

# Developing a new Landscape Institute competency framework

Selecting the right  
competencies to include





**Landscape is the arena in which people, place and nature connect. We need to make sure that the next generation of landscape professionals is skilled at making connections across all three.**

The Future State of Landscape 2018

## **The world we live in is changing, creating an enormous opportunity for the landscape profession. Ideas around sustainability, climate change, resilience, health and wellbeing, the environment, our quality of life and the value of natural capital are coming together.**

As the professional body for the landscape sector, it's the Landscape Institute's role to continually reflect the changing needs of landscape practitioners, helping them remain trusted, relevant and successful, today and in the future.

In addition to awarding professional recognition to landscape architects, the Landscape Institute recognises the need to:

- Welcome more practitioners who work in other landscape fields.
- Reflect new and emerging areas of practice.
- Attract, include and support professionals from wider and more diverse backgrounds.

**We need your feedback and expertise to help us achieve this.** We are developing a new competency-based framework to ensure that our entry standards for professional members of the Landscape Institute are fit for the 21st century. When complete, the Landscape Institute's new modular competency framework will replace the current [Landscape Institute Elements and Areas of Practice](#) document.

The primary purpose of this consultation is to identify the relevant competency areas to include in the framework.

### **Give us your views**

We need your input into the structure and content of the framework. This will help us clearly define the right competency areas for our future needs.

To help us gather and assess your feedback, we have created an online consultation, which will be open until Monday 25 March. We ask that you:

- 1 Carefully read all the background information and appendix (competency areas) in this document.
- 2 Access and complete the [consultation questionnaire](#).

We estimate that the questionnaire will take you 20-30 minutes to complete.

Your answers will be anonymised and treated as confidential. However, you will have the option to enter your contact details if you would like to be kept updated about the project and/or would like to be involved in the further development of the framework. The data we collect will be used only for the purposes of this research.

# What is a competency framework?

**A competency framework is a matrix of skills, behaviours and areas of knowledge that individuals must demonstrate to be able to work in a specified professional field.**

Such frameworks enshrine the technical and professional skills that underpin many professions. Professions that use competency frameworks include law, medicine, accountancy and surveying. (Further examples are set out at the end of this background paper.)

The Landscape Institute's new framework will be a crucial part of supporting and embracing the wider range of roles that now exist in the sector, and that will emerge in the future. It will:

- Describe the wide range of work that landscape practitioners undertake.
- Serve as a professional development tool for members.
- Support employers with recruitment.
- Align landscape with other professional sectors.
- Help the Landscape Institute set clear standards of entry to membership.

## About the structure of the proposed framework

The proposed framework reflects the multidisciplinary nature of landscape practice by grouping competencies into three categories:

### Landscape competencies

These are the skills, behaviours and areas of knowledge that are unique to the landscape profession. (Referred to as 'working with place and nature' competencies.)

### Professional competencies

These are the skills, behaviours and areas of knowledge that are broadly common across most professional sectors.

### Specialist competencies

These are the specific skills, behaviours and areas of knowledge required for certain fields of practice.

In the future, an individual's level of achievement would be assessed as follows:

- 1 Understanding.** The individual understands the application of this competency in practice.
- 2 Able.** The individual has experience of applying this competency in practice.
- 3 Accomplished.** The individual consistently applies this competency in practice and can confidently make decisions and recommendations in this area.
- 4 Expert.** The individual has expert knowledge of this competency and extensive experience applying it in practice. They are recognised as an authority in this area by others within and/or outside their organisation.



CMLI



## How we propose to use the framework in the future

Once completed, the competency framework will be used as a basis to determine entry requirements for every new member entering the profession at different professional grades of membership.

New members will need to demonstrate:

- All **landscape competencies** to some level.
- All **professional competencies** to some level.
- A selection of **specialist competencies** reflecting their specific skills and knowledge. (Some specialist competencies may be mandatory for certain fields of practice, for the use of certain designations, and for certain membership grades.)

The diagram above is a very simple demonstration of how this will work.

