

Pathway to Chartership Oral Examination – Notes for Candidates

The Pathway Examination, which takes the format of a discussion with two Examiners, is a critical milestone and is the final stage in the assessment of a Candidate's suitability for chartership. It should therefore be seen as an integrated part of your journey through the Pathway.

These notes will tell you more about what you should expect from the day, including the format of the interview as well as what the examiners will be looking for. You are also encouraged to re-read the overview about the Examination in *The Pathway to Chartership Guidebook*, and discuss and practice the exam with your Mentor and other professionals who are less familiar with you or your work.

Proof of Identification

From 1 November 2010, all Candidates must provide an official proof of identification which includes a photograph. This is expected to be a passport or photo driving license. Original documents, not copies, must be brought to the exam and shown to the Exam Coordinator when you sign in. If you do not possess one of these documents you should contact the Pathway Team to discuss your options.

The Examiners will not want to see your ID and once shown to the Coordinator this should be placed inside your bag or coat pocket, along with any other papers, in line with the guidance given below.

Candidates who arrive at the Exam without photo ID will be photographed by the Coordinator and their exam results will not be released until they have presented their original documentation or a notarised copy to the Pathway Team at the LI's London office. Photos will be deleted and results released once identification has been verified.

The Exam – practical details

- The exam will last between 40 and 60 minutes, depending on individual circumstances.
- You will have two Examiners, both of whom will be Chartered Members, with varied experience and backgrounds. If you have an identifiable specialism, we will try to match you with an examiner from a similar background, but do not be concerned if this is not possible – it is not critical to your success.
- If you have any special requirements for the exam the LI needs to have received a medical report or other evidence in support of this at least 6 weeks before the exam. We will then be happy to discuss any additional facilities or assistance you require.
- The LI Secretariat has taken steps to check that your Examiners do not know you professionally or personally, and are not directly related to you. However, it is not possible to guarantee this and occasionally a Candidate or Examiner may realise they have met in the past when they are first introduced.
 - Should this occur, the Candidate or Examiner should alert each other to it at the start of the exam.

- The Candidate will be given the option of stopping the exam and rescheduling with alternative Examiners. The decision whether to continue or not is binding and must be made before the exam can continue. We would encourage Candidates to continue with the exam unless they feel strongly otherwise.
 - Where the Candidate wishes to stop and reschedule the exam, the LI will try to ensure this happens within the current exam session (i.e. for a May exam, that the exam takes place during any remaining examination days in London or Manchester. It will not be possible for the exam to take place on the same day due to the preparation the Examiner needs to do prior to the exam.).
 - Where it is not possible for the exam to be rescheduled in the current session, the Candidate may have to wait to be examined until the following session generally held 6 months later (i.e. for a May exam, the Candidate may need to wait until the following November's exams.)
 - Where the exam does have to be rescheduled because of an unforeseen conflict of interest no additional fee will be payable.
- You are not required to bring portfolios of evidence, laptop etc; it is purely a verbal interview. Your examiners will have had access to your CV, Development Packs, Mentor Reviews and Supervisor's feedback prior to the exam.
 - Candidates are not allowed to take any electronic device (including mobile phones) into the exam room unless it is turned off and remains so throughout the exam. Candidates can take bags and coats into the room but any papers or books must be contained within a bag and not be placed on the table. The Examiners cannot review or accept any new or updated documentation during the exam.
 - You need to arrive at the venue in good time for your exam. Candidates arriving more than 10 minutes late will not be admitted as this does not leave sufficient time for the examination.
 - Unfortunately, due to the preparation each exam requires on the part of the Examiners, we cannot slot latecomers or those who are unwell into the schedule for that round of exams. Those who are unable to make their slot will need to wait until the next round of interviews, generally held six months later.
 - If you do not feel ready or able to take your exam as the date approaches you can let the LI know and move to the following session of exams. The LI must be notified of your intention a minimum of 6 weeks before the first exam. Anyone wishing to change session after this date will need to pay an exam deferral fee before their registration in the next session can be confirmed.

Format of the Exam

When you arrive at the examination venue you will be shown to the Candidate waiting room. The exam co-ordinator will ask you to sign in and show your original photographic ID. There will be water available while you wait for your exam to begin.

At the appointed time one of your Examiners will collect you from the waiting room and escort you to the examination room where you will be introduced to the second Examiner. There may also be a Monitor in the room. The role of the Monitor is to feedback to the Chief Examiner on the format of the exam and on the Examiners themselves so they will only observe the exam rather than taking an

active role. If a Monitor is present the Examiners will explain this to you at the start of the exam. There will be water and glasses in the examination room.

