

RICS Adjudicator Competency Programme – Questions & Answers

1. Overview of the Programme

What is the Panel Competencies Programme?

The Dispute Resolution Service (DRS) has developed this programme to enhance the skills and knowledge of those practising on the RICS Panel of Adjudicators. These core competencies are recognised by RICS as prerequisites for adjudicators.

The programme aims to maintain and raise the standards of RICS adjudicators by providing training, developing practical skills, and ensuring ongoing development through workshops and written feedback.

What is the purpose of the RICS Adjudicator Competency Programme?

The Programme is designed to maintain the high standards of RICS panel adjudicators and sharpen their existing skills, thus enhancing the reputation of the RICS panel overall. The objective is also to maintain RICS' reputation as the leading Adjudicator Nominating Body in the UK.

Why did RICS review the competency programme in 2024?

RICS sought to assess whether the competency programme was an effective replacement for the five-year reassessment interviews. While the workshops were well received, the multiple-choice tests were found to be insufficiently rigorous, leading to the decision to reinstate reassessment interviews.

What changes have been made to the competency programme?

The content has been updated and restructured so the programme now consists of 4 interactive face-to-face workshops.

What are the benefits of the programme?

The programme enhances practical adjudication skills, ensures compliance with RICS standards, improves professional reputation, and helps adjudicators develop and stay updated with current practices.

Who is the programme open to?

The programme is open to adjudication practitioners, party representatives and those studying adjudication. However, it is mandatory for RICS Panel adjudicators.

2. Structure and Content of the Programme

What topics do the competency workshops cover?

The programme consists of four days of in-person workshops covering:

Workshop 1

Identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest

Dealing with jurisdictional challenges

Workshop 2

Maintaining and controlling the process

Workshop 3

Principles and practice of contract interpretation

Current trends in adjudication

Workshop 4

Decision writing, including a mock decision exercise

Who has decided who will tutor on the workshops?

The idea for the Panel Competency Programme initially came from some panellists who are highly experienced, and respected, adjudicators.

In 2024, DRS convened a high-level working group of senior adjudicators and professionals from the industry to obtain insight into how the workshops and the reassessments can be better integrated, and how the competency programme could be updated.

During the course of several meetings, a small group of experienced adjudicators volunteered to act as sounding boards and technical advisers. They also volunteered to deliver the initial workshops.

DRS welcomes expressions of interest from other panellists who would like to be considered as tutors as we roll out the programme in the coming months and years.

How are the workshops structured?

Each workshop consists of two topics, except for the Decision Writing workshop, which takes a full day.

The face-to-face workshops will be taught over one full day (09:00 – 17:00).

Do I have to take the competencies in any particular order?

Workshops 1, 2 and 3 can be completed in any order.

Decision Writing Workshop 4, must be undertaken last and ideally in the 12 months before your reassessment interview. After the Decision Writing workshop, you will be required to undertake the writing of a scenario-based decision. This decision, together with the feedback from the markers, will be provided to the interview panel together with your other submissions and will replace one of the anonymised decisions required previously.

DRS encourages you to consider a development plan that suits you and spreads out your learning and attendance at these workshops over the five-year period.

When should the workshops be completed?

You must complete all workshops within a five-year period between your panel interviews. The first three workshops can be taken in any order, but the Decision Writing Workshop 4 must be completed last, ideally in the 12 months before the reassessment interview.

You are also required to attend at least one workshop in a two-year period.

DRS encourages you to consider a development plan that suits you and spreads out your learning and attendance at these workshops over the five-year period.

Are there any assessments?

No assessments or tests are required for Workshop 1, 2 and 3.

After the Decision Writing Workshop 4, adjudicators must complete a scenario-based written decision. This decision will be reviewed by markers, and feedback will be provided to the reassessment interview panel.

What if I fail the decision-writing assessment?

You will not receive a pass or fail mark for the Decision Writing assessment. Instead, you will be provided with feedback, which you can discuss with the assessors during your panel interview.

What happens if I do not agree with the markers' feedback?

You will have the opportunity to discuss the feedback with the assessors during your panel interview.

3. Logistics and Scheduling

How often will the competency programme run per calendar year?

As before, the workshops will be scheduled to run twice a year. A scheduled workshop will run subject to adequate numbers enrolling on it.

Workshop 4 will be scheduled more frequently in the 12-month period when reassessments are due.

Will all four workshops be available every year, or do some run more or less frequently?