The competencies listed in the consultation questionnaire and the appendix to this paper are described at level 3 (accomplished).

The purpose of this consultation is to ensure that we have identified the appropriate competencies. Once this is done, we will begin developing descriptions of each competency at levels 1, 2 and 4.

In developing this competency framework and considering its future application, we have listened to those who are concerned that landscape designers need specific skills that may not be required by all landscape professionals. We therefore intend to be more specific about the educational requirements and competencies required for those wishing to call themselves Chartered Landscape Architects.

This will ensure that we maintain equivalence to International Federation of Landscape Architecture (IFLA) requirements for landscape architects. There will be no change for any existing CMLI.



## Next steps

Once the consultation period ends, we will review your responses and further develop the competency areas based on your feedback. We will then work on developing the full competency framework, in draft form, by August 2019, before commencing a second-stage consultation.

Implementation of an updated Pathway to Chartership will follow, most likely in 2020. We will make transitional provisions for those coming through our existing membership system and keep these in place for at least two years after adopting any changes.

Other areas of work to follow include:

- Descriptions for each level of each competency.
- Guides for candidates seeking different grades of membership in different fields of practice.
- New assessment approaches and training for examiners, supervisors and mentors in the new approaches.

There will be some necessary adjustments to existing membership grades, including the creation of a Technician grade, and the change of Licentiate grade to Associate grade. A recent member consultation indicated high levels of support for these changes. The proposals will be taken to the 2019 Landscape Institute AGM later this year for approval by members.

## Glossary of terms

A **corporate member** (*of the Landscape Institute*) is, at present, a Fellow, chartered member, academic member, academic Fellow or licentiate member of the Landscape Institute.

A **field of practice** is a specialised area of landscape practice, e.g. landscape design, landscape planning, landscape science, landscape management or urban design.

A **grade of membership** is the type of membership (for instance, licentiate, chartered or Fellow) that a corporate member of the Landscape Institute holds.

**Landscape practitioner** refers broadly to anyone working in the landscape sector in a professional advisory role (one which involves at least some of the specialist and/or landscape competencies described in this document). A landscape practitioner might or might not be a corporate member of the Landscape Institute.

## Further information

### How have we developed the competency areas?

Landscape architects have specific skills that may not be required by all landscape practitioners. To be a fully inclusive profession, we need to be specific about the educational and competency requirements for those wishing to call themselves Chartered Landscape Architects, and for Chartered Landscape Professionals operating within other fields of practice.

The competency areas have been developed following a national consultation with a range of stakeholders. The consultation included a mix of focus groups, workshop sessions, written feedback, seminars and online discussions.

The competency areas seen in this consultation reflect the feedback we received from these stakeholder groups, including:

- Support for separate competency categories reflecting landscape-specific skills, general professional skills and specialist skills.
- Support for progressive levels of competency.
- The need for landscape and specialist competencies to reflect the Landscape Institute's focus on people, place and nature.
- The need for new standards to be forward-looking and identify future skill needs.



## How other professions use competency frameworks

| Organisation  | How they use their competency framework  | Link for further information                               |
|---|--|--|
| Association of Chartered Certified Accountants              | To set standards of entry and establish the knowledge, skills and behaviours of members  | <a href="http://www.accaglobal.com">www.accaglobal.com</a> |
| Association for Project Management                          | As an assessment tool for individuals, employers and training providers  | <a href="http://www.apm.org.uk">www.apm.org.uk</a>         |
| Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management | To specify the levels of competence expected of members at different professional grades and provide for a competence-based assessment for membership; to support members in identifying their current and required levels of competence and to plan their continuing professional development (CPD); and to promote high standards of professional practice | <a href="http://www.cieem.net">www.cieem.net</a>           |
| Chartered Institute of Management Accountants               | To underpin the CIMA syllabus for membership and establish the knowledge requirements and skills needed for both current and desired roles; and to demonstrate to the public the relevance and capabilities of a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) designation   | <a href="http://www.cgma.org">www.cgma.org</a>             |
| Institution of Civil Engineers                              | To support members to identify areas for professional development  | <a href="http://www.gedcouncil.org">www.gedcouncil.org</a> |
| Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors                    | To define the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for membership   | <a href="http://www.rics.org">www.rics.org</a>             |
| Solicitors Regulation Authority                             | To define continuing competency requirements for solicitors  | <a href="http://www.sra.org.uk">www.sra.org.uk</a>         |

