



# Building Conservation Accreditation Scheme

Applicant guide

April 2025



# Building Conservation Accreditation Scheme

|                                                 |          |                                |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction.....</b>                        | <b>3</b> | <b>BCAS competencies .....</b> | <b>10</b> |
| The benefits .....                              | 3        | <b>Re-accreditation.....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Eligibility.....</b>                         | <b>4</b> | Outcome .....                  | 12        |
| <b>Process .....</b>                            | <b>5</b> |                                |           |
| <b>Application.....</b>                         | <b>6</b> |                                |           |
| Summary of experience.....                      | 6        |                                |           |
| Continuing professional development (CPD) ..... | 6        |                                |           |
| Case studies.....                               | 6        |                                |           |
| <b>Interview .....</b>                          | <b>8</b> |                                |           |
| Structure.....                                  | 8        |                                |           |
| Presentation .....                              | 8        |                                |           |
| Preparation .....                               | 8        |                                |           |
| Outcome .....                                   | 8        |                                |           |
| Appeals .....                                   | 9        |                                |           |
| Access arrangements .....                       | 9        |                                |           |

Published by: RICS, Parliament Square, London SW1P 3AD.

All rights in this publication, including full copyright or publishing right, content and design, are owned by RICS, except where otherwise described. Any dispute arising out of this publication is subject to the law and jurisdiction of England and Wales

# Introduction

The RICS Building Conservation Accreditation Scheme (BCAS) was established in 1992 to provide a recognised qualification for individuals specialising in conservation of scheduled monuments, listed and historic buildings or sites.

The effective management of historic assets requires factors to be considered beyond those recognised for conventional assets. These factors include:

- the cultural and social value of an asset
- its materials and construction
- desire for public access and
- the impact of legislative requirements.

As a result, clients with a vested interest in historic assets can seek professionals who are able to demonstrate an understanding of these competencies and who possess the knowledge, experience and skills to respect historic buildings and manage the expectations of multiple stakeholders.

These stakeholders include:

- building owners
- occupiers
- operators
- investors
- local and national government bodies
- statutory bodies
- amenity societies and
- the public.

Accreditation provides a rigorous assessment and ongoing monitoring programme ensuring professionals understand the approach required to manage historic assets and the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders. It is only awarded to individuals who can demonstrate and maintain exemplary standards.

## The benefits

### Industry profile

Accreditation is supported by many funding bodies and owners of historic buildings and sites.

In the UK, the main heritage bodies, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Cadw (Historic Environment Service Wales) and the Department for Communities Northern Ireland, require conservation-accredited qualified professionals to be appointed to lead grant-funded work on historic assets.

The qualification may also be required by other grant-funding bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and inspections and works to ecclesiastical buildings.

RICS accreditation is recognised for these purposes and is also available globally to scheme members operating in different countries.

### BCAS register and logo

Your details and contact information will appear on the RICS Building Conservation Accreditation register, which is [published on the RICS website](#) so clients will be able to find your details. You will also have exclusive access to the RICS Certified Historic Building Professional logo:



# Eligibility

All applicants must:

- be a chartered member of RICS (MRICS or FRICS)
- have current and relevant practical experience to be able to demonstrate the BCAS competencies.

Practical experience is essential, and it is recommended that applicants have a **minimum of five years related to conservation**.

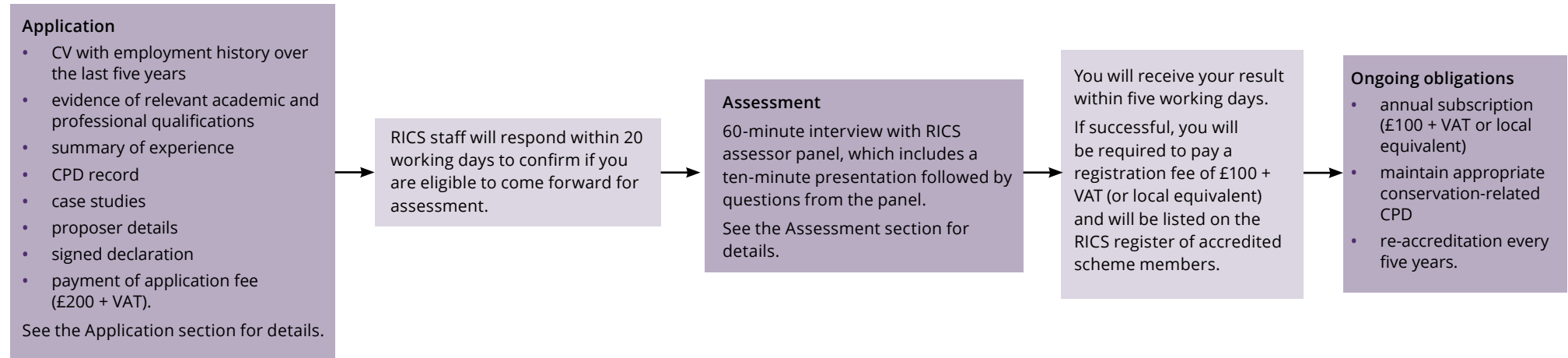
No additional academic qualifications are required to apply, but a degree or post-graduate qualification in building conservation, or academic experience, can be beneficial.

