

Education for Surveyors: An RICS Perspective

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SUMMARY

With increasing pressure on professionals and their representative institutes to offer a breadth of specialist knowledge and a competent and ethical service to clients and the public within an increasingly global marketplace, attention is being focussed on the nature of pre- and post-qualification professional education as a device to improve the quality of professionals.

This paper outlines the history of the RICS's professional education for Chartered Surveyors¹ and considers some of the issues currently facing the professional education and training of valuers. It also discusses the "objectives and principles" of the approach which The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) is adopting in its role as an accrediting body of surveying courses around the world.

Specifically, the paper covers the roles of professional Accreditation, Partnership and Threshold Standards, External Examiners, the assessment of pre-qualificational training (APC) and Continuing Professional Development.

¹ This paper does not include details of membership for Technical Surveyors to the RICS.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1881, the Royal Charter of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) established compulsory professional qualifying examinations for its Professional Associates and Fellows (Thompson, 1968: 180) and the first examinations were held in that year (ibid.: 186). William Sturge, a founder member of the Institution of Surveyors (which was later to become the RICS) advocated that in order to maintain a standard of membership “. . . the policy of the [RICS] should therefore be to require a high standard of education, as a qualification for membership, in order that the fact of being a member may be an earnest of superior competence and skill, as well as of good character . . . In short, membership should be considered a distinction, not only by the profession, but by the public at large.” (Sturge, cited by Thompson, 1968: 182).

According to Thompson (1968: 202) “As a profession with its roots in practice, rather than in ideas and principles, the training of a surveyor has traditionally been on the job . . . “ and late 19th and early to mid 20th century members of the RICS were normally articulated to “a surveyor of established reputation” (ibid.).

In the late 19th century, land surveying courses developed and in the early 20th century, technical colleges began delivering urban subjects. Heriot Watt College in Edinburgh and the Stowe College in Glasgow (both in Scotland) were the first colleges in Britain to run courses for non-agricultural surveying examinations (Thompson, 1968: 216). But “. . . the real breakthrough in university-level education came after 1918, with the movements which led to the establishment of the College of Estate Management, and to the establishment at Cambridge of a degree in Estate Management . . . “ (Thompson, 1968: 217).

The College of Estate Management is an independent body, founded in 1919 providing distance learning education and training to the property and construction industries (CEM, 2003) The RICS (specifically its predecessor) was among the sponsors of its Royal Charter in 1922 and in 1945 the College expanded as a “full time, university, institution” (Thompson, 1968: 221) and it continues to offer a range of professional education for surveyors through distance learning.

By 1950, a report on the educational policy of the Institution concluded that “no emphasis be laid upon any one of the three methods of entry into the profession” i.e. by a university vocational degree; full-time tuition at a recognised school of instruction; or by approved practical training coupled with evening classes or postal tuition (Thompson, 1968:222). However, full-time tuition for professional examinations was permitted only up to Intermediate level, beyond which it was considered a surveyor should receive two years of practical training.

By 1960, however, full-time professional courses were approved up to Final level and candidates were required to obtain an additional two years of practical experience prior to election to Professional Associate membership.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the UK saw an expansion of surveying courses in technical colleges and Polytechnics, many of which are now the so-called “new” universities. The bulk of these courses were accredited by a joint validation and accreditation exercise of the Council for National Academic Awards (validation²) and the RICS (accreditation³). Courses were monitored and accredited by the RICS’s Surveying Courses Board, a sub-committee of the RICS’s Education and Membership Committee.

Some courses adopted a ‘sandwich’ mode of attendance, which allowed students to benefit from practical experience during their academic study; but whichever mode of study was offered, prospective surveyors were still required to undertake at least two years of practical experience, which, by the 1970s was formalized into a Test of Professional Competence (now the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) and which was and continues to be administered directly by the RICS.

In January 1991, the RICS introduced mandatory Continuing Professional Development for all corporate (professional) members of the RICS⁴, and the current bylaws of the Institution require members to be able to demonstrate (if requested) a minimum of 60 hours of structured learning over a three year period.

