

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION **Rules and Regulations**

Aug 2015

1. Introduction

The Professional Practice Examination, hereafter referred to as the “PPE”, is an effective and important tool by which the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, hereafter referred to as the “HKILA”, measures an individual’s understanding of all aspects considered to be essential and desirable for the rational, executive practice of Landscape Architecture before deciding on an applicant’s election to Professional Membership of the HKILA.

This examination is in addition to, and should not be confused with, any academic qualifications an applicant may hold following successful completion of an accredited course of instruction in Landscape Architecture conducted by a tertiary educational institution either in or outside the Territory of Hong Kong. In fact, admission to the PPE is available only to applicants who attained a pre-requisite level of academic achievement as assessed independently by the Registration Committee of the HKILA upon an individual’s application for Associate Membership.

Arranged, prepared and conducted by the Professional Membership of the HKILA the PPE becomes the principal means of controlling and developing the standards of the profession in practice in Hong Kong, thus ensuring the continued recognition of the HKILA as a Professional Institute of international repute.

2. General Description

The PPE is an examination, conducted by the HKILA, for the purpose of assessing a candidate’s level of understanding of contemporary practice in Landscape Architecture and his/her responsibilities as a professional member towards the community, the HKILA and future clients. It covers all aspects of knowledge and experience considered to be essential for the practice in Landscape Architecture.

3. Professional Membership Requirement

Passing the PPE is a requirement for all who apply to the Council for election to professional membership of the HKILA. Only applicants who are corporate members of professional institutes outside Hong Kong and with whom the HKILA has agreed reciprocal membership arrangements are exempt from this requirement.

Organisations who currently fall within this category are:

- the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) and
- the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA)

Under such exemption, applicants may be elected to professional membership of the HKILA after completing a minimum of 12 months appropriate and satisfactory practice in Landscape Architecture within the Territory of Hong Kong.

4. Eligibility for admission to the PPE

To be accepted as a candidate for taking the PPE an applicant must have:

- (a) attained the age of 23,
- (b) been a Associate Member of the HKILA for at least 12 months,
- (c) an accredited academic qualification in Landscape Architecture (for details see the Accreditation Policy Paper),
- (d) completed a minimum of two years approved professional practice experience in the field of Landscape Architecture, of which one year must have been undertaken within the Territory of Hong Kong immediately prior to taking the PPE and,
- (e) submitted a Practical Training Record (PTR) covering the two years period described under (d).

An applicant wishing to take the PPE will need to obtain procedural details from the Secretary of the HKILA. The Secretary will issue on request the necessary PTR Proforma (blank sample attached) with a current PPE Syllabus to enable a candidate to complete the PTR, submit it at time of registration and prepare for the examination. The contents of the total record of an applicant's practical experience will be assessed by the Education Committee (see 6) of the HKILA to determine eligibility of a candidate to take the PPE.

5. The Examination

The PPE consists of two distinct parts as follows:

Part 1: A *written test* of pre-determined extent and content, conducted at a time and date set by the Board of Examiners (details per Addendum I) and

Part 2: An *oral test* conducted by a minimum of two selected members of the Board of Examiners (details per Addendum II), at a time following the completion of Part 1.

Candidates are notified by the Secretary of the Board of Examiners in writing of the details for each of the two parts, such as actual date, time, and venue. Such notification will be expected to be issued a minimum of three weeks before the dates set for each part.

Eligible candidates will be charged a fee for admission to the PPE to recover administrative and other costs involved in preparing for and conducting the examination. This fee is set annually by the HKILA on a recommendation from the Education Committee.

6. Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners, hereafter referred to as the “BoE”, is set up by the Education Committee of the HKILA. Members of the BoE are selected annually from a list of names obtained by open invitation from the Professional Membership of the HKILA and endorsed by the Council to serve as examiners on a recommendation from the Education Committee.

