

Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants under the Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board Competency Assessment Framework

This document summarises and anonymises common questions asked by applicants. They are grouped by the framework stages and competency areas as defined by the CSLB Competency Assessment Framework. Each section includes paraphrased questions and detailed answers to support applicants seeking a certificate of competency for their first cadastral surveying licence.

A. Academic Qualification

Q:

A pass in SURV 457 is required for a compliant degree from Otago University. However, an overseas degree can be accepted if Bureau for Assessment of Overseas Qualifications confirms it is equivalent, even though that applicant won't have sat and passed SURV 457. Why is this?

A:

SURV457(or the equivalent) is the advanced cadastral component of the Bachelor of Surveying degree from Otago University. It is an important paper to provide the foundation knowledge required for a cadastral licence in NZ. Overseas degrees that also contain an advanced cadastral surveying component can be considered equivalent. An applicant from either context will then obtain competence in the NZ cadastral system through their subsequent work experience.

B. Portfolio of Experience (PoE)

General questions on process or that are relevant to all competency areas.

Q:

I am planning to submit [insert nature of project] for my PoE – will this be suitable?

A:

The Examinations Coordinator (EC) will answer questions about the process but will not be providing advice about whether a particular project is suitable or not. It is up to the

Assessment Panel members to determine if the applicant has demonstrated the required proficiency through their PoE, not the EC.

The purpose of the Guideline is to set out the sub-competencies for each competency area. It is up to the applicants, in discussion with their Supervising LCS, to provide evidence that demonstrates that the applicant has achieved the required level of proficiency in the sub-competencies. Examples of suitable projects are included in the Guideline to set the expected level of complexity in the evidence to be provided, but applicants are free to choose any suitable projects from their work experience.

The covering report is the critical document to provide the link between the projects submitted and the sub-competencies they are demonstrating. Licensed cadastral surveyors need to be able to professionally articulate their information in a credible and authoritative way. The PoE provides applicants with an opportunity to argue that their submitted projects demonstrate their proficiency in the different competency areas.

Q:

How do I know if my project meets the required level of complexity?

A:

The new framework encourages applicants to engage directly with the competencies rather than follow prescriptive criteria. The Guideline gives examples of projects that could demonstrate the required level of complexity, but the lists are not exhaustive. As you select and prepare your projects for submission, the guidance and discussions you have with your Supervising LCS will be invaluable. Joining discussions with your peers or with organised groups such as the Survey + Spatial NZ Young Professional Group may also help to clarify what to include in your Portfolio of Experience. Not all complexity factors need to be present, but the examples submitted should not be simple projects.

Q:

Can I submit my Portfolio of Experience before moving overseas and return later for the Professional Challenge and Professional Interview?

A:

Yes, you can submit your PoE before moving overseas, provided it demonstrates the required level of proficiency in the competencies. As stated in the Competency Assessment Guideline, you must be confident that your PoE reflects your readiness to progress to the next stages. Once your PoE is accepted, you have up to two years to return to New Zealand to complete the Professional Challenge, and another two years after that to complete the Professional Interview. This flexibility allows applicants to plan around family commitments or travel.

Q:

Is it possible to use projects from multiple workplaces in my PoE?

A:

Yes, you may include projects from different workplaces in your PoE. For each workplace, you must complete and submit the Schedule of Practical Experience and Summary of Experience forms, signed by your supervising LCS. It would be prudent to gather all necessary documentation and files before transitioning to a new employer to ensure your submission is complete and verifiable.

Q:

Does an applicant, who may have many years of experience, have to record all their experience in their schedules or just sufficient to confirm compliance with the framework?

A:

Your work experience forms submitted should be sufficient to meet minimum requirements and do not necessarily need to cover all your post-graduate experience. The preference is for recent and relevant experience to be included. If your whole post-graduate career is not submitted, a statement of your overall experience through a brief CV would be helpful context for the Assessment Panel members.

Q:

Can sensitive client information be redacted and still be admissible?

A:

Yes, sensitive information can be redacted to protect privacy. The Assessment Panel will focus on the evidence demonstrating your proficiency in the applicable sub-competencies. You may also describe the structure and content of sensitive documents in your covering report, using the original document as a source without revealing personal or sensitive information. This approach also supports the professional conduct competency by demonstrating ethical handling of sensitive matters.

Q:

Can the same project be used to demonstrate multiple competencies?

A:

Yes, a single project can be used across multiple competency areas. However, the applicable material will need to be uploaded into each competency area so that the assessor has access to all the project documentation they need without cross-referencing to other competency areas. Each competency area must have its own covering report that clearly explains which sub-competencies are being demonstrated by the project.

Q:

Can I use multiple projects to demonstrate all the sub-competencies in a competency area?

A:

Yes, the Guideline anticipates more than one project being uploaded for most competency areas. For the Boundary Definition competency as an example, the Guideline anticipates more than one project or dataset being uploaded. There is a mandatory project, and then the evidence requirement goes on to say “At least one other project...”. You would need to upload all the information you created for the projects so that the assessors can follow your field work, calculations, reporting, dataset etc, and your covering report then draws together the information submitted and matches it to the sub-competencies you are demonstrating. For example, your mandatory project might be a limited title survey and you would use that project to demonstrate, say, 75% of the sub-competencies. You then might also submit, say, a unit title plan. The assessors would need to see your measurements, workings, reporting and graphics etc for the unit title plan, but the covering report might only refer to that project to tie the link to the permanent structure boundaries, interpreting building design/construction or height limited boundaries sub-competencies.

