook
- At the halfway point review, liaise with the supervisor (if they have one) and the candidate, agree progress and focus for the coming months
- At six monthly reviews judge what competencies have been achieved and when. Are they ready for final assessment?
- Discuss the topic for their case study. What would show the best spread of skills, which will cover 2 or more technical competencies? What project have they worked on in the last 24 months that best demonstrates their analytical ability and ability to give sound professional advice?
- If you have a supervisor in place, work with them to give the best advice and guidance to your candidate to help them in preparing for the final assessment presentation and interview
- Liaise with the supervisor and make sure that all the relevant documentation is included in the final assessment submissions
- Conduct a mock interview to help them prepare for the type of questions they may get asked.

If you are appointed as a PCE supervisor, you will need to complete the following tasks/activities to support your candidate through to their assessment:

- Read the PCE candidate handbook and PCE requirements and competencies handbook
- Help the candidate choose the appropriate competencies on enrolment
- Support, guide and encourage the candidate
- Plan their continuing professional education – CPE
- Give guidance on how to capture their experience in a diary to transfer into their summary of experience and log book
- Regularly review the log book. Are the competency references correct? Are they claiming too many days or not enough?
- Help the candidate interpret the competencies to ensure that they receive credit for all activities carried out
- Assess your candidate against the competencies every three months, updating their summary of experience template and log book
- At the halfway point, review progress with the counsellor and the candidate
- With the counsellor, assess whether the candidate has achieved the competency requirements of the PCE and has all the relevant evidence for the final assessment submissions
- Support and guide the candidate on the case study layout and topic. Read it with them a number of times to guide them. Make sure they check it for grammatical and spelling errors



- Prior to final assessment, discuss the candidate's progress and readiness with the counsellor. Complete the summary of experience
- If the candidate has been referred, agree a plan of action that will allow the candidate to remedy the deficient areas as per their referral report. Work closely with them to help them build confidence and understand the reasons for the referral.

## Assessing progress

A key element of any supporting role is the assessment of your candidate's progress against the chosen competencies. A key aspect to the successful management of the training period is therefore your in-depth knowledge and understanding of these competencies. The competency based approach, while still assessing what people know, also assesses what they can do. You have to ensure that your candidate not only has the knowledge and understanding but can also put this into practice.

If you are the candidate's manager you will already be doing much of what is required to assess them, using similar skills to those for appraising staff:

- be aware of how they are performing in day-to-day activities, assessing competencies such as working in a team, problem solving and working to deadlines
- look at work they have produced, learning more about their technical and professional knowledge and understanding
- ask questions about why they chose a particular approach, exploring their knowledge and understanding – this will help in developing their case studies and prepare them for their interview
- ask about the wider implications of their work, testing their understanding of the whole work environment.

From this you can begin to form a judgement of how well they are doing. The point at which they are competent, to level 2, is when you are confident that they can carry out an activity without supervision to a standard that is acceptable to you and for level 3, that they are able to give sound professional advice.

Candidates need guidance and support to get the most out of their training programme. This is particularly important where you have reviewed their progress and have decided they are not yet competent. The candidate requires clear guidance on where they need to develop. They may not realise there is a problem and miss out on a learning opportunity. These issues should be dealt with at the three/six monthly reviews.



## Section 2

# Providing support to other PCE candidates

- **BAPEQS recognised degree + a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience**

Before the candidate can progress, you as the counsellor must be satisfied that they have achieved the required levels in **all** the competencies needed for their PCE. You may not have personal knowledge of the candidate's experience in all the chosen competencies as they may have achieved some of them a number of years ago, and possibly in a different job. As a counsellor you must know the candidate's work: this knowledge may be built up through discussion and questioning with the candidate and any previous employers (where possible). You should preferably be from the same company as the candidate, and ideally should be their manager.

### Your role as a PCE counsellor is to:

- Discuss the candidate's career, relevant experience, chosen the most appropriate competencies that reflect the work that the candidate does in their day to day environment
- With your candidate review their self-assessment against the core and optional competencies
- Agree the most appropriate way of filling in any gaps where experience shortfalls are identified
- Discuss the candidate's continuing professional education activities during the last 12 months and agree a plan. (All PCE candidates are required to complete 25 credit points of CPE each year).
- Regularly meet to review their progress against all the competencies and the development of their submission documents
- Discuss the topic for their case study – what would show the best spread of skills, does it cover 2 or more technical competencies? What project have they worked on in the last 24 months that best demonstrates their analytical ability and ability to give sound professional advice?
- Ensure you are confident in the candidate's skills and ability as well as that their submission is accurate, contains no errors and meets the stated requirements.



