

## **Chief Examiner feedback: May 2017 Chartership exams**

We are delighted to welcome 75 new Chartered members of the LI, after the LI held its May Chartership exams. 90 people in total took their Chartership exam, and the pass rate continues to increase, to 83%.

The Chartership exams give us an opportunity to reflect on what can help Licentiates as they go forward for the exam:

### **CVs**

The examiners use the CVs to get an overview of each candidate. It is vital that candidates keep these up-to-date, using the LI's [CV template](#). If the LI's CV template isn't used then candidates should ensure that they include:

- Post-18 education
- Current job title and company; summary of personal responsibilities and achievements
- Previous job title and company; summary of personal responsibilities and achievements
- All relevant post-graduate experience
- Brief explanation of gaps in CV

Omitting any of these makes it harder for the examiners to achieve an overview of the candidate's experience to date, and to formulate pertinent questions. Generic practice CVs do not give the examiners the necessary level of detail about the candidate, and should not be used.

### **Development logs**

Candidates are again reminded that all development pack entries should be written concisely and reflectively. Clearly presented notes help the examiners formulate questions based on the evidence presented. The examiners particularly want to remind candidates that the development packs are not the place for revision notes. Candidates are encouraged to write clearly and concisely, and many would benefit from using bullet points to achieve this.

The best development pack entries reflect on what has been learnt, and how that relates to the syllabus.

### **Examiners' questions**

Examiners are advised to construct 60-65% of their questions around each candidate's individual knowledge and experience, as evidenced in their development logs and CV. Examiners also need to cover areas across the full syllabus. If your practical experience is limited, a greater percentage of the questions asked will therefore not be based on your direct experience.

The examiners are also likely to ask questions on items from your logs which pique their interest – particularly if something didn't go to plan with a project, or an unusual situation occurred. Ensure that you research into anything more interesting that happens.

### **Theoretical knowledge and practical experience**

The examiners do not expect candidates to have direct experience in all areas of the syllabus, and theoretical knowledge and understanding is perfectly acceptable in some areas.

Licentiates are encouraged to gain knowledge and experience outside of their day-to-day work. This could include work shadowing, volunteering, or studying a project another landscape professional has been involved with. Licentiates are also encouraged to view the projects they are working on from other points of view, or hypothetical situations that could have occurred, such as a client requesting changes to an on-site project, or what to do if newts are on your site.

The more Licentiates engage in the active learning process, focusing on how their theoretical knowledge could be applied to real-life situations, the more rewarding a process they will find it. All practitioners are expected to reflect and learn from their practice, and the wider profession, and the Pathway to Chartership is the first step in this process.

### **Mentors**

The amount of time and effort put in by mentors and supervisors to the progress of Licentiates is enormous, and hugely appreciated. New guidance and advice for mentors and supervisors is being developed, to better support these vital volunteers.

Mentors are reminded that giving their candidates an exaggerated high assessment of their knowledge and understanding can disadvantage them when it comes to preparing for the Chartership exam. The required level for passing the Chartership exam is a majority of level 2s (general knowledge) across the syllabus, with some level 3s (proficient knowledge) in areas which they work in on a regular basis. There were a number of candidates who were scored as having all level 3s and 4s (expert knowledge) – none of the examiners (and indeed no landscape practitioner) would score themselves as experts across the whole syllabus! No candidates should be demoralised, and having a realistic understanding of which areas need to be improved is very helpful.

### **Areas of general weakness**

Many candidates appeared to struggle with the links between the syllabus areas. The syllabus is not designed for each element to be studied in isolation, and should be considered holistically.

Candidates also seemed to have the least knowledge and understanding of:

- The requirements and significance of the LI's Code of Conduct.
- The governance, structure and workings of the LI.
- Forms of practice and the duties of employers.
- Techniques for assessing the significance and context of landscapes and sites.
- Structure, policies and procedures of the UK's planning system.
- Contract administration.
- Onsite monitoring and controls.

### **Mock exams**

Licentiates are encouraged to organise mock exams for themselves, and particularly need to practice listening and responding to the question asked. Licentiates who had mock exams with unknown 'examiners' and to time, were often better prepared for the Chartership exam.

Mayda Henderson and Nick Harrison  
Chief Examiners