By 1994 (RICS, 2002a: 3) the RICS had almost entirely abandoned its examining role and full-time (or equivalent) courses were offered in UK universities (or equivalents), covering almost the full range of surveying disciplines, including building surveying, land surveying, mineral surveying, quantity surveying, planning and development, valuation.

The opportunities offered by the distance learning programmes of the College of Estate Management have long given surveyors around the world the chance to qualify as Chartered Surveyors in their own countries. As with the UK, there was a trend to develop surveying education within academia and RICS accredited courses were developed in such countries as Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and South Africa.

RICS accredited courses for various specialisms are currently available in those countries listed in Table 1 below.

² validation is “the process of internal academic review whereby universities ensure that existing and proposed courses meet their own standards and objectives. The RICS is not involved in course validations.” (RICS, 2003: 13) Prior to a UK university having the power to award its own degrees, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) undertook this role.

³ accreditation is “the process of appraisal, inspection and monitoring whereby RICS ensures that specific *degree courses* meet its standards; holders of accredited degrees are deemed to satisfy the academic requirements for RICS membership.” (RICS, 2003: 10)

⁴ For new corporate members, a mandatory CPD requirement was introduced during the 1980s.

Thus, in addition to developing pre-qualification professional education, in academic institutions assessed through accredited awards; pre-qualification professional training in practitioners' offices, assess by the Institution's Assessment of Professional Competence (APC); and a mandatory requirement for its membership to continue with professional education during the course of their professional lives by undertaking a level of Continuing Professional Development, the RICS has set professional education as an intrinsic part of being a Chartered Surveyor⁵.

Table 1: Countries with RICS accredited courses

Australia	Hong Kong	Republic of South Africa
Austria	Hungary	Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Belgium	Italy	Scotland
Canada	Malaysia	Singapore
China	Netherlands	Spain
England	New Zealand	Sri Lanka
France	Northern Ireland	Thailand
Germany	Poland	USA
	Republic of Ireland	Wales

(Source: Small, 2003)

In 1999/2000, the Agenda for Change addressed issues of concern within the surveying profession, with the aim of elevating the standing of chartered surveyors and the report from the Education Task Force (established under the Agenda for Change process) identified "excellence in surveying education internationally" as necessary "to realise the needs of the membership of 'a learned society for the 21st century'" (RICS, 1999: 5). In order to raise the status of the RICS qualification, the principal initiatives proposed by the report were:

- attracting good graduates for a wide spectrum of disciplines through an innovative, fast track post-graduate route to RICS membership;
- raising standards, improving consistency and broadening the profession's skill base through the introduction of a universal professional practice examination in the APC;
- delivery of these for the RICS through full use of electronic web-based media;
- raising quality by setting new standards for surveying degrees approved by the RICS;
- strengthening members' commitment to properly planned continuing professional development by greater direct help and information, and more focused requirements and monitoring. (*ibid.*)

The report also made recommendations to strengthen its Assessment of Professional Competence for graduates entering the profession and also the role of post-qualificational education through Continuing Professional Development. Both of these are covered later in the paper.

⁵ This paper does not include details of membership for Technical Surveyors to the RICS.

2. ACADEMIC SURVEYING EDUCATION

One of the fundamental objectives to elevating the standing of chartered surveyors was high quality education and to that end, the vision of the Education Task Force established under Agenda for Change, identified the following vision for 2010:

- “a clear attractive image of the career opportunities offered by the RICS qualification at professional and technical levels;
- access to RICS membership for the best graduates in all disciplines;
- strong partnership between RICS and a limited number of recognised centers of academic excellence throughout the world characterized by:
 - highly competitive entry to courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels;
 - an appropriate range of curricula at undergraduate and postgraduate level for the profession’s Centres of Expertise;
 - excellent teaching faculties working closely with practice;
 - international standards of research by focused teams;
 - increased freedom for selected universities to develop courses and methods of delivery at undergraduate, postgraduate and post qualification levels; and
 - attractive courses promoted by RICS.” (RICS, 2002a: 3)

The vision outlined above for 2010 is being developed by the RICS through “partnership” arrangements, which are discussed in more detail later in this paper. Initially, the “partnership” principle was applied to the UK, but now it is being applied to other areas of the world where future Chartered Surveyors are being educated and trained. Partnership accreditation is applied to all courses within the UK and is being extended to those outside the UK.