The exam will be in the style of an open-ended discussion and will be conducted in the style of an interview or appraisal. The Examiners will make every effort to set you at ease. They will be seeking to discover your understanding of underlying principles, typically by reference to projects you have been involved in. In addition they will be testing your knowledge across the breadth of the syllabus. You should be prepared to be asked about any syllabus topics, so you should be aware of concepts right across the Study Guidance Notes. It is your opportunity to demonstrate what you have learnt and describe and reflect on the knowledge and understanding you have developed.

Examiners ask questions based on your career path and the information you have submitted during your time on the Pathway as well as testing your knowledge of areas of which you have not had direct experience. Consequently, there are no 'typical' questions. You will be asked about the information in your Development Pack so you should read through your submissions to refresh your memory of the projects you have worked on. They will also want to discover the extent of your knowledge and understanding across the breadth of the syllabus so will also ask you questions on those areas where you have not had any direct experience.

There is likely to be some open-ended discussion about challenges and highlights where you are encouraged to be honest – and remember this is *your* experience so there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer. The exam may also touch on 'where next?' in your future professional development.

The exam is intended to be an interesting and stimulating experience for both you and the Examiners; an opportunity for you to show your enthusiasm for Landscape Architecture and the profession. The more preparation you do, the more relaxed you will be – Candidates at the previous exams were often surprised at how much they enjoyed the experience.

Once the Exam is over one of your Examiners will escort you back to the waiting room where you will be asked to sign out. The exam co-ordinator will be there if you have any questions and will also remind you about when the results are due out. Once you have signed out you are free to go.

Preparing for the Exam

- Review your Development Packs. The Examiners will have access to all of your past submissions as well as your Mentor's and Supervisor's comments.
- Set up some mock exams. Those Candidates who passed previous exams have made extensive use of mock exams, while those Candidates who fail tend to have made little use of them. Set up more than one – one with your Mentor and one or more with another person less familiar with your work. If you are part of a Study Group perhaps team up with someone there and ask your Mentors to mock examine the other's Candidate? It gives you a chance to practise your interview technique as well as getting used to talking about the syllabus areas with people who do not know you or your organisation.
- The Examiners are specifically looking for knowledge and understanding related to the syllabus areas. Therefore spend some time thinking about which projects you have worked on relate to each syllabus area. When you answer a question you should always try to relate it to the syllabus and, where possible, your own experiences.
- Read through the Chief Examiners' feedback from the previous exams, available here: <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/pathway/submissions>.

Typical Questions

(This section is reproduced from the Pathway Guidebook.)

Candidates frequently ask for a list of typical or standard questions to use to prepare for the exam.

The Examination is based on each Candidate's own experiences, so there is no typical exam question and questions are not typically asked in any particular order. In the second part of the Pathway Guidebook, the Toolkit, different types of questions are discussed, and all of these could be used by the Examiners during your exam.

For example, an Examiner may ask the following 'closed' question.

- "What form of practice is (*name of your organisation*)?"

The Examiner may then follow on with a 'hypothetical' question.

- "What would be different if it was a partnership or a LLP?"

This might then lead into a discussion of PII, liability or the code of conduct. They will also ask other questions based on your experience. For example, an 'open' question:

- "I see you worked on (name of project) which involved a visual assessment. How did you carry that out?"

Or possibly a 'discovery' question,

- "You have worked on a number of wetland projects. How has this contributed to your knowledge of conservation designations?"

All of these questions could be asked at an Exam but none of them are typical or guaranteed to come up. The questions you are asked will depend entirely on your own career to date and the style of questioning will be a mixture of all those described in the second section of the Guidebook.

What are the Examiners looking for?

Successful completion of the Pathway means that you are able to:

- Display a systematic and critical understanding of Landscape and Environmental practice, including the part played by team-working, processes and procedures, organisations and regulations in ensuring an efficient and professional service.
- Elucidate the responsibilities and duties of a Landscape Professional in the UK.
- Demonstrate that you have gained sufficient experience and developed enough study-based knowledge at the required levels to be able to go forward for full Chartered membership of the Landscape Institute.

- Analyse projects that you have been personally involved in, using a rigorous and critically objective exploration, considering all aspects of its design, management and procurement.

The Examiners will also need to have confidence in your ability to manage your future learning so that you meet your lifelong learning and CPD requirements.

What to expect after the Examination

Your results will normally be sent to you within two weeks of the final day of exams. Full details of the process of becoming elected to chartership are explained in the *Pathway to Chartership Guidebook*.

Results are released via the Pathway online system and are also emailed to you. Candidates who have passed will simply receive a 'pass' notification. No further information is available. Feedback is only given to those Candidates who are unsuccessful. This will be released at the same time as the results and is also accessible through the Pathway online system. If you are unsuccessful you will need to have a further 'final notification' approved by your Supervisor before you can re-sit the exam. Additional information on this is available in the document 'Plan B – What to do if you fail the exam'.

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