

Feedback from the November 2014 Exams

During the November 2014 exam sessions we saw a total of 59 candidates take the exam over three days. There was an overall pass rate of 80%. This pass rate is larger than pass rates of the previous two years, which typically hovered between 72% - 78%.

Candidates continue to be from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, and experience levels.

There were a number of issues that arose from the candidates over the three days, which have been collated into the following tips:

Formulate clear, concise answers

Unsuccessful candidates in the November exam mostly struggled to give clear, concise answers in the exam format. Sometimes this was because they lacked a broader understanding of the topic, and sometimes this was down to nerves. Candidates can prepare themselves for 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, and advice to achieve this remains the same – practice, practice, practice.

Discuss your syllabus topics

The examiner feedback repeatedly recommended that candidates discuss the syllabus topics with their mentor, other practitioners, and within study groups. This encourages candidates to be able to talk with confidence in the exam situation and to gain knowledge on areas of the syllabus not directly linked to their work. If you don't have a study group within your area, please turn to [Talking Landscape](#) to see another group that you might be able to join in via Skype, or by creating your own. Please email pathway@landscapeinstitute.org and the secretariat will be able to email other candidates in your branch highlighting a new study group.

Use the mock exams, and create your own

Mock exams are an important exercise to help prepare candidates for the exam. The examiners recommended the use of mock exams repeatedly in this year's feedback. It's recommended that a mentor and their candidate carry out a mock exam in realistic exam scenarios, so that a candidate has an idea of the questions, the setting, and the time frame they will have to answer within the exam. Mock exams are a clear way of highlighting inadequate knowledge areas. It is also recommended that

candidates carry out a mock exam with another mentor. This helps candidates to prepare answering questions about the syllabus in a more realistic exam situation.

Areas of weakness

It is important to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge on all syllabus criteria. Although each candidate has different strengths and weaknesses, a few weak areas were identified across multiple candidates:

- 2E1 – Methods of calculation and charging/ Fee tendering/ Expenses/ Changes to contracts
- 3D1 – LVIA's/ Environmental agencies/ Designations/ Trees and woodlands/ Protected species and habitats/ Statutory and non-statutory registers Methods of calculation & charging / Fee tendering/Expenses / Changes to contracts.
- 3D2 – Particularly around planning system/ EIA/ Public Inquiry Structure of the Planning system/ Planning policy, procedures.
- 4B2 - Tendering methods and documentation