Not all four workshops will necessarily be available in equal frequency each year. During periods when we anticipate a larger group of adjudicators due for reassessment, we will schedule additional dates for Workshop 4 to accommodate demand. As a result, the number of dates for Workshops 1, 2, and 3 may be adjusted accordingly. This ensures that those approaching reassessment have sufficient opportunities to complete the required training while maintaining overall workshop availability.

At which locations will the competency workshops run?

RICS offices in London, Birmingham and Edinburgh. We may also look at additional locations going forward to help accommodate panellists from across a wide geographical spread.

I am required to complete the workshops within a five-year period but there are only 4 workshops. How will this work?

Examples of Workshop Attendance Schedules:

Year 1-2: Attend **Workshop 1** and **Workshop 2**

Year 3-4: Attend **Workshop 3** and one additional workshop (either Workshop 1, 2, or 3 or a one-year break)

Year 5: Attend **Workshop 4**

Alternatively,

Year 0: Complete reassessment (no workshops required).

Year 1: Break (no workshops).

Year 2: Attend **Workshop 1**

Year 3: Attend **Workshop 2**

Year 4: Attend **Workshop 3**

Year 5: Attend **Workshop 4** (final year).

Alternatively,

Year 1-2: Attend **Workshop 1** and **Workshop 2**

Year 3-4: Attend **Workshop 3** and **Workshop 4** (optional)

Year 5: Attend **Workshop 4** (For your reassessment, you must submit a mock decision from the most recent Workshop 4 you attended)

This ensures compliance with the at least one in two years rule while completing all four workshops within five years, with Workshop 4 scheduled in the 12 months before your reassessment is due.

Can I do the same workshop more than once in a five-year period?

Yes. You may undertake a competency workshop in the same subject area as many times as you wish. The content and materials for each workshop will be refreshed regularly to reflect continuous changes in law and practice.

Note: you must undertake all four workshops within the five-year period.

Can I do Workshop 4 more than once in a five-year period?

Yes, you may undertake Workshop 4 as many times as you wish. This can be beneficial if you feel you did not perform well or want to refine your decision-writing skills. For your reassessment, you must submit a mock decision from the most recent Workshop 4 you attended.

Note: you must undertake all four workshops within the five-year period.

What happens if a workshop is full when I try to register?

If a workshop is full when you try to register, you have the flexibility to attend Workshops 1, 2, and 3 in any order, so you may wish to book a different available workshop instead. However, we strongly recommend not leaving Workshop 4 until the very last minute, as availability may be limited closer to your reassessment period. Planning ahead will help ensure you can secure a place in your preferred sessions.

Can I reschedule if I am unable to attend a workshop I booked?

Yes, you can reschedule if you are unable to attend a workshop you booked, but this can only be done once. Your payment will be carried forward to the next round of workshops, but it cannot be deferred indefinitely.

It would be ideal if you could inform us as far in advance as possible so we can fill your place if you are unable to attend.

4. Reassessment and Panel Requirements

Is the competency programme mandatory?

Yes. Attendance and successful completion of all workshops within the five-year period is mandatory for all RICS construction and LVD adjudicators.

Adjudicators on the President's Panel are required to attend at least one workshop in a two-year period. Completing the competency workshops and the associated assessment is a prerequisite for remaining on the panel

What changes have been made to the panel reassessment?

The scenario-based decision from Workshop 4 together with the formal feedback, will be provided to the interview panel and will replace one of the anonymised decisions required previously.

How does this affect upcoming reassessment interviews?

Adjudicators due for reassessment in 2025 and 2026 must complete the Decision Writing class before their reassessment. DRS will make dates for the Decision Writing Workshop 4 available for these adjudicators.

Adjudicators due for reassessment in 2025 may choose to book Workshops 1, 2, or 3, but these are not mandatory to complete in 2025. Their five-yearly interval for completion of all four workshops will then re-start following their reassessment.

What happens if I do not complete the programme within the required timeframe?

Adjudicators on the President's Panel are required to attend at least one workshop in a two-year period. Completing the competency workshops and the associated assessment is a prerequisite for remaining on the panel.

There will be opportunities to attend sessions scheduled throughout the year. Failure to attend the required number of workshops within a two-year period may result in an adjudicator being suspended from the panel until the required workshops are completed.

An adjudicator who fails to complete any of the workshops within the five-year period will be removed from the RICS panel.

An adjudicator who completes some but not all of the four workshops within the five-year period may be suspended from the panel.