Examiners - number and background

The number of examiners required for the PPE will relate to the number of eligible candidates in any one year but in normal circumstances would be a minimum of three. In selecting the examiners the Education Committee will provide for a range of experience from public and private sectors of employment and the Education sector of the profession by proposing at least one practitioner from each of these three sectors for endorsement. All examiners need to be Professional Members or Fellows, hereafter referred to as “Professional Members”, of the HKILA and have practised in the profession for at least seven years to be eligible to serve on the BoE.

Overseas examiners

In the event that there is no eligible Professional Member or Fellow within the HKILA available locally to serve on the BoE at any one year, the Education Committee may invite one or more examiners from overseas who are known to have the requisite level of experience and are Professional Members of the AILA or NZILA.

The Board

The selected examiners, once endorsed by the Council, form the BoE for that particular year and will appoint a Chairman and Secretary from within their ranks. Whilst there is no limit on the number of successive years individual examiners may serve on the BoE, the Education Committee will decide on subsequent appointments each year having regard to available manpower resources and spread of experience.

Observer/Moderator

The BoE may appoint an observer/moderator to:

- monitor the Part 2 (Oral Examination) of the PPE,
- assist in advising the examiners on procedural matters during that time and
- report his/her personal observations and findings to the Education Committee if and when requested.

To be eligible to serve in this capacity a person would need to be a Professional Member of the HKILA, have practised in the profession for at least seven years and may be from any one of the three sectors previously described. The observer/moderator will act independently and will not have any casting vote in decisions made by the examiners.

7. Education Committee

Composition

The Education Committee shall be composed of a Chairman and a minimum of two (2) Professional Members or the HKILA. The Committee Chairman is a member of and is appointed by the Council. The Chairman, once appointed, invites from the professional membership of the HKILA two or more persons to serve on the Education Committee and submits their names to the Council for endorsement. Each of the members shall have had a minimum of five years appropriate professional experience to be eligible for Committee Membership.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Education Committee are contained in Chapter 4.3 of the Bye-Laws to the Constitution.

8. Evaluation Standards

Expectations of a candidate's suitability

With their academic studies completed, followed by at least two (2) years practical experience as a graduate in a Landscape Architectural Practice, it is expected that applicants would at least:

- be familiar with the practice of Landscape Architecture and the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct,
- be aware of the relationship of the profession with the community and other professions involved in the work of a Landscape Architect,
- have consolidated their technical expertise and design skills,
- be conversant in all aspects of documentation relating to a practice,
- have achieved a sufficient level of maturity to be able to confidently and clearly communicate their knowledge,
- have developed a knowledge of professional practice ingredients such as legal and statutory requirements, business, financial and time management aspects,
- fully understand the scope of works which may be undertaken by a Landscape Architect,
- be conversant with the terms and conditions of professional engagement as promulgated by the HKILA,
- have had the opportunity to explore design implementation processes.
- have analysed the steps involved in the execution of proposals and
- have developed a working knowledge of all relevant contract types and project administration.

Practical competency - Practice Training Records (Records of Experience)

During their qualifying work experience all candidates must complete a full set of Practice Training Record sheets (PTR's).

The appropriateness of the experience recorded on the PTR's will be judged by the Education Committee of the HKILA, who will assess the extent to which it qualifies a candidate to act in a professional capacity as a landscape practitioner. Regular part time or work share experience is acceptable provided that it is equivalent to a total of two (2) years full time continuous experience. Only candidates who are deemed to have had adequate prior experience will be admitted to the PPE.

Appropriate work experience must be obtained under the direction of a Professional Member of the HKILA.

Examiners' expectations

Examiners will be looking for a clear demonstration of an individual's professional capabilities and understanding of the scope of the profession. They will place particular importance on personal ethics and professional conduct. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the responsibilities in maintaining the public trust in landscape architecture as an independent profession serving the public benefit, the obligations to their clients or employers and the basis for maintaining the integrity of the profession of Landscape Architecture as well as other professions (see the HKILA's Code of Professional Conduct).

