



Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board  
of New Zealand

# The New Certificate of Competency Assessment Framework

Developed under the Standards for Licensing of Cadastral Surveyors 2021

February 2024

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

## **FOREWORD**

A key function of the Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board is to provide a regime to test the competence of those seeking a cadastral surveying licence for the first time. The Board seeks to provide a high quality and effective framework that reflects the competencies in the Standards together with modern working and learning practices.

The new framework is a culmination of Dr Don Grant's initial review of the former competency assessment process, which included a series of workshops with representatives of the profession and resulted in recommendations for the new framework. Consultation with key stakeholders and the wider profession was then undertaken, which resulted in a number of submissions that have helped to shape the final assessment framework.

The Board's focus is on the current and future surveying, learning and professional environment, with the intention that the new framework endures through the medium term with any necessary refinements. We want to ensure a viable, yet challenging, pathway for survey graduates exists that provides the foundation for a strong professional career in cadastral surveying.

*N Faulkner*

**Neale Faulkner**

Chair, Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board

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## A. Introduction

The **Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board** (the Board, or CSLB) has designed this assessment framework for the issue of a certificate of competency that applicants need before applying for an initial licence to undertake cadastral surveys in New Zealand. This framework is needed to ensure that the Board can fulfil its statutory responsibilities for licensing and to the profession going into the future.

This document outlines the background to the assessment framework, the guiding principles, the new framework and other supporting features.

## B. Background

### B.1 Cadastral Survey Act 2002

The **Cadastral Survey Act 2002** (the Act) created the Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board of New Zealand. Section 11 of the Act outlines the functions and duties of the Board, which in broad terms, are to administer the licensing of cadastral surveyors, to establish standards that those wishing to obtain a licence must adhere to, and to investigate complaints made against licensed cadastral surveyors and exercise certain disciplinary powers<sup>1</sup>.

The standards that are set for licensing must relate to the competencies required by cadastral surveyors to meet the standards set by the Surveyor-General, and to the legislative requirements for the subdivision of land to the extent that they are relevant to cadastral surveying.

The Board may conduct, or arrange for the conduct of, examinations for the purpose of determining whether applicants for licences under this Act meet the standards<sup>2</sup>.

### B.2 Standards for Licensing of Cadastral Surveyors 2021

#### B.2.1 Standards

On the 1st August 2021 the Standards for Licensing Cadastral Surveyors 2021 (the Standards) came into effect. They outline the requirements that need to be met by surveyors seeking a licence to undertake cadastral surveys, including first time applicants who are most commonly graduate surveyors. However, where the new framework has requirements that do not align with the current Standards, the Standards will be subsequently reviewed and updated.

#### B.2.2 Competencies

Schedule 1 of the Standards lists the competencies that applicants are to be assessed against, broken down into the following eight broad categories:

- Survey measurement
- Land tenure systems
- Boundary definition
- Land information systems
- The statutory planning process
- Land development engineering principles
- Professional conduct
- Communication skills

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<sup>1</sup> S.11(1) Cadastral Survey Act 2002

<sup>2</sup> S.11(3) Cadastral Survey Act 2002

### B.2.3 Assessment Panel

The Standards also define the **Assessment Panel** (the Panel) as a group established by the Board, or by another entity under an arrangement with the Board, to undertake examinations. Following the examinations, the Assessment Panel will issue a certificate of competency when it is satisfied that the applicant has met the required level of proficiency in the competencies.

Once an applicant has received a certificate of competency from the Panel, they may apply to the Board for an initial licence to undertake cadastral surveys.

## C. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the certificate of competency assessment framework are as follows:

- a) Ensure the list of competencies stated in Schedule 1 of the Standards is the primary driver for the assessment framework.
- b) Ensure that applicants are assessed against the competencies that are applicable at each stage of the process, and to a standard that is appropriate for this point in their careers.
- c) Ensure the framework provides a clear pathway for survey graduates seeking a certificate of competency for an initial cadastral survey licence.
- d) Ensure that the assessment of applicants is consistent from year to year and that the process clearly identifies those who have met the competencies and those who have not.
- e) Provide flexibility around the evidence of experience that is submitted to prove knowledge, understanding and ability more directly against the applicable competencies.
- f) Utilise modern assessment formats to efficiently measure the competence of applicants, and to try and reflect a modern working environment.
- g) Ensure the Assessment Panel (whether internal to the Board or a third-party provider) clearly understands the requirements of the Board and the levels of competence expected.
- h) Ensure the framework is sustainable for the members of the Assessment Panel, with appropriate remuneration benchmarked against comparable professional models and subject to regular review.
- i) Ensure that the process of engaging with the framework is cost-efficient and that the direct costs of assessment are recovered from the applicants.
- j) Ensure that the process of licensing cadastral surveyors in New Zealand aligns with the Board's responsibilities as a member of the Council of Reciprocating Surveyors Boards of Australia and New Zealand (CRSBANZ).