The RICS’ Education and Membership Committee determines RICS education policy and principles, and responsibility for implementing the RICS’ policy for partnerships (and the previous system of course accreditation) lies with the International Partnership and Accreditation Board, and its three regional Partnership and Accreditation Boards (PABs) covering Europe, Asia/Pacific and Africa/Americas.

2.1 Partnership

The “Partnership” strategy operated by the RICS since 2001 evolved from the Agenda for Change debate. In some ways it develops from earlier experiences of RICS education policy but it has other aspects which reflect a concern for clear transparent criteria on which “. . . to elevate the status of the RICS qualification . . .”

“Partnership” represents the coming together of a university and the RICS to establish common goals and then to work together to achieve them. This is discussed further later. All partnerships have five “generic aims”, which are defined by a joint Statement of Arrangements signed by both partners, as follows:

- maintaining threshold standards (refer 2.1.1);

- attracting bright entrants into the profession;
- promoting innovation in surveying related areas;
- more responsively developing courses to meet the needs of the profession; and
- improving professional-educational links.

Most partnerships may include additional specific aims.

The aim is to develop strong partnerships between the RICS and a limited number of recognised centers of academic excellence throughout the world (RICS, 2002a: 3). Such centers are characterised by:

- highly competitive entry to courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level;
- an appropriate range of curricula at undergraduate and postgraduate level for profession's Centres of Expertise;
- excellent teaching faculties working closely with practice;
- international standards of research by focused teams;
- increased freedom for selected universities to develop courses and methods of delivery at undergraduate, postgraduate and post qualification levels; and
- attractive courses promoted by RICS. (*ibid.*)

The RICS has identified (RICS, 2002a: 4) the following "key objectives" for world-wide standards in its partnership universities:

- internationally respected standards of student selection;
- the highest quality teaching environment;
- exposure of students to the most innovative ideas;
- a curriculum which is highly relevant to professional practice; so that
- the RICS has access to high calibre graduate output.

In acknowledging that educational and employment systems vary in different countries, the RICS recognises the need for the partnership objectives to be delivered to a consistent standard globally and therefore has identified a process of establishing standards for partnership in different countries based on the following key principles:

- standards should be found for the objectives which are relevant to the country concerned;
- standards should (ideally) be quantifiable and in the public domain;
- standards should be relevant to national job market characteristics;
- the minimum acceptable level for accredited courses in any country should be broadly equivalent to the average attainment level for student selection across all subject areas;
- the level of consistency of output grades across the country's university system will be taken into consideration;
- variations between student admission practices in different countries will be taken into consideration;
- standards for the teaching environment should include the overall teaching and learning environment, external and internal reviews and external audits, as well as the quality of the teachers;

- students need to be exposed to innovative ideas and standards should relate to the engagement of the educational establishment with high quality research;
- one threshold standard may cover more than one objective; and
- the standard for professionally relevant curricula should ensure that the overall programme prepares graduates for the surveying profession and should broadly map on to the competency needs of the Assessment of Professional Competence.

2.1.1 Threshold Standards

Threshold standards are measures to assess the standard of courses in respect of achieving the objectives and principles outlined above. Where possible, these standards are demonstrated by information which is produced for other purposes and which is in the public domain, thereby avoiding the need to create unnecessary extra work for partner universities and also to have a greater level of transparency in the demonstration of threshold standards.