DRS will invite you to explain why you did not complete the outstanding workshop(s). Mitigating circumstances, such as illness, will be considered, and a fresh deadline may be set for completion.

If you do not complete the Decision Writing workshop in the 12 months before your reassessment is due, you will not be invited for reassessment and will be suspended from the panel until you complete the Decision Writing workshop and successfully pass your reassessment interview.

If you are aware in advance that you will be unable to attend all four workshops within the five-year period, you should contact DRS as soon as possible to explain your circumstances.

I was reassessed in 2024. What happens to the workshops I completed before my 2024 reassessment?

The competency programme has been designed as ongoing training for panellists throughout their time on the Panel to ensure that they continue to develop their skills and expertise.

Attendance at the previous competency workshops was considered as part of your CPD during your last reassessment. It was also essential to remain eligible for nominations by RICS.

After your reassessment in 2024, a new five-year cycle began. This means that between 2024 and 2029, you must complete all the workshops again. You must complete Workshop 4 in the 12 months before your next reassessment.

While you will need to complete the workshops again in this new cycle, the benefit of your previous training remains and continues to support your development as an adjudicator.

I completed competencies under the old system. How do they 'count' towards the new system?

If your reassessment is due in 2025, your attendance at the previous competency workshops will be taken into account as part of your CPD during your reassessment.

If you were reassessed in 2024, your attendance at the previous competency workshops was already considered as part of your CPD during that process.

Additionally, completing the previous competency workshops was a mandatory requirement to remain eligible for appointments by DRS during that period.

The competency programme has been designed as ongoing training for panellists throughout their time on the Panel to ensure that they continue to develop their skills and expertise. It is also essential to remain eligible for nominations by RICS. While you will need to complete the workshops again in the new five-year cycle, the benefit of your previous training remains and continues to support your development as an adjudicator.

What are the requirements if I am on the Scottish and England and Wales panel?

The competencies required to be an adjudicator in Scotland and also in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are largely the same, except for the law component.

There is no requirement to attend separate workshops on both Scots law and English law. The training sessions which focus on the law are not designed to teach panellists what the law is, but instead to develop their skills in applying it.

5. Costs and Value

I currently pay £550 plus VAT for my five-yearly assessment interview. I am also required to pay for the competencies. What am I receiving for this additional cost?

RICS is aware of the constant scrutiny that our nominations service and adjudicators on the President's Panel are under. The competency programme is intended to reassure the government and the users of RICS adjudication services that we are actively and continually helping our adjudicators to keep up to date and that we are monitoring them on a continuous and systematic basis.

The programme of workshops is designed to be interactive and offer highly experienced adjudicators opportunities to continuously improve their practical knowledge and skills. It also demonstrates to users of adjudication that a panellist is constantly on top of their game throughout the time they are on the RICS panel.

The Panel Competency Programme complements the panel interview every five years. It is a rolling programme of education and updating for adjudicators, and assessments, which we believe offers value for money.

Panellists will be able to count the workshops toward their formal CPD hours.

Is the Panel Competency Programme merely a revenue opportunity for DRS?

The fees paid by panel adjudicators to attend workshops and undertake assessments are just about adequate to meet DRS's costs for delivering the programme.

Any additional income, such as fees paid by non-RICS panellists will provide contingency to meet any additional costs and help the programme achieve a modest margin.

Does participation in the competency programme count towards CPD requirements?

Yes, attending and completing the workshops satisfies part of an adjudicator's and RICS member's annual formal CPD requirements.

6. Entry and Eligibility

Do I have to be on the RICS panel to attend a workshop?

No. Whilst priority will be given to RICS panellists, the workshops will be made available to anyone who wishes to attend.

The workshops will be useful to adjudicators on other ANB panels, those who act as party representatives and anyone who wishes to keep up to date with current adjudication practices and procedures.

I have recently completed the RICS Diploma in Adjudication, and I am keen to get on the RICS panel. Is the Panel Competency Programme just another set of hoops to jump through to get on to the panel?

No. The Panel Competency Programme is mandatory only for adjudicators already on the RICS panel. The purpose of the programme is to support panel adjudicators by providing a level of training that is not currently available to experienced adjudicators. The scenario-based mock

decision exercise adds value by ensuring panellists remain up-to-date on current law and practice.

While the workshops are not mandatory for non-panellists, they will inevitably be of value to anyone who wishes to keep up-to-date with law and procedure and would benefit from listening to and learning from, highly experienced adjudicators.

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