After a detailed analysis of a candidate's responses, the examiners will make a final judgement on whether the candidate has the ability to practice Landscape Architecture independently, clear of any perceived potential to cause undue embarrassment to the profession and to the HKILA.

9. Examination Syllabus

The syllabus of the examination is contained in the following general headings:-

Section 1 – Professional responsibilities, liabilities, and ethics

Section 2 – Legal system and development control

Section 3 – Professional practice management

Section 4 – Construction contracts, and pre-tender & tendering procedures

Section 5 – Contract administration

Please refer to **Addendum III** for details of the syllabus.

10. Timetable

The normal time frame for arranging and conducting the PPE is as follows:

- 30 September - Closing date for candidates' registration to the PPE.
- October - Issue of notification of eligibility for admission to the PPE.

- November - Part 1 of PPE - Written Test.
- December - Results of Part I of PPE issued.
- January - Part 2 of PPE - Oral Test.
- March - Final results of PPE issued.

11. System Review and Monitoring.

The examination system will be subject to periodic reviews conducted at not more than three years intervals and modified as considered necessary and approved by the Council upon a recommendation from the Education Committee. To this effect the HKILA, through the Education Committee, will set up an “Examination System Review Panel”, hereafter referred to as “the Panel”. The Panel will consist of a minimum of three Professional Members selected from the Institute’s membership and subsequently approved by the Council. In addition, an observer may be nominated by Government to monitor the proceedings. A letter inviting such nomination will be sent out at least six (6) weeks prior to the official induction of the Panel.

The Panel will review the format and content of the examination, the criteria for selecting examiners and all other procedures relating to the proper conduct of the PPE. The Panel will report their findings and submit any recommendations for improvements to the Council for their consideration and action as deemed appropriate.

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION (PPE)
ADDENDUM I - PART 1 - WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

1. Contents.

Part I - Written Examination of the PPE - shall consist of:

- (a) **50 Multiple Choice Questions** and
- (b) **10 Essay/Note type Questions** in pairs, offering a choice between “either” one “or” the other.

The candidates are expected to answer all of the questions under (a) and five of the questions under (b) within a time limit of **3 and 1/2** hours. The total complement of questions will cover the entire syllabus as promulgated by the HKILA.

2. Examination Papers - Compilation procedure.

Individual members of the BoE draft a range of questions covering specific parts of the year’s syllabus. The number of questions produced is usually well in excess of requirements for that year’s examination. This not only allows a wider scope for selection but also the building up of a library of questions for future use.

Questions with their answers are submitted to the Chairman of the BoE who checks them for any anomalies, inconsistencies and/or ambiguity and arranges amendments through their respective authors before making a final selection for inclusion in the year’s PPE Paper. The selected questions are then passed to the Secretary of the BoE, who prepares the official question papers for the PPE.

3. Awards.

The current practice for awarding points for answers to questions received from candidates is as described below:

(a) **Multiple Choice Questions.**

Each correct answer to the 50 questions attracts one (1) point whereas 1/2 point is deducted from a candidate’s total score for every incorrect answer. Failure to answer a question attracts 0 points.

The maximum attainable score under this section of the paper is therefore 50 points.

(b) **Essay/Note type Questions.**

Each complete and comprehensive answer to a question can attract up to 20 points. The maximum attainable score under this section of the paper is therefore 100.

4. Overall Assessment - implications to candidates’ progress.

The overall maximum number of points a candidate may score for Part 1 of the PPE is therefore 150 points. In assessing the candidates’ suitability to continue to sit for Part 2 (Oral Test) of the PPE the following achievement levels are set:

Pass -Candidates who scored 70% of the total or at least 105 points.

Borderline -Candidates who scored between 60 and 69% of the total or at least 90 points.

Fail -Candidates who scored less than 60% or less than 90 points.

Candidates who ‘passed’ this examination are selected to sit for the Oral Examination whereas those with a ‘borderline’ achievement level may also be selected, depending on a number of other considerations (see note below).

