

# Professional Project Assessment

## IRRV GUIDANCE NOTES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PROJECT ASSESSMENT

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The objective of the Professional Project Assessment (PPA) is to enable potential Corporate members of the Institute to demonstrate their ability to understand the principles of benefits and/or revenues administration, or rating valuation, and to apply their knowledge in the workplace in accordance with the corporate aims of the Institute.

1.2 The project is presented in the form of a report of between 12,000 and 15,000 words (including appendices) on a topic of practical value to your employer. Whilst you will receive support from a mentor, the work and responsibility for the project rests with you.

1.3 Once your report has been submitted, you will be invited to attend a viva, at which you will be expected to present your project and answer questions on its content. The viva forms part of the assessment process and is mandatory for all candidates.

### 2. Candidate's eligibility

2.1 All applicants must be an Affiliate or Technician members of the Institute. If you are not already an Affiliate or Technician member, you should contact the Membership Department for details or visit [www.irrv.org.uk/membership](http://www.irrv.org.uk/membership).

2.2 To be eligible for the project-based route to Corporate membership, in addition to holding IRRV Affiliate or Technician membership, you must

- be a senior manager who is directly responsible to a Head of Service,
- hold a specialist technical position (e.g. Band 2 Case Worker, VOA), or
- be a senior valuer in private practice. Applications will be considered on merit and your position within your own organisation will be taken into account

### 3. Role of Mentor

3.1 Before starting work on your project, you should find a mentor at your work place who can support and advise you as you develop your thesis.

3.2 You should seek the mentor's advice on selecting a suitable project topic and adopting a systematic approach to collating and presenting information. The mentor's advice should be of a general nature, allowing you the freedom to manage your own project. The collection, analysis and evaluation of information are your tasks. If you are unable to find a work place mentor, the Institute will provide one for you.

3.3 When your project is submitted for assessment it must be accompanied by a verification certificate, which your mentor and your employer are required to sign, certifying that, to the best of their knowledge, the project is your own work.

### 4. Selecting a Project Topic

4.1 As part of your PPA application, you must submit an outline of the project that you propose to undertake. Selecting an appropriate project topic is extremely important. You should take time to ensure that your proposed project will allow you to demonstrate that you meet the assessment criteria.

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4.2 The project outline must be typed and no more than 500 words in length. The subject matter should be directly relevant to your work and the outline should give a clear indication of the proposed objectives, scope and methodology of your project and your contribution to it.

4.3 Your project outline should include:

- the title of the project report (brief and self-explanatory)
- main features, chapters or headings (a sentence or short paragraph to explain each of the main areas to be addressed) · methods to be used (a brief outline of how you will develop your report)
- proposed outcomes (a summary of what you have achieved (if the report is complete), or hope to achieve (if it is yet to be written) through the project)
- the inclusion of the learning objectives that you have set yourself in relation to the project would be useful, though not essential

4.4 You must agree your choice of project with your employer to ensure that your chosen subject is of value to the employing organisation. If you are employed as a consultant or adviser, you will need to gain agreement of your sponsoring organisation or client. You are advised not to undertake a project a subject that is already being reviewed, or due to be reviewed, by your organisation or an external agency. All projects submitted for the PPA must have employer support.

## 5 Approving the project outline

5.1 Your project outline will be sent to an assessor who is a specialist in the subject you have chosen. The assessor may make comments on your project outline before approving it, and it is always advisable to take these into consideration before proceeding with your report. In the event that your project outline is not approved, you may revise and re-submit it for further consideration.

5.2 The project timetable is set out below. Please note that, if you plan to submit your project report for assessment in April, your project outline must be submitted by 31 August. If you wish your work to be assessed in October, you must submit your project outline by 31 January.

### PROJECT TIMETABLE

1st application date

- Proposal submitted by 31 January
- Proposal approved by 20 February
- Report due by 20 October
- Viva 3rd week November
- Exam Board January
- Results published February

2nd application date

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- Proposal submitted by 31 August
- Proposal approved by 20 September
- Report due by 20 May
- Viva 3rd week June
- Exam Board August
- Results published August (late)

## 6. Producing the project thesis

6.1 Successful projects show a clear progression of ideas, from well-defined objectives, through to clear outcomes. It is therefore important that you consider the structure of your proposed project carefully at the outset.

