PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
MODULES POLICY

JANUARY 2013
Revised – 30th March 2015
TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION
2. PURPOSE OF THE SKILLS MODULES
3. LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE
4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND FEEDBACK
5. LEARNING ACTIVITIES
6. THE EXAMINATION
7. EXAMINATION FEES
8. THE EXAMINERS
9. SCOPE OF EXAMINATIONS
10. MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS
11. TRANSITIONAL PERIOD
12. REFERENCE MATERIAL
13. ROUTES TO REGISTRATION

ABBREVIATIONS

APC - Assessment of Professional Competence
EFT - Electronic Fund Transfer
FRICS - Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
MRICS - Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
NQF - National Qualifications Framework
PrQS - Professional Quantity Surveyor
PSM - Professional Skills Module/s
SACQSP - South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession
SAQA - South African Qualifications Authority
SGB - Standards Generation Body

DOCUMENT STATUS

Revised 30.03.2015

Deletion of redundant references to roll-out of the programme
Revision of semester dates and examination
Examiner appointment and moderation sampling clarified
Inclusion of provision for examinations without pre-assessment and examination re-counting
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The SACQSP currently publishes on its website, 'registration routes' for Candidate Quantity Surveyors who wish to register as PrQS. This structure requires candidates from differing educational / professional backgrounds to attain such status through a combination of workplace experience; supplementary training; and an 'Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) interview'. The guideline presented here describes the procedural arrangements, and requirements to be met by candidates that require supplementary technical training.

The Professional Skills Modules have been purpose-written for the SACQSP and based on unit standards developed by the SGB for Quantity Surveying and registered with SAQA. **It must however be stressed that these PSM’s do not substitute any formal tertiary education.**

There are 18 Professional Skills Modules (PSM) that will be individually assessed. Candidates, (unless specific written exemption is granted by the Registrar) will be required to complete all 18 modules and will be issued certificates of competency for each module passed.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS MODULES

Until the end of 2012 all candidates with qualifications lower than 480 credits were required to pass SACQSP Part I and Part II examinations in order to advance to an APC interview. The examinations were always set by an examiner from one of the academic institutions offering SACQSP-accredited 480 credit qualifications. Due to the vast amount of material that had to be prepared for each of the examinations Parts I and II, and only one examination being set on several topics, the failure rate through the years has been unacceptably high.

The purpose of the PSM’s is to establish a minimum threshold assessment of quantity surveying knowledge in terms of learning-based outcomes to bridge the knowledge gap between a 360 credit (NQF level 7) qualification and a functional 480 credit (NQF level 8) qualification.

The general objective with the modules is an emphasis on understanding rather than memorising and to develop the candidate’s skill to apply the principles in a practical way. A problem-driven approach to learning is followed. Candidate-centred and co-operative learning is encouraged in order to optimally develop the skills outlined in the study component.

3.0 LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE

3.1 NQF level 7 (360 credits) or equivalent
   - Bachelors of Technology in Quantity Surveying
   - Bachelors of Science in Quantity Surveying
   - A built environment accredited cognitive degree in construction management or property development
   - A non-accredited or foreign Bachelor’s degree in Quantity Surveying.

3.2 Although 360 credits (NQF Level 7) is the minimum level for learning assumed to be in place, it may be recommended that the candidate acquire the skills of various other modules as a foundation prior to undertaking more advanced
modules, which will be detailed on the schedule of PSM's as set out in section 10 below. Typically, these would comprise the ‘Fundamental' and ‘Core' unit standard modules. Examples of ‘Fundamental' unit standards are Statistical analysis of financial and economic data; mathematical systems for commercial applications; micro economics; macroeconomics; financial accounting; management accounting; and principles of management theory and practice. ‘Core’ unit standards typically comprise quantity surveying-related knowledge e.g., interpretation of construction drawings and specifications.

3.3 Candidates who have written and passed examination Part I or Part 2 will be exempt from the examination for the PSM’s as indicated in Section 11 Transition Period.

4.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND FEEDBACK

4.1 Candidates undertaking the modules will require to meet the minimum interim assessment criterion, before writing a formal final exam.

4.2 For PSM 1, the Candidate will be required to undertake a minimum of 100 hours of work-place experience as inputted into the QS DIARY application pertaining to the module content. If the Candidate is not currently employed and not being mentored by a PrQS or MRICS, they cannot undertake this module.

4.3 For PSM 2 to PSM 18, interim assessments will be determined by the completion of on-line tests with the minimum mark of 60% to be attained. Candidates, who fail to attain the minimum mark, can re-write the test on-line approximately a week later.

4.4 The final written examination is to be undertaken in a designated examination venue. The examination duration for PSM 1 is 240 minutes (4-hours) and all the remaining modules will be 180 minutes (3 hours). The examination is handwritten on paper.

