

Chief Examiner feedback: November 2015 Chartership exams

During the November 2015 exam sessions a total of 66 candidates sat the Chartership exam over three days. The pass rate was 76%, which compares favourably with the last few years of exams.

The Chief Examiners collate general feedback from the examiners, and present this below to help future Chartership exam candidates and their mentors prepare.

- **Formulate clear, concise answers**

Those candidates who were unsuccessful in the November exam struggled to give clear, concise answers to the questions presented. Experience shows that this is a combination of exam nerves, and the candidate's lack of understanding of the syllabus. The Pathway to Chartership requires the mentor and supervisor to confirm readiness for the exam; however, candidates should prepare themselves for the format of the exam by reading [Pathway to Chartership Oral Examination – Notes for candidates](#). The examiners are looking for strong, clear answers that are explained with relevant examples. There is only one way to achieve this: practice, practice and practice!

- **Length and quality of quarterly submissions and giving a professional impression**

Examiners repeatedly comment that candidates write far too much in their development and activity logs for examiners to realistically make use of. The candidates who wrote concise sentences, reflecting on how their experience related to the syllabus, were often better prepared for the exam. Examiners also recommend that candidates ensure that they have proof-read, and spell-checked their entries prior to submission. The online development packs lead to a professional exam, and having spelling mistakes in logs does not give the right impression. Proof-reading may also help candidates reduce the length of their submissions, by avoiding repetition, and increasing reflection. In a similar way the candidate should treat the oral exam as if it was a job interview and try to give a professional impression.

- **Remember to update CVs**

CVs are a vital tool for the examiners when preparing for the exams, giving a rounded picture of the candidate's overall experience in a concise format. It is therefore in each candidate's interest to ensure their CV is up-to-date. Generic practice CVs do not give the examiners the necessary level of detail about the candidate, and should not be used. The LI has provided a [CV template](#), which although not compulsory, candidates may find useful.

- **Importance of mock exams**

Every year examiners recommend mock exams as an important strategy in preparation for the exam. Mentors and their candidate should carry out a mock exam in realistic exam scenarios, so that the candidate has an idea of the questions, the setting, and the time frame they will have to answer within the exam. If possible, candidates are strongly encouraged to set up further mock exams with

other CMLIs, with whom the candidate is less familiar, to provide practice in answering questions in a more realistic exam situation.

A mock exam is the opportunity for the candidate to practice demonstrating their knowledge in a clear, succinct way. Mock exams also help candidates identify areas of the syllabus where their knowledge is not as strong as they would like.

- **Mentor reviews**

The examiners were concerned to note that a number of mentor reviews did not realistically represent the scores that the candidates had actually achieved, with many being extremely optimistic. Mentors are encouraged to read through the description of the levels of knowledge and understanding required, and adjust their scores if necessary. Candidates will not be at a disadvantage if their scores have been changed, as long as the change in level has been justified.

Scoring candidates overly highly does not help the candidate, and can give a false sense of security prior to the exam. This can be detrimental if further learning and consolidation of knowledge is in reality required in preparation to sit the exam.

- **Particular areas of weakness**

Areas of weakness that appeared most frequently across candidates were sections 3D – techniques for assessing the significance and context of the landscape/site; and 4D – monitoring and controlling projects. The examiners also noted that several candidates showed a general lack of knowledge of the JCLI form of contract.

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