Q:

It is difficult for some firms and their applicants to get the full range of projects necessary to demonstrate skills in all the sub-competencies listed. Is it expected that our projects cover every sub-competency for a particular competency area?

A:

It is important to closely examine the wording of the sub-competencies, and in particular the verb that they each start with. For example, in the boundary definition competency area, some of the sub-competencies start with “determine” and others with “describe”. Where it says “determine”, the expectation is that you will undertake project work to fully demonstrate this, whereas “describe” gives you a bit more flexibility to explain the process if you don’t have a work job to hand.

The PoE is designed so that applicants can utilise projects undertaken within a work context under the guidance of a supervising LCS. However, applicants can prepare suitable projects in their own time to complete a portfolio, if the evidence submitted clearly demonstrates the understanding and proficiency of the applicant in the relevant sub-competencies.

Applicants and their managers should also consider seeking secondments or sub-consulting arrangements with friendly firms to give the applicant the required experience and/or projects.

Q:

Can I use a project where I only did part of the work?

A:

It is understood that applicants will at times be reliant on other work colleagues to complete projects. It is important that you clearly state in your covering reports what your

personal involvement was in a project, and that you understood what was going on in the parts you didn't do. You may also choose to upload extra projects to demonstrate that you personally undertook all relevant aspects of a competency area.

B.1 Survey Measurement

Q:

Can I use guidelines from the old framework for control surveys?

A:

Yes, but you don't have to. While the new framework does not specify exact requirements for control networks, if you have undertaken a control survey under the old framework as a reference it is likely to be complex enough for the new framework. However, you can also consider other types of survey control projects and other factors that can create comparable complexity. Not all complexity factors need to be present, but the examples submitted should not be simple projects.

Q:

What factors contribute to complexity in control surveys?

A:

Complexity can arise from varied accuracies, combinations of equipment and methods, level of detail, and logistical constraints. Even if factors like topography or buildings are less relevant, others such as survey area size and data integration can also enhance complexity. The goal is to present a network that goes beyond a simple scenario.

Q:

Do I need to use SNAP or similar software for control network adjustments?

A:

The sub-competencies are designed to be software and equipment agnostic. You may use manual methods or any appropriate software as long as you demonstrate proficiency in statistical analysis and adjustments. The assessors will look for evidence that you can determine survey requirements and perform accurate measurements and reductions.

B.2 Land Tenure Systems

Q:

Can I use a project involving Māori freehold land and fragmented ownership records?

A:

Yes, such projects can be valuable for demonstrating land tenure competencies. For example, researching ownership using Māori Land Court records and advising clients on limitations and next steps shows your understanding of tenure systems and authoritative sources.

B.3 Boundary Definition

Q:

Can unit title surveys be used to demonstrate permanent structure or height-limited boundaries?

A:

Yes. Unit title surveys or other scenarios such as fee-simple titles, easements or covenant areas with vertical limits can be used to demonstrate these sub-competencies. The key is to provide evidence that shows your proficiency in defining boundaries relative to permanent structures or vertical datums.

Q:

Do I need to submit projects for every sub-competency in boundary definition? What if I don't have access to rare survey types?

A:

While the guideline anticipates multiple projects and at least two cadastral datasets (urban and rural), it might be possible to demonstrate some sub-competencies without using a cadastral dataset. For instance, a survey to check if a water boundary has shifted could involve recreating the original boundary from source documents, surveying the current bank, and determining if movement has occurred.

B.4 Land Information Systems

B.5 Statutory Planning Process

Q:

How much detail should be included in the planning project covering report?

A:

Your covering report should be standalone and include all relevant evidence that demonstrates your proficiency in the sub-competencies. For the statutory planning competency, this will include showing how you gave effect to a subdivision consent.

Evidence such as the consent itself, resulting LT plan, as-built records, and certification documents are more relevant than, say, details of the cadastral calculations.

Q:

Can s.348 RoW applications or covenant plans for transferable titles be used to demonstrate planning competencies?

A:

The statutory planning process and land development engineering principles competency areas are largely driven by s.11(3)(b) of the Cadastral Survey Act 2002. This states that “the standards must also relate to the legislative requirements for the subdivision of land to the extent that they are relevant to cadastral surveying”. The sub-competencies are therefore particularly focused on the subdivision process and the cadastral surveys that result from them. The work experience requirements for Subdivision Consents are similarly focused on “obtaining and implementing subdivision consents” (refer to the Guideline page 7). It is important to discuss your projects and advice in the Guideline with your supervising LCS. It is up to you to build a case in your covering report that any projects submitted do provide relevant evidence.

B.6 Land Development Engineering Principles

B.7 Professional Conduct

B.8 Communication

Q:

Can I use artificial intelligence (AI) methods to prepare my covering reports?

A:

If AI is used in the preparation of any covering report, this must be disclosed at the start of the report and a reference made to an appendix containing an AI disclosure statement. The AI disclosure statement must contain information about the AI assistance methods used and how the AI generated content has been thoroughly verified by the applicant.

C Professional Challenge

D Professional Interview