# Competency areas

## 1 Landscape competency areas

(in alphabetical order)

| Competency area  | Description (at Accomplished level)  |
|--|--|
| 1.1. Creative problem solving                                | Identifies issues, challenges, and opportunities relating to landscapes and/or places and develops and implements effective solutions using initiative and creativity.   |
| 1.2. Healthy places  | Recognises landscapes and/or places as assets with the potential to improve health and wellbeing. Adopts the principles of healthy places that improve the physical aspects of the landscape (air, water and soil quality).  |
| 1.3. Inclusive environments                                  | Seeks to ensure landscapes and/or places are accessible and inclusive for all by working to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation.   |
| 1.4. Landscapes as systems                                   | Understands and considers natural processes – soil, air, water and ecological – and the role of human intervention, including management and maintenance. Understands the important link between plants, animals, trees and materials and habitat development and biodiversity in urban and/or rural settings.   |
| 1.5. Landscape quality                                       | Promotes quality interventions that integrate with both the function and identity of a landscape and/or place, putting land, water, drainage, energy, community, economy, infrastructure and other such resources to the best possible use.  |
| 1.6. Physical and social context of sites/ places/landscapes | Accounts for the physical and social context of landscapes and/or places, including visual, environmental, access/use and heritage, and evaluates the distinctive, characteristic and functional qualities of component parts and the whole.   |
| 1.7. Planning, legal and regulatory compliance               | Complies with the planning, legal and regulatory framework, including (but not limited to) town and country planning, access and rights of way, landscape and environment, statutory and non-statutory designations associated with landscape, trees and woodlands, ecology, heritage and wildlife.  |
| 1.8. Research and analysis                                   | Undertakes research and analysis relating to landscapes and/or places including (but not limited to) the way places work and how they look, their history and context, the connections between people and places, movement and design, nature and the built fabric, natural capital, health impact assessments and the processes for ensuring successful places.   |
| 1.9. Sustainability and resilience                           | Applies the principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability to landscape projects. Fosters the capacity of landscapes and/or places to survive, adapt, and grow under changing conditions and challenges to their physical, social, economic and technical systems and infrastructure. Seeks to avoid climate change and to manage micro climates. Enhances the value of the environment and implements resource management policies appropriately, utilising natural resources. |

## 2 Professional competency areas

(in alphabetical order)

| Competency area   | Description (at Accomplished level)   |
|---|---|
| 2.1. Communication, negotiation, influencing and engagement | Understands and uses appropriate, clear and concise written and verbal communication for specific circumstances and audiences. Gives engaging presentations. Engages effectively with stakeholders and is able to influence others and negotiate to reach agreement and resolve conflicts.  |
| 2.2. Data management  | Adopts appropriate security measures when holding, using and sharing information and data and understands and applies relevant legal and ethical standards and organisational data management procedures.   |
| 2.3. Digital practice                                       | Uses digital technology and media to perform tasks, solve problems, communicate, manage information, collaborate and create.  |
| 2.4. Equality, diversity and community engagement           | Treats all individuals with respect, responds sensitively to differences and encourages others to do likewise. Seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Supports principles of fairness of opportunity for all. Plays a part in creating a culture and practice that recognises, respects and values people's differences for the benefit of all. Fosters participative community engagement, being mindful of equal opportunities and understanding of cultural differences. |
| 2.5. Health and safety                                      | Complies with relevant health and safety legislation and regulation and organisational policies. Manages risk including the identification of hazards, assessment of risks and implementation of control measures. Manages own personal safety and that of others.  |
| 2.6. Management of organisations, people and services       | Contributes to the operational, financial, strategic, people and risk management of practices and organisations providing landscape services. Delivers high standards of client and customer care.  |
| 2.7. Political, legal and economic framework                | Understands and has the ability to work within the political, legal and economic framework of the countries/nations of practice.  |
| 2.8. Professional judgement, ethics and values              | Complies with the Landscape Institute's Code of Conduct and Charter and laws relating to professional responsibility relevant to the country of practice. Fosters and maintains a professional working relationship with clients and customers and shows commitment to reflective practice and to developing and maintaining competence.  |
| 2.9. Project management                                     | Plans, structures and prioritises own work to achieve results. Uses appropriate processes, methodologies, tools and techniques to manage projects effectively. Manages time, budget and risk and evaluates projects. Manages conflicts and adopts appropriate methods of conflict avoidance and resolution.   |
| 2.10. Team working and collaboration                        | Works effectively in teams. Develops effective working relationships and shows interdisciplinary understanding and cooperation.   |

