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New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Inc (NZILA) Registered Membership

MENTORING AND THE REGISTERED MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the roles and responsibilities of mentors within the Registered Membership process and programme.

It should be noted that all Registered landscape architects who have two or more years experience following successful Registered membership will be expected to act as a mentor upon request from an enrolling Graduate or local NZILA Branch.

This may be considered part of the responsibility of belonging to a professional institute and contributing to the NZILA and its members.

On a more prosaic level, mentors will be able to earn CPD points through active mentorship.

In addition to mentors, landscape architects applying under the reciprocal process will require a sponsor to certify and recommend membership.

The roles of these and group sponsors are described below.

2.0 SUMMARY OF INVOLVEMENT

Graduates may enrol in Stage 1 of the programme at any time of the year, provided they have completed the minimum experience necessary to enrol. At the time of enrolment, they will need to have a mentor.

The normal period of mentoring will be 60-90 weeks, with the aim for graduates to complete documentation and apply for formal examination (panel interview) within 18 months.

Meetings between the mentor and graduate will have an expected minimum frequency of 1 meeting every 2 months.

During this period, graduates will also attend workshops with group mentors approximately twice a year.

At the end of the term mentors will be expected to endorse and propose the applicant for membership, and group mentors will second the proposal.

3.0 CHOOSING A MENTOR

Before enrolling in the Registered membership programme, and following a period of practical work experience, a graduate will be obliged to choose a mentor. The mentor will normally be selected from his or her workplace, but where a mentor is not available, the graduate will be encouraged to approach the local Branch or Registrar to find one.



Prior to accepting a graduate, the mentor should meet with the graduate, to establish that they have sufficient experience, time and commitment to undertake the programme. The graduate is required to have a minimum 90 weeks of practical work experience prior to being accepted for Registered membership.

Mentors will be required to co-sign the enrolment form to signify agreement to mentoring and that they consider the applicant has adequate experience to start the assessment process. They should therefore see project work examples (and a work summary or project record sheets) prior to agreeing to be a mentor.

Where a mentor is not from the graduate's workplace, any issues of perceived conflict of interest or commercial sensitivity should be settled before the enrolment documentation is submitted.

4.0 MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

Mentor requirements include:

- A minimum 2 years experience as a Registered NZILA Landscape Architect.
- Able to work with the graduate over an extended period of time. The minimum commitment of time is 45 weeks but most graduates will require a mentor for a period of 60-90 weeks.
- Meet with the graduate on a regular basis and within a formal framework. It is suggested that mentor and graduate meeting at least once every 2 months. An external mentor may need to meet with the graduate more frequently in order to feel confident about the assessment process.
- Provide assessment on the graduate's capability and competence, measured against various criteria.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback
- Assess the graduate's readiness for Registered membership. The Mentor may have to advise the graduate that she/he is not ready to proceed to Stage 2.
- Sign off on the Applicant's Declaration form as part of the Stage 2 process. By doing this, the mentor is stating that they consider the graduate has all the necessary experience and competencies to progress to the Stage 3 Interview.

5.0 ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The mentor's role is to help the graduate develop attitudes, strategies and skills that equip them for the profession and for practice as a landscape architect. He



or she is not a teacher or a trainer but rather someone who provides advice, guidance, and, more formally assessment, against the various criteria established by the Institute.

The mentoring process relies on regular meetings where the mentor and graduate discuss and re-assess achievement and competence against set milestones and criteria. The Assessment Workbook will be an essential part of the mentor programme and application documentation. It details the elements of the core competencies, the range of practice area competencies, and the evidence and judgements required for Registered membership.

Through mentorship a graduate's level of knowledge and understanding is expected to increase over the period of assessment, with the support and guidance of their mentor as he/she advances through the Workbook. Mentors should not be expected to maintain their role indefinitely, however, and a normal period of mentoring is expected to last 60-90 weeks with a minimum frequency of 1 meeting every 2 months. If circumstances change, for example the graduate gets a new job or the mentor moves away, it is the graduate's responsibility to find and obtain approval from the Registrar for a new mentor.

At the end of the mentor programme, the mentor will sign the Workbook to indicate their assessment that the graduate has gained sufficient competence in all the areas applicable.

In addition, the mentor will sign the Mentor (Proposer) Declaration, which states that he/she endorses and proposes the applicant for Registered NZILA membership and certifies their personal knowledge of the professional ability and character, methods of practice, and experience of the applicant.

This concludes the mentor programme, except for times when the Registrar or Chair of the Interview Panel may make contact to discuss the application, or the Interview Panel recommends referral back to the mentor for a specific area of weakness.

6.0 DETAILED MENTORING PROCESS

The following is taken from the Registered Membership Guide.

6.1 *Preliminary Assessment*

It is recommended the mentor meet with the graduate as soon as possible after the enrolment has been confirmed so that they can (with the aid of the Assessment Workbook):

- Confirm the graduate's practice areas (2 majors and 1 minor)
- Confirm the graduate's present levels of knowledge and understanding against the relevant assessment criteria in the Registered Membership Guide.



- Identify areas where the graduate should undertake study or extend their practical experience.

This should provide enough information to determine the frequency of meetings required to achieve the required levels of competence within the normal maximum 90 weeks mentoring.