In the UK, the minimum standards currently imposed are:

- 75% of first year entrants with an average A level score of 230 UCAS⁶ points;
- a relevant research score of 2D or equivalent in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE);
- a relevant teaching quality score⁷ with no more than one 2 score or lower;
- 75% of graduating students in relevant employment, as defined by government statistics. (RICS, 2002a: 7)

Each undergraduate course must meet all four thresholds in full and for post-graduate courses, the student entry standard is not applied. Courses are not differentiated because of their mode of study.

Threshold standards have also been produced for Hong Kong, covering student selection, employment profile, research assessment and teaching environment. Selection and employment standards are determined from university selection and graduate destination data. For the research standard, the government assessed information is used. The teaching environment is determined by an RICS external examiner assessment.

Further details of threshold standards and how they are interpreted is contained in the RICS' Policy and guidance on university partnerships (RICS, 2002a).

The RICS is currently developing threshold standards for other countries where accredited courses currently exist, specifically for Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, New Zealand and USA.

⁶ UCAS is the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service. By way of illustration, 230 points at A level would be achieved with 2 'A' grades or 3 'C' grades (both 240 points).

⁷ the Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) scores in England and Northern Ireland are graded from 1 (worst) to 4 (best) in: curriculum design, contact, organisation; teaching, learning and assessment; student progression and achievement; student support and guidance; learning resources; quality assurance and enhancement. Different systems apply in Scotland and Wales.

2.1.2 Partnership Development

Partnership represents the coming together of a university and the RICS to establish common goals and then to work towards achieving those goals. Much of what was previously controlled centrally is devolved to the partnership, including course development and the scrutiny of the external examiners' reports.

A university can proceed to partnership at any time when it can demonstrate that its course(s) meet the threshold standards (2.1.1) and that its courses meet the key objectives (refer p. 6 above), in particular that “. . . that the curriculum is highly relevant to professional practice.”

Each partnership is expected to sign a joint Statement of Arrangements and to review the statement at the annual meeting. Such a statement includes a mutual commitment to the five generic aims (refer 2.1 above) and to any specific aims agreed by the partnership.

The partnership meeting normally comprises a member of the regional Partnership and Accreditation Board, the regional Director, a regional representative (nominated by the regional Director), an external examiner, four or five members of the university staff plus a member of the RICS secretariat. In choosing the external examiner representative at the partnership, the RICS will take into account the main disciplines represented on the partnership group. Partnership meetings review mutual aims and objectives and develop actions to achieve them.

Partnership is intended to be developmental in nature and annual partnership meetings discuss the following issues:

- annual course review reports;
- student enrolment figures;
- external examiner reports;
- staffing and other resource changes;
- revised course proposals and re-validation reports; and
- how research and/or other innovations are fed back into courses.

Each partnership is invited to send a member of the partnership to the RICS regional board or RICS national association annually to present progress in the partnership to a wider RICS audience.

2.2 External Examiners

A major role in the RICS' Partnership process is undertaken by External Examiners. External examiners are used extensively in the UK as a device to ensure quality assurance in university courses, not all of which are accredited by professional bodies. They are appointed by the university and (for the purposes of RICS surveying courses) approved by the RICS, in part, because of their experience in education and training. Their key functions are to ensure that:

- the standard of the University's award is maintained; and
- students are treated fairly in the assessment process.

As will be seen, external examiners provide an important function both for the universities for whose courses they are responsible and for the RICS, which accredits the courses involved. There is clear and broad agreement on the functions and responsibilities of external examiners between the universities and the RICS, and although documentation from these bodies may vary the wording of the roles and duties of external examiners, the process is clear.

2.2.1 Appointment of External Examiners

External examiners are generally proposed by the University course administrators to the RICS and approved by the Regional Partnership and Accreditation Board which covers the country in which the awarding university is situated. It is usual for each accredited award to have two external examiners, one an academic and one a practitioner. At least one of these (and generally both) should be RICS members and at least one should be a member of the RICS faculty for which the course is primarily designed. External Examiners are normally appointed for one year longer than the cycle of the course i.e. if the course is a three year course, external examiners are appointed for four years, with at least one year of overlap between the end of their terms.