4.5 The minimum written examination pass mark for a module is 50%.

4.6 No supplementary examinations for the final exam are granted.

4.7 The results for the interim assessment test are immediate. The results of the final written exam are normally published within 4 weeks from the date of the examination. The results and exam script will be inputted into the candidate’s personal profile on the SACQSP website as a permanent record.

4.8 Examinations without interim assessment will only be permitted if the candidate achieved a final mark of their written examination of between 40% and 49%. Failing achieving the sub-minimum will require that the candidate will have to enrol for the module from scratch, paying the relevant fee for the module material and to do the interim on-line assessment. This exemption from having to purchase and undertaking the module interim on-line assessment does not apply to PSM 1 or any module that has been substantially revised as advised on the PSM portion of the website.
5.0 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

5.1 The relevant on-line study material is only available through the office of the SACQSP.

5.2 Six (6) modules will be delivered on a 12-week semester cycle and will be up-loaded on the dedicated PSM webpage of the SACQSP’s website. The order of the modules is detailed per a schedule published annually. On payment of the enrolment fee, each module can be electronically downloaded off the Council’s website – no paper copies are available. The files are in PDF format and range in size from 40 to 70 A4 pages. Candidates will automatically be enrolled on the dedicated module forum page where they are free to post questions and comments pertaining to the subject matter. A subject specialist will periodically monitor the study forum to answer/steer candidates as necessary.

5.3 Candidates are restricted to enroll for 3 new modules per semester, unless an examination without interim-assessment has been granted per clause 6.5 below. Candidates may apply to a maximum of one additional new module per semester. Such application is to be made to the Registrar with motivation for such application, which shall be granted at the sole discretion of the Registrar.

5.4 Candidates have the choice of mastering the content of the PSM’s solely through self-study and the on-line discussion forum established, or they may enrol and attend external courses offered by SACQSP accredited tertiary institutions. The tertiary institutions will not be examining the modules, but may host the examination session with examinations provided by the SACQSP. The costs incurred to enrol and attend the external workshops offered are over-and-above the enrolment and examination fees charged by the Council.

5.5 The dates for the interim on-line test assessments and final written examinations will be published on the SACQSP’s website.

5.6 Candidates may enrol on-line for the Professional Skills Modules at any time during their ‘in-training’ period, per the schedule published by the SACQSP.

5.7 Candidates are cautioned that they need to be sure which module that they enrol for, as once the electronic release of the course material has been sent, there can be no retraction of the material, and no refunds of fee costs will be made by the SACQSP.

6.0 THE EXAMINATION

6.1 Final written examinations timetable will be published on the Council’s website and advised to Candidates by e-mail. A maximum of six examinations will be held per semester.

6.2 All written examinations are written under strict examination conditions and supervised by an appointed invigilator. Any dishonesty will result in disqualification and disciplinary action by Council.

6.3 At the Registrar’s discretion, examinations are written in centres where an adequate number of Candidates/Applicants reside. Currently the following examination venues are established;
  - Midrand
  - Durban
• Cape Town
• East London
• Port Elizabeth
• Bloemfontein

6.4 While every attempt is made to accommodate overseas candidates, this can only be considered where suitable venues and invigilators are available in a specific location. Examinations conducted overseas are scheduled at the same time and under the same conditions as local examinations. It is the responsibility of the candidate to source the venue and an independent invigilator (to the satisfaction of Council).

7.0 MODULE COSTS

Selected Modules to be undertaken by candidates are charge for individually. There are 2 stages of enrolment and billing; i.e. (a) enrolment and on-line assessment test and (b) written examination.

(a) Initial enrolment - Candidates enrol for each module on-line via the SACQSP website. Payment can be done on-line via credit card or debit card, alternatively, payment can be made via EFT or direct deposit and once the accounts department has accepted the proof of payment, an unique booking number will be issued on-line. The unique number is your ticket to download the PDF learning material, access to the community forum, and the assignment portal. The initial enrolment fee includes the cost of submission and the on-line interim assessment test.

(b) Examination – Only after being notified by the SACQSP that the on-line interim assessment has been successfully completed, the registration system will advise candidates via email to enrol for the module written examination. In the same manner as before, candidates enrol for each module examination on-line via the SACQSP website, with the exception that an venue for writing of the examination needs to be selected. Payment can be done on-line via credit card or debit card, alternatively, payment can be made via EFT or direct deposit and once the accounts department has accepted the proof of payment, an unique examination number will be issued on-line. The examination booking sheet needs to be presented on the day of the examination and at the scheduled time as proof of payment and is used as your unique identifier on the examination script. No candidate will be permitted to write the examination without having such a booking sheet on their person.

The enrolment cost and the examination booking fee are as determined annually by the SACQSP and published on the SACQSP website. Candidates who fail the examination will have to wait until that module is repeated in the next year’s semester of Professional Skills Modules, and enrol afresh.