## D. Certificate of Competency Assessment Framework

### D.1 Overview

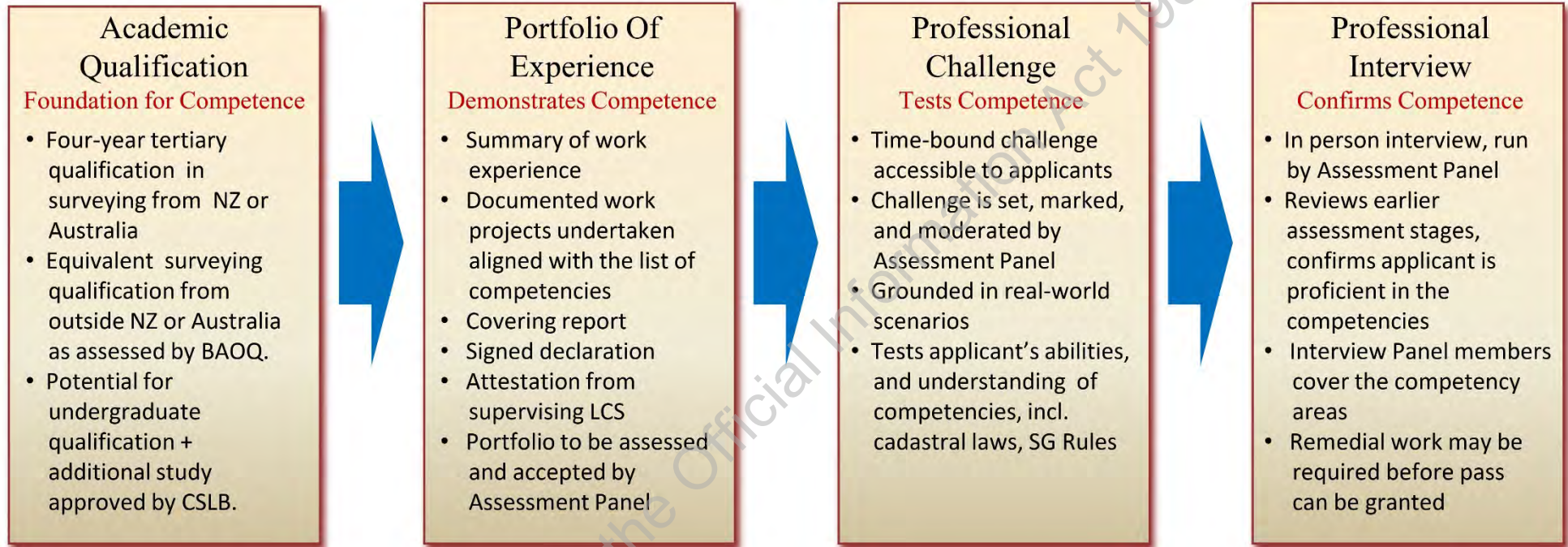
The framework involves four stages of assessment that are undertaken *sequentially*:

1. Academic Qualification
2. Portfolio of Experience
3. Professional Challenge
4. Professional Interview

The diagram below shows the four stages, with a summary of the requirements contained in each.

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## Cadastral Surveying: New Framework for Assessing Competency



Each of these stages must be completed successfully before the applicant can progress to the next stage.

BAOQ - Bureau for the Assessment of Overseas Qualifications  
LCS - Licensed Cadastral Surveyor



The Board accepts that not all aspects of the competencies can be easily judged at each stage of the framework. Some aspects of the competencies are covered in theory and examined as part of the tertiary education qualification, while others are gained during the practical work experience. Some aspects of the competencies can be easily tested in an examination format, while others are best explored in an interview. For these reasons the different approaches are required to achieve a holistic assessment of the applicant's capabilities in the different competencies. The stages of the framework explained in detail below refer to the *applicable competencies* being assessed, meaning those aspects that are appropriate to test during that particular stage.