If you have any unresolved complaints or other active conduct issues/sanctions on your RICS record, your application cannot be considered.

The application fee is £200 + VAT (or local equivalent).

If you would like to check your eligibility to apply, please contact the RICS Assessment Delivery team at [UKlassessmentdelivery@rics.org](mailto:UKlassessmentdelivery@rics.org)

# Process



# Application

Your application provides the panel with details of your experience to inform the interview.

You must include:

- CV with employment history over the last five years
- evidence of relevant academic and professional qualifications
- summary of experience
- CPD record
- case studies
- proposer details (must be an RICS chartered member and in a conservation or related discipline)
- signed declaration
- payment of application fee (£200 + VAT)

## Summary of experience

You should set out your position on building conservation, referencing your relevant career history, education, training, significant and recent work, and any other relevant achievements. You should demonstrate experience within the last five years.

Word limit: 500 words

## Continuing professional development (CPD)

As an RICS member, you already have an obligation to complete annual CPD.

For your BCAS application, you need to provide a summary of each CPD activity relevant to building conservation completed in the last five years.

The minimum requirement for BCAS assessment purposes in hours is 30% of the overall RICS CPD requirement for members.

Word limit: 50 words per CPD activity.

RICS members must maintain up-to date records on the online CPD management tool. Visit the [CPD compliance guide](#) for more details.

## Case studies

You must provide **five** case studies on work you have completed.

Three case studies must be on projects within three years prior to applying. The remaining two case studies must be within five years of the date of your application.

This could cover:

- practical experience – complete repair, maintenance or conservation contracts/projects, quinquennial or other reports
- academic experience – technical papers, research or a dissertation. You can only submit one case study involving academic experience.

Notes:

- For each case study topic, outline your role and level of involvement, which should be substantial.
- Separate phases of work to a single building could qualify as separate case studies, provided they involve different aspects of conservation, for example, repairs to particular elements of fabric, diagnosis of defects or a single conservation statement.
- The case studies should reflect your professionalism and high standard of communication.
- Use the competency guidance on pages 10 and 11 to focus your case studies on significant elements.

Word limit: 500 to 750 words per case study.

## Structure

Each case study should be presented under three headings:

| Heading                                          | Practical case study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Academic case study                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Description<br/>(maximum 250 words)</b>       | Describe the monument, building or site, the category of statutory protection and details of any funding/grant aid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Describe the background and objectives of the technical paper, research or dissertation.                                                                                    |
| <b>Critical analysis<br/>(maximum 500 words)</b> | Explain your conservation philosophical approach, your role in the work, the role of your practice/company/organisation and the outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Explain your conservation philosophical approach, the conclusions of your report, technical paper, research or dissertation, its outcomes and contribution to conservation. |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                | Examples of your drawings, photographs, specifications, schedules or extracts from your report, technical paper, research or dissertation.<br><br>Drawings must be limited to two single sides of A4 (A3 drawings should be reduced to A4).<br><br>Photographs must be limited to two single sides of A4 with a maximum of four images on each side.<br><br>Extracts, specifications and schedules must be limited to two single sides of A4.<br><br>All appendices must be clear and legible or will be dismissed. |                                                                                                                                                                             |

Your application alone will not be used to judge your competence and will not determine the result of the interview.

Assessors may request further information from you if they require clarification. However, all responsibility remains with you to ensure a complete application. Requests for information do not extend to incomplete applications.

### If your application is unsuitable

Your application will be checked against the criteria and guidance mentioned previously in this guide and will be returned if it does not comply. You will be asked to update your application, which may delay your interview.

Examples of unsuitable applications include:

- incomplete or missing information
- unprofessional or poorly written communication
- exceeding the word limits
- excessive appendices
- failure to demonstrate suitable experience to inform interview process.

# Interview

The purpose of the 60-minute interview is to confirm your knowledge, experience and understanding of the competencies.

The interview is conducted by a minimum of two chartered members of RICS, who are accredited scheme members and have been trained as assessors.

One assessor will be chairperson and will be responsible for managing the interview.

If you decline more than two assessment dates or cancel an assessment with less than 24 hours' notice, a new assessment fee will be payable to sit the assessment.