## Section 3

# Preparing for final assessment

It is the responsibility of the PCE counsellor (and supervisor if appointed) to ensure that the candidate is competent in all the required areas and to the required levels before applying for the final assessment. Candidates must not come forward for final assessment too early – this is the biggest reason for candidates being referred.

The final assessment interview is primarily competency based and your candidate will need specific skills for this. It is extremely important that you plan this with the candidate, ensure that they have a good working and well-rounded knowledge of their core and selected optional competencies.

## Judging the evidence

Think about the type of evidence that will best demonstrate your candidate's competence (for example reports, valuations, correspondence). Base your decisions on actual evidence of work produced rather than their ability to talk about what they do. Competency-based assessment is about the candidate being able to operate under normal work pressures, such as interruptions and tight deadlines. It is also about having interpersonal skills, communication and being part of a team. The best way to judge this is to observe them in their normal working day. Be objective in your assessments and give your candidate honest and reasoned advice.

The main ways to assess candidates are:

- Observation in the natural course of your work and theirs
- Examination of their work, asking them questions about their work and the decisions they make
- Speaking to other people who know their work for confirmation of their abilities.





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When looking at the work produced by your candidate, find out what they did themselves and which aspects were done by teamwork. Talk to them at length about this. The following questions will help determine whether they have met the competencies or not.

- Is the work they have produced relevant to the competencies they are claiming?
- Is it sufficient? Are you sure they could do this again in similar circumstances?
- Are they drawing upon current experience? If the examples they are using are not current, can they still complete the task accurately and professionally?

For some of the competencies, you should have enough recent knowledge of your candidate's work to be able to judge from personal experience. However, they may tell you that some of the competencies were achieved in the past, perhaps ten years ago or more. For these competencies, you will have to form a judgement based on your discussions with them – you may feel you have to ask some probing questions to assure yourself that the candidate's experience is of sufficiently high quality and is using current practices and legislation.

The candidate must be competent in all the required competencies to the required levels before applying for final assessment. If you use a variety of assessment methods and get to know their work over a period of time you will be able to make a sound judgement. Your candidate cannot apply for final assessment until you have certified that, in your opinion, they have reached a level of proficiency that justifies attending the final assessment.

**Note:** When you certify a candidate as competent on their summary of experience and application, you are confirming that not only can the candidate do the task in their current organisation but, allowing for minor differences, could also do so in another organisation. Most importantly, you are confirming that you consider this candidate to be suitable to become a registered quantity surveyor who will uphold the rigorous standards of BAPEQS. You are signing a declaration in your capacity as a BAPEQS registered member and as such you are bound by the BAPEQS Code of Professional Conducts and Ethics.



## Section 4

# Supporting the referred candidate

Your support and guidance will be of great importance to a referred candidate. Ask them to write a few notes about their experience in relation to the interview and the referral report contents. When you meet, adopt a counselling style of interview.

Help them understand the outcome of the assessment and accept the reality of the situation. They must take ownership of the outcome and either accept the result and not seek to blame anyone else or (if you feel that there are grounds for an appeal) provide you with evidence to support an appeal.

You and your candidate must agree how to address the deficiencies identified in the referral report. Take the time to do this thoroughly, both you and your candidate need to be confident that you have a plan which will help them to gain the further experience and development necessary to reach the standard required the next time they take the assessment.

To be eligible for re-assessment candidates should:

- complete some further relevant professional experience
- continue to complete their CPE
- write a new case study or re-submit the same case study as long as the project is no more than 24 months old
- agree together how best to address the deficiencies identified in the referral report
- if they are following a structured training programme, they must continue to maintain and record their experience until they are successful
- provide an updated summary of experience covering all the competencies you have gained further experience in since your referral focusing on any areas identified in your referral report (200-300 words in total per competency). If you are following a structured training programme, you must continue to maintain and record your experience until you are successful.

The candidate will then be re-interviewed in the normal manner.