2.2.2 Responsibilities of External Examiners

The RICS (2003a, 2 – 3) describes external examiners as “. . . one of the most effective means of assuring standards and maintaining the professional relevance of courses . . .”. External examiners are appointed from other academic institutions and professional practices and should therefore be impartial in their judgment. In order to be able to undertake their roles, external examiners must normally:

- be involved in all levels of assessment;
- attend meetings of the board of examiners and have access to all assessed work;
- be given the opportunity to comment on the management, development and resourcing of the course;
- be consulted over proposals to admit students to a higher level of study than normal for the institution and ensure compliance with RICS regulations;
- confirm the pass and classified lists of candidates, including recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions; and
- make annual written reports to the educational establishment concerned after each assessment on its conduct and effectiveness.

This normally involves:

- receiving and commenting on all assessments (examination papers, assignments, coursework and marked tests) and their model answers before the students are assessed;
- scrutinising the scripts, assignments and dissertations written by the students and the comments, feedback and marks awarded by the internal examiners;
- attending examination board meeting and being consulted upon the appropriate decisions which should be reached in the light of the relevant regulations and in the light of fairness to the students.

It is usual for external examiners to make two visits a year to the university to attend the meetings of the Boards of examiners. It is also usual for the university to arrange for external examiners to have private (without the presence of members of the university staff) meetings with a group of students, selected from all years of the course. Such a meeting allows external examiners to establish how the students have experienced the course, what they consider worked and what could be improved. It is a fundamental role of the external examiner to ensure that students are treated fairly within the assessment process and hearing the opinions and experiences of students is an important part of the external examiners' visits to the university.

2.2.3 Appointment of External Examiners

“Only persons of sufficient seniority and experience to be able to command authority and respect should be appointed.” (University of Ulster, 2002a: 13).

Appropriate external examiners are normally recommended for approval to the relevant Regional Partnership and Accreditation Board by the University for a named course or courses and for a specified period of time. This is normally done during the year before the external examiner becomes responsible for assessment, although it can be done at any time before the date of the first assessment with which the proposed external examiner is to be associated.

External examiners are required to be and be seen to be independent of the courses and universities for which they are responsible and the RICS requires that external examiners should not:

- act concurrently as consultants to a course team for course design;
- be members of an internal panel established to review the course they examiner;
- normally be re-appointed by the same university within five years of completing a previous external examiner appointment;
- have previous close involvement with the educational establishment concerned which might compromise objectivity;
- be appointed to a university which provides the external examiners to their own university or departments, either concurrently or consecutively.

Similarly, external examiners should not normally be, and must always declare if they are:

- personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course;
- required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
- corporately or personally responsible for students regarding bursaries or other emoluments to students on the courses being examined.

2.2.4 Criteria for Appointment

External examiners should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience, which is indicated by:

- present post and place of work;
- range and scope of experience in higher education or professional practice;
- current and active involvement in academic activities, research or professional practice related to the field of study.

However, in recognition of the onerous nature of the work required of an external examiner and also of the fact that the normal timetable of events is similar, an individual can not normally hold more than two such appointments at the same time.

When identifying external examiners for an accredited course, a department or University will normally chose an academic and a practitioner, who are able to complement each other in terms of expertise and experience. Thus, an inexperienced external examiner can be appointed alongside an experienced external examiner

2.2.5 External Examiners' Reports

External examiners are required to provide a written report at the end of the academic year to the educational institution on the conduct of the assessments and other relevant matters during the academic year. The purpose of the report is to enable the educational establishment to judge whether the course is meeting its stated objectives and to make any necessary improvements, as appropriate. It is also a condition of the Partnership that External examiners reports are provided by the educational establishment to the RICS annually, including the university's response to the report.