6.2 *On-going Assessment*

The mentoring process relies on regular meetings where the mentor and graduate discuss and re-assess achievement and competence against the set milestones and criteria. All meetings are to be documented by the graduate in some form of diary, or minutes or recorded in an Activity Log (refer to Part 8, Assessment Workbook). The mentor should check the Activity Log at frequent intervals and may wish to add his/her own notes and/or sign the assessment schedule notes after each meeting. The Assessment Workbook will form part of the application documentation and form part of the examination by the Interview Panel. The Registrar may also call on this documentation later if there are any queries after Stage 2 or 3 of the process, and to assist in evaluation of the mentoring programme.

Graduates should be encouraged to meet with their mentor at a frequency that matches their experience and which will be agreed between them. It is suggested that meeting once every 2 months is a minimum requirement.

The Assessment Workbook provides guidance on the criteria used for assessment, and assessment forms/worksheets should be used to record the on-going progress of the graduate. A completed assessment form will be required for the graduate's Stage 2 application for Registered membership.

6.3 *Deferring Stage 2*

If the Mentor determines that the graduate will not meet the required competencies within the agreed timeframe, it is their professional responsibility to advise the graduate immediately and discuss the reasons for this decision.

Once a deferment has been mutually agreed, the mentor and graduate should advise the Registrar of the delay in progressing to the Stage 2 application. Note that the Registered Membership Guide may be subject to minor revisions periodically. It is the graduate's responsibility to check that the documentation they have is current.



6.4 *Mentor Audit*

The mentor should keep a copy of the Assessment Workbook on completion of the mentorship period in case the Interview Panel wishes to contact the mentor to clarify part of the assessment.

6.5 *Recording Experience*

The mentor should work with the graduate to ensure they complete the Assessment Workbook and record their practice experience, including filling in the Activity Log and completing the assessment schedule sheets.

6.6 *Completing the Assessments*

At the completion of Stage 1, the mentor and graduate should ensure that the assessment documentation, Workbook and assessment form are completed and signed off. This is required for the Stage 2 Application. Both the graduate and mentor should keep a copy of this documentation, which will form part of the examination. The mentor may be contacted in confidence by the Interview Panel during Stage 2 or 3 of the registration process about any aspect of the assessment or progress of the graduate.

6.7 *Continuing Professional Development Recommendations*

The mentor may make recommendations for the graduate's professional development (CPD) that address areas that the mentor and graduate have identified as requiring further attention. Any suggestions should be noted in the assessment workbook.

6.8 *Application Documentation*

It is helpful if the mentor checks the graduate's application documentation before it is submitted.



7.0 ROLE OF THE GROUP MENTOR

The group mentor is a Registered landscape architect who works with a group of graduates enrolled in the registration process (each with a primary mentor). While the group mentor has a lesser commitment of time than the mentor, they too have a responsibility to the profession and to graduate landscape architects. Their role is to provide advice and guidance to graduates in a group setting. A landscape architect may be sponsor to a number of graduates but should be sufficiently aware of each individual's capabilities and competence to enable him/her to be a seconder for their application for Registered membership.

8.0 THE GROUP MENTOR PROCESS

Graduate workshops are arranged by the local branch (minimum 2 a year), and run for graduates who have a mentor and an established mentor relationship. The workshops provide an opportunity for graduates to receive another source of feedback and assessment on their on-going practical experience. The timing of the workshops may vary from branch to branch and the participants could have a range of work experience and competence.

9.0 GROUP MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

Group mentor requirements include:

- A minimum 2 years experience as a Registered NZILA Landscape Architect.
- Provide advice with regard to a graduate's capability and competence, measured against various criteria.
- Sign off on the Applicant's Declaration form as part of the Stage 2 process. By doing this, the group mentor is stating that they are prepared to support the applicant to progress to the Stage 3 Interview.

The group mentor must be committed to:

- Attend a minimum of two consecutive workshops to establish a relationship with a group of graduates.
- Providing honest and constructive feedback.
- Advising on the Stage 2 and Stage 3 process.
- Contributing to any knowledge base at the request of graduates and primary mentors.
- Be available to liaise with the graduate's mentor with regard to the graduate's on-going assessment.



10.0 THE SPONSOR PROCESS

A sponsor is a Registered NZILA Landscape Architect who is prepared to certify personal knowledge of an applicant who is a full professional member of an IFLA recognised (overseas) landscape architecture institute or association, and their work and suitability for registration.

Sponsorship of a landscape architect requires a member to diligently assess the applicant and their eligibility. Sponsors under reciprocity will need to have sufficient experience and knowledge to attest to the applicant's professional knowledge and competence within the New Zealand context. By endorsing the application, the sponsor is stating that they have personal knowledge of the professional ability and character, methods of practice, and experience of the applicant and consider that he/she has satisfied the requirements for NZILA Registered membership.

Sponsors will be familiar with the Registered Membership Guide and the relevant core competencies criteria in the Workbook in particular, to ensure that they are able to advise and support the applicant.

11.0 SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS

Sponsorship requirements include:

- A minimum 2 years experience as a Registered NZILA Landscape Architect.
- Able and willing to advise the landscape architect in relation to practising in New Zealand.
- Prepared to support the application for Registered membership. By doing this, the sponsor is stating that they consider the applicant has satisfied the requirements for Registered NZILA membership and, in particular, has highly developed understanding of the legal and social context of New Zealand.