## D.2 Competency Assessment Process

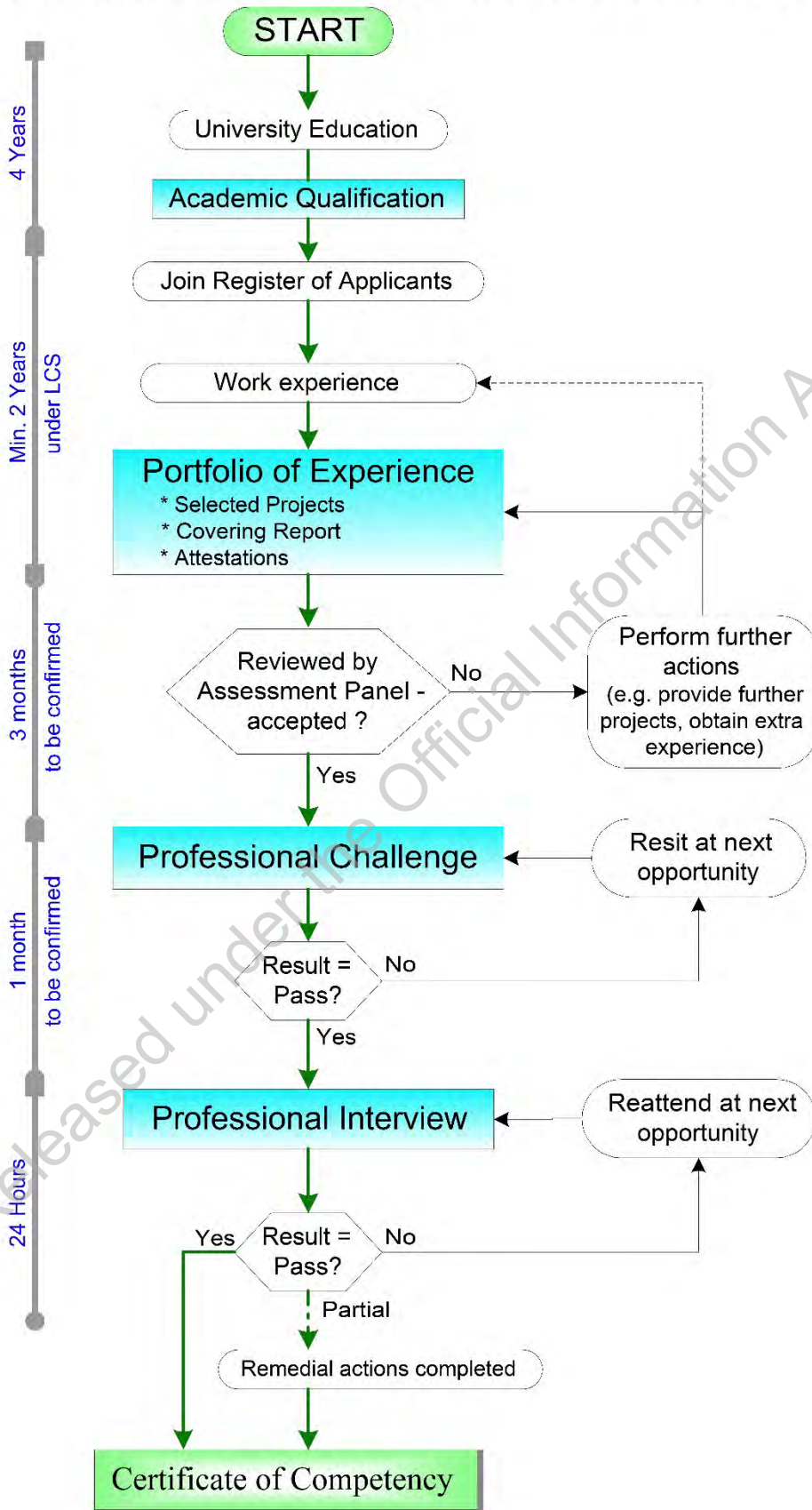
1. The different elements of the core framework are discussed in further detail below. This begins with a process flow diagram provided in [Section D.2.1](#) below, showing the path, timeframes, and sequences of actions for applicants in achieving a Certificate of Competency.
2. Once an applicant has completed enough post-graduate experience to potentially be proficient in the competencies and they have submitted their portfolio, they will then proceed through the subsequent stages to obtain their certificate of competence.
3. The deadline for the submission of the Portfolio of Experience will be set to allow enough time for the information to be reviewed and accepted prior to the Professional Challenge being held. The Professional Interview will in turn follow after the results of the Professional Challenge are known. Sufficient time will be provided between each stage to allow the applicant to prepare.