Specific matters to be addressed in the report include:

- the overall performance of students in relation to their peers on comparable courses;
- the strengths and weaknesses evidenced by the students' performance;
- the quality and subject-specific nature of the knowledge and skills demonstrated by the students;
- the professional relevance and academic appropriateness of the structure, design, aims and subject content of the course;
- the methods of assessment, marking and classification of all assessments, including the relevance to the learned outcomes and the nature of any feedback provided by staff;

- the internal marking standards and consistency of standards; and whether the final assessment of candidates was fair and in accordance with the criteria for marking and classification;
- the quality of student learning, teaching and other support provided by staff, as indicated by student performance;
- any suggestions for improving the curriculum, syllabus, teaching methods, resources, assessment methods and the management and review of the course; and
- any other recommendations arising from the assessments.

(RICS, 2003a: 4; University of Ulster, 2002a: 57-8).

2.2.6 Validation and Review

External examiners are independent and impartial advisors, providing universities and professional bodies with informed comments on the academic standards set and the student achievement in relation to those standards. Their role is therefore one of quality assurance, which is critical for maintaining (and being seen to maintain) standards which is important both for universities and for the professional bodies which accredit their courses.

External examiners and their comments (in the form of their written reports) have a vital role both for the reviews undertaken by the universities and the reviews undertaken by the RICS' Partnership meetings and external examiners' reports and the university's response which should identify any follow-up or corrective action, should be a standing item at partnership meetings.

2.3 Professional Education

The RICS has revolutionised its professional educational policy to produce a set of guidelines which can be administered world-wide. They rely, as far as possible, on evidence which is available in the public domain (and this therefore provides a level of objectivity as well as a level of transparency). Also, such evidence removes from academics the responsibility of generating additional data when their prime role should be one of education.

The introduction of partnership into the UK and the principles which underpin it caused a great deal of debate, both in academia and within the profession at large. Some UK courses have been closed because threshold standards were not being met and educational establishments in other countries which specifically prevent those educational establishments from undertaking research have been concerned as to how the threshold standards will be applied to them. The RICS recognises this difficulty and interprets "research" as an engagement with high quality research, appropriate to the national circumstances.

Partnership is, however, not yet in force throughout the world. Currently threshold standards have only been established for the UK and for Hong Kong. The commitment of the RICS to establish standards for partnerships in different countries based on specific principles which (largely) reflect the national levels of higher education in that country should ensure that quality surveying education is available world-wide.

However, surveying skills are not based solely on pre-qualification academic education alone and the role of the Assessment of Professional Competence in achieving an appropriate level of pre-qualificational practical skills and the importance of Continuing Professional Development in maintaining both theoretical and practical skill and knowledge are vital for the educational policy of the RICS.

3. ASSESSEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Much of the change in RICS professional education which has received professional attention has related to the professional education provided by universities, but, in relation to professional education, this is only the first step in a life-time of professional learning. Following the award of a university qualification⁸, graduates are required to demonstrate a level and breadth of professional competence, prior to becoming eligible to join the RICS as corporate members. This process, the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) is administered by the RICS directly and operates in conjunction with the candidates' employers.

All candidates are required to undergo a minimum of two years structured professional training, during which they are supported by a supervisor (with day-to-day responsibility for the candidate) and a counsellor (who is responsible for planning the training programme and for monitoring the candidate's progress) who are jointly responsible for ensuring that the candidate gains the range and depth of experience and training necessary (RICS, 2002b).

The RICS is composed of sixteen subject-specific faculties and for each faculty a number of competencies are identified, some of which are "core competencies" and some of which are "optional competences". Competencies are a mix of technical and professional, interpersonal, financial, business and management skills and will depend on the route to membership and the faculty chosen. Candidates may choose certain competencies (over others) or choose the level at which they will attain certain competencies. In all cases, candidates are required to achieve the defined level of the mandatory competencies (RICS, 2002c: 4) which comprise:

- ethics, professional identity and accountability;
- conflict avoidance, management and dispute resolution procedures;
- collection, retrieval and analysis of information and data;
- customer care;
- environmental awareness;
- law;
- health and safety;
- information technology;
- oral communication;
- self management;
- team working;

⁸ Students undertaking part-time and sandwich academic courses may include part of their professional experience gained prior to graduation as part of their APC supervised work experience.