6.2 You are advised to prepare a detailed timetable, showing each stage in producing the project, which can be used to gauge the amount of work involved and to measure progress. You should plan for an early submission date to allow for contingencies, should the need arise.

6.3 The amount of time devoted to a project will depend on the nature of the subject. The Institute suggests that employers allow candidates three weeks of office time, on average, for project work. You will be expected to complete the remainder of the work in your own time.

6.4 The Institute must approve any major change in the project's scope or direction to that originally proposed.

6.5 The Institute must be informed in writing at the earliest opportunity if there is likelihood that you will not be able to meet the submission deadline. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

6.6 The project must be your own work. All quotations must be referenced and acknowledged in the form of a footnote. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in registration being terminated and may lead to further disciplinary action by the Institute.

6.7 Your submission should include a bibliography listing the published material you have read in relation to your project. You may be asked about these publications at your viva.

## 7. Format of the Project

7.1 The length of the project report should be between 12,000 and 15,000 words, including tables, graphs and appendices. If your work does not meet or exceeds these guidelines, you will be penalised.

7.2 The report should be typed, 1½ line space, using A4 paper and securely bound in a protective cover. Each chapter should start on a new page and each page should be numbered. Appendices should be clearly cross-referenced to the main text.

7.3 The completed report should include the following sections:

- Title page
- Copy of approved project outline

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- List of contents
- Project text
- Appendices
- Bibliography/references
- Verification certificate

## 8. The Viva

8.1 The project viva is conducted by a panel consisting of two subject specialists and an independent Chairman. An Institute observer may also be present. The observer's role is to monitor the assessment process for consistency. S/he will take no part in the discussion or your assessment.

8.2 At the viva, you will be expected to introduce your project for ten minutes and will then be questioned by the members of the panel for approximately thirty minutes on the scope, methodology, conclusions and recommendations contained in your report. This is followed by a brief summing up during which any points of clarification can be addressed.

8.3 You may use notes as an aid, but should avoid merely presenting a précis of the project. You should, instead, seek to amplify the reasons for choosing the project, the way in which you tackled it, any problems you encountered and how you dealt with them, and the reasons for deciding on your final recommendations. Visual aids may be used and an over-head projector will be available should you require one. If you wish to make an electronic presentation will need to provide your own equipment. You should note that candidates will not be allowed extra time to set up presentation equipment.

## 9. Assessment criteria

The assessment panel will be asked to comment on whether your project adequately demonstrates your practical skills, knowledge and understanding. In particular, the panel will examine the following areas:

- Project formulation
- Currency and relevance of project topic
- Knowledge of the relevant characteristics of established practice and theory
- Selection of key issues within the working environment in order to formulate a problem
- Design of possible solutions
- Investigation of the various methods used to find an optimum or 'best fit' solution.
- Reasons for the selection of the chosen method to include time and cost considerations
- Implementation of the response or solution
- Collection and analysis of the data and/or description of the product and its preparation

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- Identification of opportunities for further development of the knowledge base or product
- Evaluation of project outcome
- Critical evaluation of findings and methodology to include own role in project
- Review of conclusions reached with a summary of implications of findings, including recommendations for changes in working practices, if relevant
- Project organisation and presentation
- Oral communication
- Clearly written and presented project to include well-organised argument substantiated by data and applied references
- Clear and concise oral presentation of the project
- Ability to give informative responses to questions about the project topic and the wider professional context in which it is set

## 10 Membership recommendation

If the assessment panel is satisfied that your overall submission meets the criteria, a report will be presented to the Institute's Examinations and Assessment Board. The Board will make a recommendation concerning the conferment of membership to Council. If the recommendation is approved, you will be invited to make an application for Corporate membership.

## 11 Referral and Appeal

11.1 If your submission is unsuccessful, you will be informed in writing of the respects in which the work has failed to meet the published criteria, normally within two weeks of your viva. You will be offered one referral opportunity at the next available assessment session at no additional charge.

11.2 If you wish to appeal against an assessment decision, you should do so in writing within 14 days of receiving notification from the Institute. No additional material will be accepted for assessment in the case of an appeal. The current appeal fee must accompany the appeal. The fee will be refunded in full if the appeal is upheld.

## 12 Fees Payable

The fees payable for the Professional Project Assessment route to Corporate Membership is £850 plus VAT. This includes two years Membership while completing the Professional Project Assessment, assessment and Certificates. Corporate Membership Fees are payable on completion of the Assessment.

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