

Chief Examiner feedback: November 2017 Chartership exams

We are delighted to welcome 82 new Chartered members of the LI, after the LI held its November Chartership exams. 101 people took their Chartership exam through the Pathway to Chartership, and six people through the Experienced Practitioner Route. The pass rate for the Pathway to Chartership was 78%.

The Chartership exams give us an opportunity to reflect, and we encourage current Licentiates to read the feedback to help them prepare for their future exams:

1. Development logs

Candidates are reminded that all development pack entries should be written concisely and reflectively. We particularly want to remind candidates that development packs are not the place for revision notes or diary-style entries. Some candidates have spent time copying out parts of the syllabus and the Code of Conduct. This is unnecessary, and does not demonstrate the candidate has any depth of understanding of that area.

Candidates should use the development packs to reflect on what they have learnt, how they would apply that knowledge in both 'textbook' and real life scenarios, and their reflection on the context of their projects and learning. Clear, concise and reflective development logs provide a professional impression, and makes it easier for examiners to formulate questions around information provided by the candidate. Candidates may like to consider using shorter paragraphs and bullet points, as well as ensuring they do a final spellcheck prior to submitting.

2. CVs

We are pleased to note the increased use of the use the LI's [CV template](#) which allows the examiners to gain an overview of each candidate.

Candidates are encouraged to keep their CVs up-to-date and review these every six months or so, and particularly if they change their employment. This is particularly important in the run up to being nominated for the exam, as the supervisor will want to see how the CV has expanded since being on the Pathway to Chartership.

3. Examiners' questions

Examiners are trained to construct around 60% of their questions on each candidate's individual project knowledge and experience, as evidenced in their development logs and CV. If the candidate has presented limited project information in their development packs, the examiners will therefore have to rely on more general or hypothetical questions.

The examiners are also likely to ask questions on items from the candidate's logs which pique their interest – particularly if something didn't go to plan with a project, or an unusual situation occurred. Candidates should ensure that they research anything more unusual or interesting that happens, and demonstrate this in their development packs.

4. 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. Some candidates relied too

heavily on not knowing the answer but knowing where to look it up. This leaves the examiners in doubt of the level of the candidate's knowledge and experience. To be put forward to the exam, candidates need to demonstrate that they have general knowledge and understanding across the syllabus (level 2), with possibly only a few areas of basic knowledge and concepts. There should be no areas of the Chartership syllabus which candidates have no knowledge or understanding.

Licentiatees 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. Licentiatees 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 Licentiatees engage in the active learning process, focusing on how their theoretical knowledge could be applied to real-life situations, the more they will find it a rewarding process. 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.

5. Mentors and supervisors

We are hugely grateful for the amount of time and effort put in by mentors and supervisors to aid the progress of Licentiatees.

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. We do not want any candidate to be demoralised, and having a realistic understanding of which areas need to be improved is very helpful. As a reminder, the required level for passing the Chartership exam is a majority general knowledge (level 2) across the syllabus, with proficient knowledge (level 3) in areas in which they work on a regular basis.

6. General areas of weakness

We found that in this session candidates struggled with the links between syllabus areas. Candidates had weaker knowledge and understanding of:

- 1A1-4, 1B2-4: The requirements and significance of the LI's Code of Conduct.
- 2A1-3, 2B1, 2C1-3: Forms of practice and the duties of employers.
- 2E1: Methods of calculation and fee charging.
- 3D1: Techniques for assessing the significance and context of landscapes and sites.
- 3D2: Structure, policies and procedures of the UK's planning system.
- 4B1-4: Tendering methods, documentation and reports.
- 4C1-5: Contract administration.
- 4D1-5, 4E1-2: Onsite monitoring and controls.

7. Mock exams

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

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Chief Examiners