When advising the results of Part 1 of the PPE, candidates who achieved ‘Pass’ or ‘Borderline’ status are only informed of their selection to sit for Part 2 (Oral Examination) of the PPE.

Convening the Written Examination - Invigilators.

A minimum of two invigilators will be appointed by the BoE, who are responsible for the satisfactory operation of the written examination (“the Examination”) as determined by the BoE. The Examination will be conducted in a suitable venue to accommodate all candidates and invigilators comfortably within a single room in a quiet environment.

The time limit for the Examination is 3 and 1/2 hours with a five minute period added before the start for candidates to familiarise themselves with the general instruction issued with the paper. Candidates will have their identities checked by the invigilators and will be instructed not to include their name on any of the answer sheets provided. All papers handed in by the candidates at the end of the examination will only bear personal identification numbers.

(5) Portfolio of Professional Practice Experience

Candidates who are successful in the written examination will be required to prepare a portfolio of their professional practice experience and present it in the subsequent oral examination. The project portfolio will need to illustrate projects / assignments that they had worked on, and to highlight the practical experience they had gained with respect to the five sections of the syllabus of the PPE. The project portfolio shall be submitted at least two weeks prior to the date of the oral examination.

The Project Portfolio shall be a bound booklet / folder made up of a maximum of 20 A3 pages (not including the front and back covers) printed on one side. Candidates are expected to use photographs, drawings, and other illustrations as the main component of the portfolio while supplemented by text. The total words used for the text shall not be more than 2000. The written medium shall be English.

DO NOT SUBMIT ANY CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL.

Note 1 Multiple Choice Questions, as the name implies, offer a choice of three (3) or more possible answers to each question, of which only one is absolutely correct. These questions allow examiners to test candidates on the full spectrum of essential knowledge of the material included in the syllabus.

Note 2 Essay/Note type questions may not have one definite answer and alternatives may be provided by the candidates in their answers. The examiners will therefore be looking for a general understanding of what is behind the question and may accept, upon further reflection of the answer given, a well-reasoned approach, as demonstrated by the candidate, to solving the problems set. The use of notes to indicate the candidate’s own understanding of the question is often helpful in this respect, provided they are clear and unambiguous.

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION (PPE)
ADDENDUM II - PART 2 - ORAL EXAMINATION**

1. Generally.

This second part of the PPE is conducted in a suitable venue offering a quiet and comfortable environment essential to examiners and their candidates for the proper performance of personal interviews.

2. Time frame and procedures.

The minimum processing period for each candidate is fifty (50) minutes, which allows for:

Part I: Practical Experience Presentation - a 20-minute interview in which the candidate makes a maximum 8-minute Practical Experience Presentation which is then interrogated by the examiners. The purpose of Part I is to examine the candidate's personal experience in relation to relevant areas of the syllabus.

Part II: Q&A Interview - a 30-minute interview in which the candidate is asked questions from a pre-selected list of questions. The purpose of Part II is to examine the candidate's general knowledge of the syllabus.

Although the actual time taken for an interview may vary with each candidate, depending on an individual's responses to questions, the timetable for attendance by candidates is set at 60 minutes per candidate.

On completion of all interviews, all participating examiners will meet with the observer/ moderator (if appointed) to discuss their assessment of the performance of each candidate and decide on the final results (see note 1), which are subsequently recorded in a report prepared by the Chairman of the BoE.

3. Final Report.

The examination report, which contains a firm recommendation as to each candidate's suitability for election to Professional Membership of the HKILA, is checked and co-signed by at least one other examiner prior to its submission to the Education Committee for consideration and endorsement.

After due consideration of the report content and recommendations of the BoE by the Education Committee, the Committee Chairman presents such recommendations as the Committee endorsed to the Council of the HKILA.

4. Notification of final results.

The decision of the Council will subsequently be conveyed to all successful candidates by the Secretary of the HKILA issuing a formal notice that they are eligible to apply for Professional Membership of the HKILA.