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D.2.1 Assessment Process Diagram

CSLB Competency Assessment Process Flow Diagram



### D.3 Academic Qualification

1. Under the Standards an applicant must hold:
  - a. A 4-year tertiary educational qualification from New Zealand or Australia in surveying, recognised by the Board; or
  - b. A tertiary qualification in surveying from outside New Zealand or Australia that the BAOQ has assessed as being at least the equivalent of an approved 4-year surveying degree from New Zealand or Australia.
2. The Standards also provide the opportunity for an applicant who has an undergraduate qualification which does not align with the above requirements, but has undertaken extra study required by the Board, to seek a licence.

### D.4 Portfolio of Experience

1. Applicants must have a minimum of two years post graduate practical training and experience under the guidance of a licensed cadastral surveyor, of which at least one year must include cadastral surveys involving the subdivision of land and boundary definition.
2. The applicants are to present a portfolio of work that demonstrates they have achieved the appropriate level of proficiency in each of the applicable competencies listed in Schedule 1 of the Standards. The portfolio must directly indicate how the work completed addresses the competency requirements.
3. The setting of minimum expectations and the broad types of work experience required is outlined in the **Professional Experience Guideline** (the Guideline). The Guideline is broken into sections aligned with the relevant competency areas that can be easily demonstrated by practical experience, and outlines the evidence to be provided to show proficiency for each applicable competency area. Some projects or stages of projects could be used to demonstrate proficiency across more than one competency area.
4. The Guideline also sets the requirements for formatting the evidence provided in the Portfolio of Experience, along with the forms for the standard declarations required by the applicant and any supervising licensed cadastral surveyor (LCS).
5. The **evidence required** to demonstrate that the applicant has become proficient in the competencies set out in Schedule 1 of the Standards includes:
  - a. A **summary of work experience** to confirm the specified time in post-graduate experience has been achieved. The summary must include dates, location, company, broad work types, roles of the applicant etc.
  - b. Copies of plans, reports and documentation of **selected work projects** undertaken by the applicant that cover an applicable competency (or many of them). This could begin with the information provided to the client/Council/LINZ in the course of a normal work project, supplemented by a written discussion including topics such as equipment choice, methodology, logistics, hurdles overcome, reflections etc
  - c. A comprehensive **covering report** linking the work projects submitted to the competencies that are demonstrated. The covering report will have a word limit.

- d. A **declaration signed by the applicant** that all the information submitted is predominantly their own work and that the summary of work experience is accurate.
  - e. An **attestation signed by the supervising LCS(s)** verifying the summary of work experience. When an applicant changes company a separate summary would need to be signed by the relevant supervising LCS.
6. Provisions are available for those applicants who are unable to get project work to cover a particular competency. This needs to be approved by the Board in advance and can only be for a small percentage of the Portfolio. In such cases the Board will require the applicant to demonstrate their competence through some other means, such as writing an essay or undertaking a mock project.
7. **Suitable** pre-graduate experience may be included in the summary of work experience. This can be approved by the Assessment Panel, under a delegation by the Board, in the following circumstances:
- a. the applicant holds a formal survey technician qualification; and
  - b. the work was done under the supervision of a LCS; and
  - c. no more than 6 months pre-graduate experience is recognised.

Applicants with pre-graduate experience that does not align with the above criteria can submit a request to the Board for consideration.