- written/graphic communication and
- two further business management and interpersonal related competencies.

Candidates are assessed by their supervisor at three monthly intervals (and by their counsellor at six monthly intervals) against their chosen competencies and are required to provide documentary evidence (a report, log book and a diary) of their experience.

There is an interim assessment of the candidates' progress, administered by the employers. The final assessment of the APC (which is administered by the RICS) is designed to show that candidates:

- can express themselves clearly in a verbal presentation and interview;
- can demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge gained during their training; and
- have an acceptable understanding of the role and responsibilities of a chartered surveyor.

Prior to the interview, candidates are required to submit:

- a log book which records the candidates' experience;
- professional development, which demonstrates that the candidate has acquired at least 48 hours of extra skills and knowledge which may not be available within their working environment (it is something akin to the continuing professional development requirements imposed on chartered surveyors (refer ***));
- record of progress in achieving the various competencies and which is signed by the supervisor and counsellor;
- interim and final reports from their supervisor and counsellor;
- a critical analysis – an original essay analysing a project in which the candidate has been involved.

The candidates are required to attend an interview at which a panel of three trained APC assessors will establish whether the candidate has successfully completed the APC requirements. At interview, the candidate is required to give a 10 minute presentation based on the critical analysis, following candidates are questioning on:

- their presentation;
- their critical analysis;
- their professional development record; and the
- broader aspects of their experience and knowledge, including ethics, RICS rules of conduct and current issues of concern to the profession. (RICS, 2002d: 12)

Outside the UK, APCs are normally administered by the national associations. Where there are no local representations, assessments are administered by the Education and Training department in the UK.

Successful completion of the APC will allow a candidate to apply for Chartered membership of the RICS and, subject to a number of conditions (including the payment of fees) such candidates become corporate members of the Institution.

4. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Having achieved the chartered surveying qualification, it is well recognised that, education does not finish upon leaving university and the RICS encourages the concepts of life-long learning not only to make chartered surveyors better at what they do, but also to encourage them to consider the opportunity it can offer to explore new challenges. (refer www.rics.org/careers/cpd/what_is_cpd.shtml)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the systematic updating and enhancement of skills, knowledge and competence which takes place throughout working life. It is an approach or process which should be a normal part of how professionals plan and manage their whole working life. (*ibid.*)

The RICS has a mandatory requirement for all chartered surveyors to follow a structured programme of continuing professional development (the minimum requirement is 60 hours over three years, with at least 10 hours each year) in order to ensure that their level of professional education is both maintained and enhanced. From 1 January 2004, members are required to register their learning objectives in advance, including the ways they intend to meet them and include a brief evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning activity.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The RICS has developed over time a process of ensuring quality professional education and training for its membership up to and beyond the point of qualification. The nature and quality of its professional education remains a key concern of the RICS and this paper outlines the current system for 'Partnership' for the accreditation of university courses which the RICS has developed in the UK and is developing in other countries, as well as the pre-RICS' qualifcational training programme, (the APC) and its post-qualification programme for life-long learning (CPD). The RICS is continuing to develop its educational programme in order to ensure that it achieves and retains the status of "a learned society" and that must be of benefit for the Institution, its membership and for all of the clients, and consumers of the output of Chartered Surveyors, including the general public.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Dr. Frances Plimmer, Dip Est Man, MPhil, PhD, FRICS, IRRV, is the RICS Delegate to Commission 2 (Professional Education) and chairs the FIG Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. She has been working in academia for over 20 years, and has researched and taught, amongst other things, issues affecting professional education and training in Europe. She is a former member of the RICS's Education and Membership Committee, a qualified APC assessor, and is currently external examiner for surveying courses in Napier University in Scotland and the University of Ulster, in Northern Ireland. She holds two part-time research posts: one with Kingston University, and one with The College of Estate Management in Reading in Surrey, both in England.

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