## Structure

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Chairperson's introductions      | 2–3 minutes       |
| Candidate's presentation         | 10 minutes        |
| Questions on the presentation    | 10 minutes        |
| Discussion on overall experience | 35 minutes        |
| Chairperson closes               | 1–2 minutes       |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>60 minutes</b> |

You will be given the opportunity to review any previous answers and clarify any areas of uncertainty. You will also be able to ask the panel any questions.

## Presentation

You must prepare a ten-minute oral presentation to demonstrate your understanding of principles and applications of building conservation. Visual aids and handouts will not be accepted.

Candidates are advised to avoid simply reiterating the content already included in the written submission.

Candidates should instead seek to present a reflective critique of their experience and case studies focusing on aspects such as significance, challenges, decision making, justification/defence of decisions made with reference to relevant philosophy and legislation together with an evaluation of the lessons learned.

## Preparation

Prepare for the interview by consulting:

- your application
- your case studies
- the BCAS competencies (see page 10)
- relevant international charters and standards including but not limited to the *ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and Training* (1993)
- COTAC Insight and Understanding Conservation resources
- statutory legislation applicable to the country where you practice and
- recent issues of RICS' *Built Environment Journal*.

## Outcome

Following the interview, the panel will review your experience and reach a conclusion. The chairperson provides a written summary of the interview and this will be agreed with the other panel members.

You will receive the result via email within five working days of your interview.

There are two possible outcomes – pass or refer.

## Pass

If successful, your individual details and contact information will appear on the RICS Building Conservation Accreditation register, which is [published on the RICS website](#), so clients and others will be able to find your details. You will also have exclusive access to the RICS Certified Historic Building Professional logo.

### Ongoing obligations

You will be required to pay an initial registration fee of £100 + VAT (or local equivalent)

As an accredited scheme member, your ongoing obligations are:

- Annual subscription of £100 + VAT (or local equivalent). This is payable every January and will be included with your annual RICS membership subscription.
- Maintain appropriate conservation related CPD.
- Re-accreditation every five years (see page 12).

## Refer

If you are referred, you will be offered the opportunity to come forward for assessment again. You will receive a referral report detailing the following information:

- an explanation of why you have not met the required standard
- advice on any areas to focus on ahead of a future reassessment
- details on submitting for reassessment
- details of the appeal procedure.

Where appropriate, you may be offered a mentor.

## Appeals

You have right to appeal if you are referred. Details of how to appeal are available on the [Assessment applications](#) web page.

The appeal panel does not question the merits of the assessors' decision. The panel looks at the way the assessment was conducted, and will allow the appeal only if, on the balance of probabilities, there was fault in the process.

The panel does not reach any conclusion about your competence to practise: it considers only administrative or procedural matters.

When an appeal is made, it must:

- be in writing, accompanied by the appropriate fee
- be made by you and not a third party
- clearly state the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

You will have 21 days from the date of your referral report being issued by RICS to appeal.

The appeal panel has no powers to award accreditation. If an appeal is approved, the original final assessment interview is disregarded, and you will be given a new interview based on your original assessment submission.

If the appeal is dismissed, the original assessment result will stand.

Please note: the appeal panel's decision is final and there is no right to appeal this decision.

## Access arrangements

RICS makes every effort to protect applicants from discrimination in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#) (the Act) and is committed to equality of opportunity.

Reasonable adjustments: When applying for an assessment, RICS must consider requests for a reasonable adjustment where a candidate, who is disabled as defined by the Act, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

A reasonable adjustment must be based on the individual needs of the applicant and their ability to access an assessment.

To apply for a reasonable adjustment, you should first refer to the [Access Arrangements: Reasonable Adjustments policy](#). If this is relevant to your circumstances, please inform the RICS Assessment Delivery team at [UKassessmentdelivery@rics.org](mailto:UKassessmentdelivery@rics.org) and they will provide an application form to apply.

Special consideration: defined as a consideration given to an applicant who has temporarily experienced a significant personal difficulty at the point of taking an assessment.

To apply for a special consideration, you should first refer to the [Access Arrangements: Reasonable Adjustments policy](#) before sending your request to the RICS Assessment Delivery team at [UKassessmentdelivery@rics.org](mailto:UKassessmentdelivery@rics.org)

For further information, see the [Access arrangements](#) web page.

# BCAS competencies

The competencies define the skills required to achieve accreditation.

Assessors will expect you to demonstrate the following for each competency:

- ability to deliver a sustainable conservation philosophy to your work
- breadth of experience on a variety of projects, for example, project complexity, conservation issues, construction type, contract type and
- appreciation of your client's objectives.

