

## Mock Exams

These guidelines have been written to help Candidates and Mentors set-up and conduct mock exams. Once a Candidate has a notification approved they may register for the pathway exam. Before the exam takes place the Landscape Institute strongly encourages Candidates to undertake at least one mock examination in preparation.

While reading these notes and conducting the mock exam Candidates and Mentors should always remember that each exam is based on the Candidate's submissions on the Pathway. Questions will vary from Candidate to Candidate and the way in which one question is answered will frequently influence the asking of another. It is therefore entirely possible that two Candidates who work side by side on the same projects will have differing exam experiences as their submissions will have been different and they will answer questions differently.

Even the most confident Candidates can sometimes be subject to an attack of nerves and the behaviour of a nervous Candidate can starkly contrast with their behaviour during normal working conditions. The Examiners are trained to deal with nervous Candidates and mock exams help familiarise Candidates with the exam set-up and atmosphere.

### Mock Examiners

Most commonly, the Candidate's Mentor takes on the role of the mock examiner. While this is certainly an effective method of preparation, a more realistic scenario will be achieved if two Candidates can arrange to be examined by each other's Mentor instead of their own. This is often arranged through discussion at a Study Group meeting.

In the actual exam there will be two examiners present (and possibly a monitor). However, a mock exam can be conducted with just a single person in the examiner role.

### Preparing for the Mock Exam – Candidates

Candidates should read the sections of the Guidebook concerned with the exam and also read "Exam Guidance Notes for Candidates" which is available online. (<http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/pathway/submissions>)

### Preparing for the Mock Exam – Mock Examiners

It is essential for the mock examiner to prepare for the mock exam before it takes place by reading through the Candidate's development packs and preparing some questions in advance. It will help the mock examiner if they have a print out of the syllabus to hand (available at the end of this document) so that they can ensure that their questions cover the whole syllabus, rather than just those parts the Candidate may have personal experience of.

In preparing for the real exam the Examiners will have taken into account the development packs submitted during the Candidate's time on the Pathway, the Mentor's reviews and feedback from the Supervisor. The Examiner's approach will differ to some extent in response to each individual Candidate but, in general, questions will initially be of a broad nature followed by more detailed supplementary questions in which the Candidate can demonstrate their knowledge of the subject and, where appropriate, refer to personal experience. Examples are given below for how questions could develop. However, it should

be remembered that the exam is a conversation and therefore unique. Candidates should not expect to be asked the questions below or that only these types of questions will be asked.

The syllabus areas interlink so it is usual for an answer to one question to bring up another area of the syllabus. In this way a single line of questioning can cover multiple syllabus areas.

#### Example 1

- a) I see you have worked on X Project. Tell me about your role on that.
- b) How did the project come into the office?
- c) How was the fee quote calculated?
- d) What type of contract was used and why?
- e) When might you use a XX contract?

#### Example 2

- a) What is the Quantity Surveyor's role on a project at the pre and post-tender stages?
- b) What is the process and how might responsibilities be allocated between the QS and the Contract Administrator for the preparation of valuations and the production of certificates?
- c) From your own experience can you describe how YY would affect ZZ?

#### Example 3

- a) I see from your last submission that you are working on W Project which required planning permission.
- b) Talk me through the application process, the actions that were taken and the documents that were submitted.
- c) If the outcome had been different, what would your advice have been to your client?

The mock examiner should prepare questions that cover the whole syllabus. These should be a mixture of questions that relate to the Candidate's work and more theoretical questions that explore areas where the Candidate has no direct experience.

Mock examiners should also remind themselves of the standard being looked for from the Candidate. Answers should indicate a minimum stage 2 level of knowledge across the majority of the syllabus with a minority of answers (which do not directly relate to the Candidate's day to day work) being at stage 1. If the Candidate is unable to show level 1 knowledge of any areas of the syllabus then they will fail. The stage definitions are summarised in the Guidebook.

### **At the Mock Exam Venue**

When the Candidate arrives at the real venue they will be shown to the candidate waiting room. The exam co-ordinator will ask them to sign in and show their photographic ID. There will be water available while they wait. At the appointed time one of the Examiners will collect them from the waiting room and escort them to the examination room where they will be introduced to the second Examiner. The two Examiners sit on one side of a table and the Candidate sits on the other side. There will be water and notepaper in the examination room.

For the mock exam it is strongly suggested that a room be found where the mock examiner and Candidate will be undisturbed for an hour. The Candidate should wait outside and the

Examiner can ask them to come in when they are ready to begin. This helps replicate exam conditions all Candidates will find it useful to familiarise themselves with this arrangement.

### **During the Mock Exam**

There is always a temptation to treat the mock exam quite lightly, especially if you do know each other quite well. However, the more closely it can resemble real conditions the more useful it will be to the Candidate.

At the exam the Candidate knows they may take notes during the session but must leave them in the room at the end. For the mock exam you may find it useful to agree in advance that the Candidate will note the question and the mock examiner will note the answer so that you can effectively review how the mock exam went afterwards. Alternatively it may be useful to use an audio recorder or just rely on your memories if you are comfortable with that.

As the mock examiner will probably be unfamiliar with the examiner role it may be useful to have a clock or timer available that can indicate as each 15 minutes passes. Remember that ideally the questions will have covered the whole syllabus within 45 minutes.

The issues that regularly contribute to exam failures are described in the chief examiners feedback from past exams which can be accessed online. Recurring examples that mock examiners should look out for are:

- Answers are too long
- Answers are imprecise
- Candidate knows what happens in their project/office but not how it might differ in a different type of organisation or in a different scenario
- Candidate knows the theory but does not know how to apply it.
- Candidate can only answer about one syllabus area at a time - they are unable to make links between different syllabus areas
- Candidate has trouble answering questions where they do not have direct experience

Save feedback and comments for the end of the mock exam. In this way you will maintain the exam atmosphere until the mock exam is over.

### **After the Mock Exam**

Mock exams are of little benefit to the Candidate without feedback on their performance. This feedback should be constructive and balanced. The mock examiner should try to comment, always constructively, on the following aspects of the Candidate's performance:

- Relevance of answers (i.e. did the Candidate answer the question you asked or give a 'portfolio answer' where they told you everything they know about a topic in the hope that part of it answered the question)
- Depth of answers: were they stage 1, 2 or 3
- Whether any answers were incorrect
- How answers might be improved
- How often the Candidate used examples from their own experience
- Whether these examples were always relevant to the answer