### 3 Specialist competency areas

(in alphabetical order)

| Competency area   | Description (at Accomplished level)   |
|---|---|
| 3.1. Arboriculture and woodland   | Recognises the importance of trees and woodland as part of both urban and rural landscapes and/or places, including their ecological, economic, socio-cultural and aesthetic roles. Considers the principles of silviculture, including species selection according to site conditions, artificial and natural regeneration of woodlands and interventions. Creates management plans.                       |
| 3.2. Contract administration  | Manages tendering processes and agrees contractual arrangements for work with contractors. Administers projects ensuring the correct contractual procedures and fair, effective administrative practices are followed and that the contract is accurately and completely recorded from inception to completion. Deals with insurances, contract instructions, variations, practical completion and defects. |
| 3.3. Design – garden  | Formulates/interprets project briefs. Blends creative and artistic skills with a scientific understanding of horticulture, plants and materials to create and represent proposals for the design of gardens.  |
| 3.4. Design – landscape   | Formulates/interprets project briefs. Creates and represents proposals for the design, planning or management of landscape projects, including verbal and visual representation, two- and three-dimensional and temporal contexts. Presents design proposals to a range of professional and lay audiences.  |
| 3.5. Design – play and/or recreation (to include one of golf courses, play areas, parks, sports facilities) | Formulates/interprets project briefs. Blends an understanding of user requirements, legal and regulatory requirements, horticulture, plants and materials to create and represent proposals for the design of play and/or recreational facilities.  |
| 3.6. Design – public realm  | Designs a public realm that provides a connected, inclusive and intuitive user experience and responds to the local character of the area, providing a sense of place. Creates designs that are vibrant, modern and with a distinct local character, that integrate maintenance needs with design needs and ensure that appearance is in keeping with structural and functional design concepts.            |
| 3.7. Digital technology and photography   | Researches, surveys, plans, designs, communicates and/or presents landscapes and places using appropriate digital tools and visualisation techniques (including photography). Uses digital technologies to transfer information and to facilitate understanding and representation of a current or future reality and for recording, analysing, manipulating and expressing ideas.                          |
| 3.8. Grants and funding   | Contributes to a fundraising strategy and action plan. Identifies opportunities for grants and funding. Writes applications for funding. Delivers and evaluates funded projects. Understands and manages relevant legal and legislative mechanisms that provide funding for landscapes and/or places, e.g. levies, service charges, taxes etc.  |
| 3.9. Habitats and species   | Contributes to the enhancement of biodiversity and the creation and diversity of habitats for a range of species. Uses appropriate ecological techniques and applies seasonal constraints for projects. Identifies and evaluates habitats in accordance with local, national and international classifications and at a variety of spatial scales. Uses appropriate metrics for habitat evaluation.         |