Applicants are advised to refer to the *ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and Training* (1993). The competencies reflect these Guidelines and will be used as a basis for the assessment.

| Competency                              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conservation philosophy and legislation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• application of international charters, standards and national and local Acts, regulations and guidelines (applicable to the jurisdiction)</li><li>• significance of monument/ building/site and its setting – aesthetic, historical and social value</li><li>• level of intervention.</li></ul> |
| Construction techniques                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify construction, structure and materials</li><li>• report on behaviour of building</li><li>• advise repair methods.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                             |
| Diagnosis of defects                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identification</li><li>• impact – destructive, non-destructive</li><li>• required action.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Conservation Project management         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• organisation of project and works</li><li>• liaison with occupiers, owners and other stakeholders</li><li>• reporting to non-specialist readers</li><li>• creation of records</li><li>• future care and maintenance</li><li>• recognise specialist input.</li></ul>                             |

Your application could cover the following topics.

You are not expected to evidence all the listed skills and experience in your word-limited application.

### Conservation philosophy and legislation

- Understanding what form of protection (if any) applies and why.
- Understanding if protection is appropriate – too high, too low or incidental.
- Application of standard approaches – minimum intervention, conserve as found, like-for-like, maintenance, etc.
- An assessment of significance – using a known measurement system such as [Conservation Principles](#).
- Evidence of research – desk studies, archival, physical investigation, recording, monitoring.
- An impact assessment – comparison of options with an idea how these might be weighted in context.
- Awareness of related/overlapping conservation paradigms – nature, energy, portable property, interdisciplinary working.
- A client-centred and/or asset-centred approach – understanding different client types and asset types, use and needs.
- Stakeholder viewpoints – being able to communicate about significance, impact and decision making.
- Using challenge and innovation – being able to adapt to unusual or irregular situations, sense check, move from strategy to detail.

### Construction techniques

- Description of construction types and materials relative to the norm for this asset type and locality.
- Known weaknesses and threats for the material/asset type in question.
- Established repair techniques and any changes in the techniques that reflect new research and thinking in building conservation.
- Monitoring, measuring and analysis of performance and rate of change for the whole asset, individual components and elements.
- Understanding the advice of specialists such as conservation scientists or conservators, and placing in context with the overall performance of the asset.
- Sourcing and specifying materials, ethical issues about supply and sourcing.

- The role of crafts, skills and design in asset performance and ethical approaches to training and retention in the sector.
- Use of options appraisals and agreeing performance outcomes.

### Diagnosis of defects

- Identifying the defect as active and a threat or commensurate with its context (i.e. patina, static conserved, slow)
- Prioritising by likely impact in terms of time, cost, difficulty of repair, effect on significance.
- The use of sampling, testing, monitoring – specifying investigations and how to calibrate/test accuracy of findings.
- Looking at compound issues/overlapping defects such as rot and corrosion to identify root causes.
- Management of defects, temporary repairs as measures to secure better long-term outcomes.
- Looking upstream to whole care strategy, use and ownership to prevent defects and recurrence.
- The role of inspection (such as quinquennial inspection), access and funding for repairs on outcomes.
- Role of [Heritage at Risk](#) and other programmes on duty to report risk/vulnerability.

### Conservation project management

- Matters of liability, insurance and procurement.
- Measuring project success – evaluation, setting expectations.
- Making records of intervention, public engagement and compliance.
- Overlap of historic environment regulations with other (non-conservation) regulations – *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations*, building control and anti-money laundering.
- Use of standard and non-standard contracts and dispute resolution processes.

# Re-accreditation

All accredited scheme members must be re-accredited every five years.

Re-accreditation is a written submission and assessed by an RICS member panel. The submission requirements are:

- CV – updated CV for the purposes of re-accreditation, highlighting conservation work within the last five years.
- CPD – a record of 30 hours' conservation CPD within the last five years. This is 30% of the overall obligation for RICS members over the same period.
- Two case studies – 500 to 750 words each, following the same requirements at the initial application.

There is no additional fee for re-accreditation because it is covered by your annual accredited scheme member subscription fee.

## Outcome

There are three possible outcomes:

1. Pass – your accreditation is renewed for five years.
2. The panel may request further information or clarification.
3. The panel may recommend a full BCAS re-assessment, including an interview.



## Delivering confidence

We are RICS. As a member-led chartered professional body working in the public interest, we uphold the highest technical and ethical standards.

We inspire professionalism, advance knowledge and support our members across global markets to make an effective contribution for the benefit of society. We independently regulate our members in the management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others supports their professional practice and pioneers a natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all.

**rics.org**

General enquiries  
**[contactrics@rics.org](mailto:contactrics@rics.org)**

Candidate support  
**[candidatesupport@rics.org](mailto:candidatesupport@rics.org)**