8. The deadline for the submission of the complete Portfolio of Experience will be set 3 months (to be confirmed) before the Professional Challenge is to be held, which will be determined and communicated by the Examinations Coordinator in consultation with the Assessment Panel.
9. The Examinations Coordinator will undertake a quality assurance check to ensure all the necessary information has been submitted with the completed Portfolio of Experience. Once all the correct information is received, the portfolio is passed to the Assessment Panel for review and acceptance.
10. The Assessment Panel will review the portfolio submitted by the applicant to ensure it meets the requirements of the assessment framework and the Guideline.
11. If a portfolio is below the required standard and is not accepted by the Panel, the applicant will need to provide further evidence and re-submit the portfolio at a future date.
12. Once the Panel is satisfied with the information provided, the applicant will be advised that the portfolio has been accepted. The applicant can then progress to the next stage, being the Professional Challenge.

## D.5 Professional Challenge

1. The purpose of the Professional Challenge is to independently **test** the applicant's knowledge, understanding, and abilities in the applicable competencies detailed in Schedule 1 of the Standards.
2. The Portfolio of Experience needs to have been accepted by the Assessment Panel before an applicant can undertake the Professional Challenge.

3. The requirements of the Professional Challenge are:
  - a. An invigilated time-bound challenge, or series of challenges.
  - b. All applicants undertake the challenge(s) at the same time.
  - c. The challenge will include real-world scenarios that would likely be faced by applicants at this stage of their careers.
  - d. Access to legislation and other relevant reference material would be available.
  - e. The format of the challenge is to reflect current academic best-practice and be of a standard that is consistent from year to year.
  - f. The challenge will be offered at least once (preferably twice) a year.
  - g. The challenge may be held on-line if sufficient controls are in place to ensure the integrity of the process.
  - h. The challenge is to be designed to test applicants against the relevant competencies and how to apply them. The challenge will not necessarily cover all the competency areas, however, the challenge will include mandatory components on cadastral law and the current rules for cadastral surveying.
  - i. The challenge needs to clearly determine whether an applicant has passed or failed.
  - j. The challenge may also be used to test applicants for licenses who have not followed the normal graduate pathway, such as qualified surveyors from jurisdictions beyond New Zealand and Australia.
4. The Professional Challenge, or series of challenges, will be designed, marked and moderated by the Assessment Panel.
5. The Examinations Coordinator, in consultation with the Assessment Panel, will determine and communicate the date and location of each Professional Challenge at least 12 months in advance. Any venue used must be suitable for the format of the challenge.
6. The Professional Challenge must be passed by an applicant within two years after the acceptance of their Portfolio of Experience, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
7. A pass in the Professional Challenge is required before the applicant can progress to the Professional Interview.

## D.6 Professional Interview

1. The purpose of the Professional Interview is to confirm that an applicant has achieved proficiency in the competencies. An applicant can only attend the Professional Interview once they have passed the Professional Challenge.
2. The requirements of the Professional Interview are:
  - a. The interview for each applicant will be conducted by three members of the Assessment Panel. The panel members will between them have significant expertise across all the applicable competencies.
  - b. The interviews will be conducted in person unless there are extenuating circumstances.

- c. The interviewers will utilise the applicant's Portfolio of Experience and Professional Challenge results to help shape the discussion. The interview will also assess the applicable competencies that are not easily tested by the portfolio or challenge, such as professional conduct and communication skills.
  - d. The interview will be offered at least once (preferably twice) a year and will follow a suitable period of time (to be confirmed) after the completion of the Professional Challenge.
  - e. The interviews may be offered in different locations to make it easy for applicants and interviewers to attend them.
3. The Examinations Coordinator, in consultation with the Assessment Panel, will determine and communicate the date and location of each Professional Interview at least 12 months in advance.
  4. The Professional Interview must be completed by an applicant within two years after passing the Professional Challenge, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
  5. An applicant may be accompanied by a support person, subject to advance warning being given to the Examinations Coordinator and appropriate protocols being followed.
  6. Interviewers will either confirm a pass, identify any remedial work required by the applicant, or rule that the applicant is unsuccessful. Each applicant will be notified of the decision as soon as possible after the interview.
  7. Any remedial action required will be clearly articulated to the applicant in writing with a reasonable timeframe for completion.
  8. If an applicant does not successfully complete the interview, they will be required to attend a scheduled interview at a later date.
  9. After the successful completion of the interview, or following the completion of any remedial action, the applicant will be issued a certificate of competency by the Assessment Panel. The Examinations Coordinator will also be notified.
  10. The certificate of competency can be used by the applicant to apply for an initial licence from the Board.