| Competency area   | Description (at Accomplished level)  |
|---|--|
| 3.10. Heritage landscapes and/or places                       | Contributes to the identification, protection, management and/or celebration of heritage assets. Considers the cultural and natural heritage value attached to landscapes and/or places and how they interrelate. Contributes to conservation management plans setting out the significance of a heritage asset and how that significance will be retained in any future use, management, alteration or repair.  |
| 3.11. Landscape assessment                                    | Prepares formal landscape assessments including (but not limited to) Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Sensitivity Assessments and Seascape Character Assessments. Ensures approach and methods adopted are appropriate to the specific circumstances and considers appropriate mitigation measures.   |
| 3.12. Landscape construction (materials and systems)          | Identifies and selects appropriate palettes of materials with consideration of site, context, intended use, structural performance, sustainability characteristics, intended lifespan, maintenance and financial implications.   |
| 3.13. Landscape ecology                                       | Considers the relationships organisms have with their environments and the impact of human-led and natural change. Seeks to improve relationships between ecological processes in the environment and particular ecosystems within a variety of landscape scales and development spatial patterns.   |
| 3.14. Landscape engineering                                   | Works in interdisciplinary teams to apply principles of engineering and other sciences to the design and creation of anthropogenic landscapes (human landscapes). Holistically considers landforms, substrates, ecology and vegetation throughout all phases of design and construction.   |
| 3.15. Landscape planning and/or policy                        | Develops and/or applies strategies, policies and plans to create successful environments, in both urban and rural settings, for the benefit of current and future generations. Advises on or manages proposals for change which may affect the landscape. Assesses and seeks to resolve environmental, economic and social opportunities and constraints and take these into account in addressing a landscape's potential and capacity to accommodate change. Contributes to applications for planning consents |
| 3.16. Landscapes and/or places and people (including tourism) | Manages the demands of people and nature. Creates a positive user experience and maximises the local benefits that visitors can bring to the environment, economy and community whilst adopting measures to ensure conservation of the natural or urban environment. Seeks to ensure landscapes and places are accessible and inclusive for all. Contributes to the creation and implementation of user/visitor management plans. Obtains and addresses feedback from users and ensure continuous improvement    |
| 3.17. Management of landscapes and/or places                  | Cares for land in ways that ensure that landscapes and/or places can fulfil needs and aspirations in an effective and sustainable manner for present and future communities of users. Responds to the needs of owners, managers and users of land. Ensures that landscapes and/or places can be effectively maintained and managed over time, prepares management plans and strategies, advises on new developments, designs and plans, and provides management-based solutions to site issues.                  |

| Competency area                                     | Description (at Accomplished level)  |
|---|--|
| 3.18. Master planning                               | Determines the future development of an area (urban and/or rural) by setting a vision, framework and design guidance showing how it will be achieved. Works collaboratively in a multidisciplinary team to provide integrated solutions that meet operational and commercial objectives whilst being responsive to the environment and the needs of local people and communities.  |
| 3.19. Natural Capital and Ecosystems Services       | Recognises and values the benefits associated with the environment within the accounts produced for an organisation or other accounting unit (such as a specific area of land).  |
| 3.20. Planting                                      | Identifies and selects appropriate plant palettes with consideration of climate conditions, microclimate influences, soil, sun, moisture and wind. Evaluates and selects appropriate plants to perform environmental, functional and aesthetic roles for outdoor spaces and built environments. Applies the principles of creative planting design to form an artistic composition.  |
| 3.21. Protected landscapes and/or places            | Contributes to the identification, protection, management and/or celebration of protected landscapes and/or places. Develops and delivers projects that will conserve and enhance protected landscapes. Promotes opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of protected landscapes by the public whilst fostering the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.  |
| 3.22. Soil management, conservation and improvement | Understands and applies principles of soil pedology, physics, science, chemistry, biology and mineralogy. Identifies appropriate soil management strategies including cultivations, drainage, irrigation, assessment of potential soil structure degradation, land reclamation, land restoration and the prevention of soil erosion and damage. Commissions/undertakes soil surveys to assist in the development of land management strategies or in the resolution of planning conflicts. |
| 3.23. Water design and/or management                | Prioritises all elements of the water cycle using the principles of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). Plans, designs and/or manages landscapes that integrate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and reduce the risk of flooding. Uses principles of natural drainage to absorb or attenuate water into permeable and vegetated surfaces to better manage the flow of water.   |