Candidates that qualify for an examination without pre-assessment (according to point 4.8) do not have to purchase the module material again unless it has been substantially revised. However, Candidates will require to register and pay for the costs for the written examination.
8.0 THE EXAMINERS

8.1 The Council will appoint an examination panel of educators plus a moderator to set the annual examinations. The panellist and moderator shall all be current or historical academics of tertiary institutions offering SACQSP-accredited Honours programmes at NQF Level 8. The panellist and moderator will be drawn from different academic institutions.

8.2 The Moderator is required to review the proposed examination papers and provide the panel with comments or proposed revisions. The final, approved examination paper will be signed by both parties and submitted to the Registrar. The candidates’ scripts shall be marked by the examiner panel and a minimum 20% sample shall be reviewed by the moderator, with a minimum of 20 scripts reviewed. All scripts with a mark falling between 45% and 50% shall be reviewed and be included in the sample to be reviewed. The examiner panel shall prepare a confidential report containing the marking guideline for the set examination and their findings following the marking of the examinations, which will be submitted to the Registrar. On the completion of the examination process the candidates’ final marks and Certificates of Professional Skill competency for each module will be lodged in the candidates’ personal profile on the SACQSP website.

8.3 The decision of the examiners / moderators is final and binding, and the SACQSP will not enter into any correspondence on the outcome of an examination.

8.4 Candidates may not apply for a remark, but may apply for a recount of the examiners marking after payment of a refundable fee of R100 should there be an error in the addition of the marks.

9.0 SCOPE OF EXAMINATIONS

The scope of subject matter covered by the examinations is limited to the material covered in the Professional Skills Modules as set out in Table 1. The Timetable of Professional Skills Module delivery is detailed in Table 2.

TABLE 1: Descriptions of Professional Skills Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS MODULES</th>
<th>NQF LEARNING IN PLACE</th>
<th>UNIT STANDARD CREDIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Undertake advanced descriptive quantification</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Manage production processes of price determination documents (bills of quantities, etc.) for Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide advice on contract documents and price determination methods (procurement strategies) for Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manage price determination processes (tender procedures) for Built Environment projects</td>
<td>6 (240)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resolve claims and apply close-out processes on Built Environment Projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Compile a project cost information database for Built Environment projects</td>
<td>6 (240)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Undertake financial feasibility studies for Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Understand the basic principles of property law and property valuation in South Africa</td>
<td>6 (240)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Strategic planning of Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Implement project service quality assurance on Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Undertake whole life appraisals of Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Understand Value Management processes on Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Manage risk on Built Environment projects</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Understand professional practice management procedures in a quantity surveying enterprise</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Understand the basic principles of Construction Law in the Built Environment</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Dispute resolution in the South African Construction Industry</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of Professional ethics</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>7 (360)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.0 MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The SACQSP prescribes that the minimum requirements for registration for a candidate is that all 18 Professional Skills Modules (unless formally exempted) require to be undertaken. Should a candidate not pass a module, the candidate will
be required to repeat the module/s entirely as it reoccurs on the timetable in Table 2 above. The study material is continuously being updated, and candidates are advised to download the latest study material should they be required to repeat the module.

11.0 TRANSITION PERIOD (Candidates registered before 31 December 2012)

The regulations pertaining to registration has changed with effect 1st January 2013. Candidates registered before this date fall under the previous Council Examination requirement. However, the Council Examinations Part I and 2 were phased out with effect from 16th September 2012 as per the notice published in the Government Gazette in 2009. Eligible candidates will be required to undertake the modules listed below in lieu of the outstanding Council Examination Part I or Part 2

Council Examination Part I Modules - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 17 and 18

Council Examination Part 2 Modules - 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18

The exemption to undertake and pass the above PSM’s for candidates falling under the previous regulations is valid until the end-November 2015. Candidates, who fail to achieve a pass in all the above aligned PSM’s within the set time period, will be required to undertake all 18 PSM’s per the 2013 Registration regulations.

12.0 REFERENCE MATERIAL

Candidates are referred to the relevant reference material as indicated in each of the foregoing PSM’s. It should be recognised that the texts indicated are for guidance purposes only. Candidates should extend their studies well beyond these limited reference sources and are advised to consult with senior members of the construction / property industry - particularly those who have undertaken advanced studies of the subjects indicated.

Candidates should specifically access material in textbooks, peer-reviewed academic journals, on-line and conference proceedings, as well as guides, manuals and legislation relating to the Built Environment. These are normally available for study purposes in the libraries of tertiary institutions throughout South Africa or on the internet. Where copy-write permits, the SACQSP provides web-links to the prescribed reading.

13.0 ROUTES TO REGISTRATION

The historical twelve routes to registration for candidates with quantity surveying qualifications and ten routes to registration for candidates with construction management qualifications all lapsed on 31 December 2012. The routes to registration applicable from 1 January 2013 are detailed in the SACQSP Registration Policy and Guide to the APC. For a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for the duration of the in-training period and entry into the APC interview, kindly refer to this document.