## **E. Other Matters to Support the Competency Assessment Framework**

### **E.1 Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board**

1. The Board will own the assessment framework and maintain responsibility under the Act to arrange for the conduct of examinations.
2. The roles of the Board under this assessment framework are:
  - a. Enter into any arrangement with a third party provider for the Assessment Panel (if required).
  - b. Work with the Assessment Panel to design and refine the detail to deliver the different post-graduate stages.

- c. Approve the appointment of members to the Assessment Panel.
- d. Undertake any audits on the performance of the framework, including, to ensure a consistent and appropriate level of assessment is being achieved.
- e. Approve the setting of fees charged to applicants.
- f. Consider applications for recognition of tertiary education and qualifications, where required to be approved by the Board, to satisfy the first stage of the assessment framework.
- g. Consider applications under post-graduate stages of the assessment framework for recognition of prior experience, exemptions, clarifications or time extensions. These must be directed to the Examinations Coordinator in the first instance.
- h. Consider requests from applicants for reviews of decisions made by the Assessment Panel.
- i. Determine whether to issue an initial licence to an applicant who provides a Certificate of Competency.

## E.2 Assessment Panel

1. The Assessment Panel is a group established by the Board or a third party entity, to undertake the assessment process described by this framework.
2. A third party entity that provides the Assessment Panel must enter into a formal arrangement with the Board.
3. A third party entity must recruit panel members with the appropriate skills to undertake the assessment process. They must ensure that there is sufficient capacity to cover Panel member unavailability and to manage workloads.
4. A third party entity must train and induct new Panel members, and ensure effective succession planning.
5. The roles of the Assessment Panel under this assessment framework are:
  - a. Review and accept the Portfolio of Experience, or make recommendations on any further work experience or documentation required.
  - b. Design, prepare, mark and moderate the Professional Challenge.
  - c. Undertake the Professional Interviews, and set requirements for remedial work for those applicants who are deemed to not yet be proficient in the competencies.
  - d. Issue a Certificate of Competency to successful applicants.

## E.3 Examinations Coordinator

1. The competency assessment framework will be administered by a dedicated **Examinations Coordinator** (the Coordinator).
2. The Coordinator will be engaged by the Board.

3. The role requires skills in technical surveying and administration. The Coordinator would also need to have a good understanding of the assessment framework.
4. The key functions of the role of the Coordinator are to:
  - a. Respond to the day-to-day enquiries from applicants about the assessment process.
  - b. Administer the Register of Applicants.
  - c. Set the date by which the Portfolio of Experience must be received prior to a Professional Challenge, in consultation with Assessment Panel.
  - d. Undertake a quality assurance check to ensure all the necessary information has been submitted with the Portfolio of Experience. Once all the correct information is received, the portfolio is passed to the Assessment Panel for review and acceptance.
  - e. Arrange venues and set dates for the Professional Challenge and Professional Interviews, and coordinate with the Assessment Panel members.
  - f. Receive applications from applicants to sit a Professional Challenge and Professional Interview.
  - g. Receive notification from the Assessment Panel when an applicant has been issued with a certificate of competency.
  - h. Be a conduit between applicants and the Board with respect to enquires about recognition of prior experience, exemptions, clarifications or time extensions.
  - i. Report to the Board on assessment matters annually or as required.

#### E.4 Register of Applicants

1. A register of applicants will be established by the Board and maintained by the Examinations Coordinator. Potential applicants (graduates) will be invited to record their interest in participating in the assessment framework. It will also enable the Board, through the Examinations Coordinator, to communicate directly with the applicants on their progress and matters that affect them.
2. The register will hold information and milestones such as:
  - Date of graduation, name of qualification, and a transcript of the papers passed (e.g. to confirm SURV457 has been included);
  - BAOQ determination for overseas graduates;
  - Date of intended submission of Portfolio of Experience, and dates when actually submitted and accepted;
  - Date of intended sitting of Professional Challenge, and then date and pass mark once completed;
  - Date of intended participation in Professional Interview, and then date once successfully completed;
  - Date of issue of Certificate of Competency.
3. The Board Secretary would have access to this register and would use it to confirm the issue of a Certificate of Competency to an applicant when they apply for their initial licence.



## **E.5 Fees**

1. The direct costs of the assessment process (excluding administration) are to be recovered from fees charged to the applicants. The level of fees charged are to be approved by the Board.

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