

FAQs Mentees - POST 2012

When should I start the Registered membership process?

You need to have at least 90 weeks professional practical experience before applying for examination. You also need to be able to show your selected mentor that you understand what is involved and will have the necessary evidence and competencies within the next 60-90 weeks (refer to Registered Membership Guide and Assessment Workbook).

Most graduates will have 3-5 years experience before embarking on the Registered membership process.

When should I enrol for mentoring?

The cut off for enrolment is 1st May of the year preceding the exam (normally held in November) to achieve 90 weeks mentoring, and 1st August achieve 60 weeks mentoring.

Later applications will be accepted where it can be demonstrated that a lesser length of mentoring is acceptable (for example a candidate has considerable experience/seniority as well as meeting all normal eligibility criteria). Such applications will need to be endorsed by the Registrar or a deputised Exec member.

How do I choose a mentor?

A mentor should be someone who can help you develop personally and professionally. They should have sufficient experience to guide you through the mentoring process and equip you for the interview. They will have been Registered for at least 2 years and will preferably be someone in your workplace.

How often should I meet with my mentor?

You are responsible for determining the duration and timing of meetings (in consultation with your mentor).

A minimum of 10 meetings is expected for graduates but this may be augmented by discussion groups with other graduates or peer groups.

Regular meetings are best, preferably every 3-4 weeks for the duration of the mentee's progress to interview stage.

How much work do I need to do/document?

You will need to be prepared to take responsibility for and ownership of your active learning process, including setting targets and objectives. Your mentor is not a teacher and you will be responsible for your own education.

You will need to document, explain and articulate your understanding and learnings from your practice areas, as well as show a broad understanding of the core areas.

All documentation preparation is the mentee's responsibility.

What do the milestones mean/ how are they applied?

The milestones are a tool and guide to measuring your progress. The Assessment Workbook defines them as:

Milestone 1: the applicant is aware of particular concepts, and is able to demonstrate a general understanding of the principles behind them

Milestone 2: the applicant is able to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge and understanding of these concepts in day-to-day professional situations

Milestone 3: the applicant is able to give well-reasoned advice to clients or consultants, based on a full appreciation of the relevant issues raised, the opportunities and potential liabilities.

An example of applying the milestones is found in the following responses to a question about the NZILA Code of Conduct:

Milestone 0

"I've never read it."

"I've been meaning to read this for ages and will do tomorrow so I'll be at least a 1 by next week."

Milestone 1

"I have read through the Code of Conduct but am not really sure how it applies to my work."

Milestone 2 "I read the Code of Conduct a while back and at last week's Study Group we discussed how it affects each of us in the context of our current projects. I can see how it could apply within the context of the Park I am currently working on."

Milestone 3

"When I was working on the Council Parks Project we had a problem with the Client asking me to do work that I wasn't qualified for. I had to behave professionally while maintaining our good relationship with the Client and ensuring we didn't take on additional liability. It all made me think about the Code of Conduct and how it links with industry and company best practice."

How much do I need to know in my "minor" professional practice area?

While you will gain personal experience of a number of topic and practice areas through your day-to-day work as a landscape architect it is not expected that this will be the case for all areas.

Where no personal experience has been possible, mentees should gain the minimum level of knowledge through personal study and discussions with professionals working in those areas. This means having an operational awareness across all the main areas of practice.

You should be able to demonstrate awareness of any weaknesses in particular areas and to indicate a methodology to deal with this.

You should be able to demonstrate to your mentor and the interview panel that you have a professional attitude and enough knowledge about the specific area to deliver an appropriate professional response to any such situations.

An appropriate response could be that you know how and when to seek appropriate professional assistance.

Where necessary, you should demonstrate a willingness to seek out relevant on-going CPD for areas of weakness.

For sign off by your mentors you will need to demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding across the competence areas, expressed in terms of achievement of the Assessment Workbook and as follows:

- Applicants for Registered membership are expected to have achieved a minimum of Milestone 2 across the majority of the core competence areas and one practice area;
- Milestone 1 may have been achieved in a small number of areas which are not directly related to the Candidate's day-to-day work;
- Milestone 3 is likely to have been achieved in areas relating to the Candidates specific areas of expertise. These will relate to a minimum of two practice areas.
- No areas should be at Stage 0.

Stage 0: no knowledge of this syllabus area

Stage 1: a basic level of knowledge and understanding which the graduate may not yet have applied in a professional context

Stage 2: a structured, coherent and integrated understanding of the intended learning outcomes, and their application in routine professional contexts

Stage 3: a critical understanding of the intended learning outcomes, which have been applied in both routine and non-routine professional contexts with a knowledge of the implications and liabilities of decision making

How much do I need to know of the core competence areas?

(Refer to question above.)

Basic requirements of core areas are:

- Understand the legal and professional obligations of a professional member of the institute in relationship to clients, the profession, fellow professionals and society in general
- Understand the organisation, administration and management of landscape practice including client relationships and professional charges
- Be aware of the extent and application of law and legislation relating to land and the landscape
- Have a sound knowledge of the legal and contractual aspects of designing, managing and implementing landscape work

In addition to discussing these areas with your mentor, you are encouraged to organise and participate in graduate/mentee workshops to upskill your core competence in different topics.

How should I fill in the Workbook?

Examples of workbooks are on the NZILA website (and a word version for use).

The workbook should have clear and concise documentation that provides a summary of the mentor process. Voluminous and conversational recording is not helpful or a productive use of time.

Document your learnings rather than your discussions.

What can I expect at the interview?

Refer to the Registered Membership Guide and keep up to date with information posted on the NZILA website.

The interview will test candidates for an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding across all the competence areas, expressed in terms of achievement through the Assessment Workbook and milestones. In particular, you are expected to have achieved a minimum of Milestone 2 across the majority of the core competence areas.

Your workbook and project examples will be used to prompt questions related to your experience and practice.

How much weight does the mentoring process have in the interview?

The mentor process is the main way that experience and competence of practice areas are judged. However, the interview panel will also test candidates for an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding across all the competence areas.

If the workbook is deficient and questioning from the panel elicits that the mentoring was not robust or candidates cannot demonstrate understanding of key concepts, further questioning on professional practice can be expected.