Unsuccessful candidates are advised of their individual results by the Chairman of the Education Committee and encouraged to attempt the PPE again the following year. Some indication of their weaknesses, as observed during the interview, may be included at the sole discretion of the Education Committee, to assist their future performance.

- Note 1** A candidate's earlier performance under Part 1 of the PPE (Written Examination) has no bearing on any of the discussions and/or final results of Part 2 of the PPE (Oral Examination).
- Note 2** Candidates who "passed" Part 1 of the PPE (Written Examination) but "failed" Part 2 (Oral Examination) may be exempted from repeating Part 1 the following year when taking the PPE.

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION (PPE)
ADDENDUM III – SYLLABUS**

Section 1 Professional responsibilities, liabilities, and ethics	Section 2 Legal system and development control	Section 3 Professional practice management	Section 4 Construction contracts, and pre-tender & tendering procedures	Section 5 Contract administration
<p>Professional roles and responsibilities , ethics and values including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Professional Roles & relationships ➤ The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects Incorporation Ordinance ➤ HKILA’s Constitution and Bye-Laws ➤ HKILA’s Code of Professional Conduct ➤ Continuing Professional Development Policy ➤ Professional Ethics <p>Professional duties and liabilities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Liabilities under contract, tort, and statute ➤ Negligence ➤ Professional indemnity insurance ➤ Intellectual Property law 	<p>The legal system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HK legislation and law relevant to landscape <p>The planning system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The structure of the HK planning system ➤ Development control and development plans ➤ Planning procedures, restrictions, consents and enforcement and appeals ➤ Statutory authorities <p>Environmental control and conservation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) ➤ Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) ➤ Environmental and conservation agencies ➤ Tree preservation and 	<p>Administrative and management aspects of professional practice and appointment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Copyright ➤ Changes to contracts ➤ Novation ➤ Fees and charges ➤ Fee tendering ➤ Standard and non-standard briefs ➤ Methods of calculation and charging ➤ Expenses ➤ Payment periods, interest and recovery of fees ➤ Work schedules ➤ Disputes <p>Professional relationships including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contracts with public, private and corporate clients ➤ Collateral Warranties ➤ Design and Build contracts 	<p>Contracts and contract law including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meaning and essentials of a valid contract ➤ Forms of agreement and conditions of contract ➤ Types of contract ➤ Subcontracts ➤ Contract documents ➤ Law related to latent damages ➤ Standard specifications <p>Pre-contract and tendering procedures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selecting contractors ➤ Tendering methods ➤ Tendering documentation ➤ Tender assessment and reports ➤ Letting the contract 	<p>Contract administration including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Duties of all parties under contracts ➤ Control of the works ➤ Inspections and site meetings ➤ Site inspectorate staff ➤ Insurance ➤ Instructions, variations, valuations and certification ➤ Delays and disputes ➤ Bankruptcy and insolvency ➤ Liquidated and ascertained damages ➤ Practical completion ➤ Defects/ rectification and maintenance period ➤ Final accounts

Section 1 Professional responsibilities, liabilities, and ethics	Section 2 Legal system and development control	Section 3 Professional practice management	Section 4 Construction contracts, and pre-tender & tendering procedures	Section 5 Contract administration
<p>Professional registration including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Landscape Architects Registration Ordinance (LARO) ➤ Role and responsibilities of a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> removal application ➤ Landscape, heritage, conservation and ecological designations ➤ Protected species and habitats ➤ Pollution control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multi-disciplinary teams ➤ Sub-consultancy ➤ The role of other relevant professions ➤ Building Information Modelling and data sharing requirements ➤ The role of a landscape architect in a public authority <p>Practice management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Forms of practice ➤ Public practice ➤ Employers duties and contracts of employment ➤ Employees duties ➤ Quality management systems ➤ Data protection and intellectual property ➤ Advertising and practice promotion ➤ Occupational, Health and safety legislation and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Performance bonds 	