



RTPI

Royal Town Planning Institute

Academic Experience Advice Note

Supplementary Guidance

For Chartered APC and Associate membership
candidates

Published June 2019



**This supplementary guidance must be read
alongside main guidance available at:
www.rtpi.org.uk/apc
www.rtpi.org.uk/associate**

**Your application will be rejected or deferred if
you fail to comply with the main guidance.**

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1. General information

1.1 Who is this advice note for?

This advice note is applicable to Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) candidates applying for:

- Chartered membership via the Licentiate Assessment of Professional Competence (L-APC): www.rtpi.org.uk/l-apc.
- Chartered membership via the Associate Assessment of Professional Competence (A-APC): www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc.
- Chartered membership via the Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC): www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc.
- Associate membership: www.rtpi.org.uk/associate.

Candidates with academic practice experience; for example, but not exclusively, PhD students and researchers, post-doctoral academics and university lecturers teaching planning or planning related subjects (e.g. urban design or regeneration) should use this advice note. If you carry out planning research for a think tank, charity or advocacy group, and wish to draw on this experience as part of your application, you may also find this note useful.

1.2 How to use this advice note

This advice note provides supplementary guidance on how to demonstrate experience in academic practice for RTPI membership applications. It **must** be read in conjunction with the **main membership guidance available at:** www.rtpi.org.uk/apc or www.rtpi.org.uk/associate.

Section 2 of this advice covers applications for Associate membership while section 3 covers applications for Chartered membership.

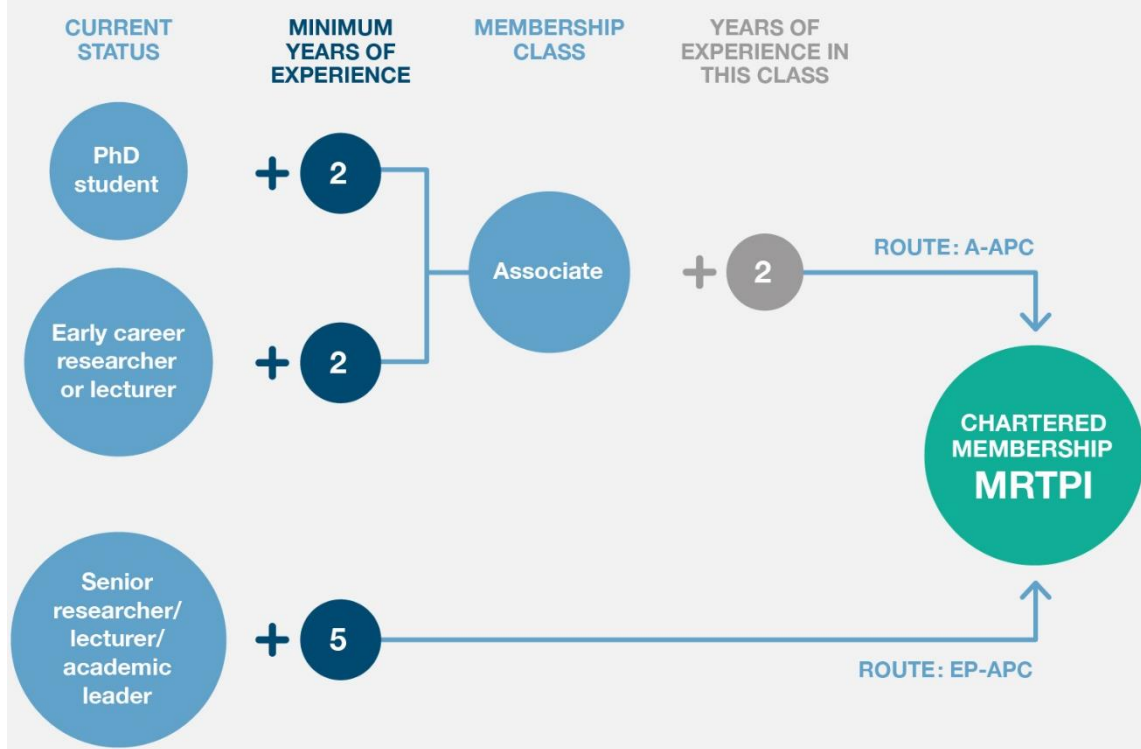
1.3 RTPI membership for planning academics

The RTPI welcomes and encourages applications for membership from those working in planning research and teaching. It is vital that such planners achieve membership, as they shape our next generation of planners and advance various fields of critical planning research. Academics make a key contribution to the Institute's charitable purpose of advancing the science and art of planning for the benefit of the public.

Achieving membership shows that you are competent, ethical and committed to your professional development – whether you are at a university, other academic institution, work in research, teaching or are an external examiner. If you teach, becoming a member can also benefit your students. It shows that you lead by example, are committed to maintaining an up to date awareness of current issues and strong links with planning practice.

If you are an academic who has completed a fully RTPI accredited qualification, you will probably apply for Chartered membership via the L-APC route. Otherwise, you will likely apply for Chartered membership through the A-APC or EP-APC route as indicated in the diagram.

Routes to membership for academics



1.4 Glossary of terms

For clarity, a glossary of academic terms used in this advice note has been provided below.

Academic experience / academic practice: This refers to planning research and / or teaching experience conducted within an academic institution.

Course: Programme of study required to complete an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

Curriculum: This sets out the anticipated learning experiences of a student at a strategic level. The curriculum influences how an academic will design and deliver module content.

External examiner: A person from another institution or organisation who monitors the assessment process of an institution for fairness and academic standards.

Module: A class, unit or subject which is undertaken as part of a course.

School: A department within a university.

2. Academics applying for Associate membership

2.1 Is your academic experience eligible?

This class would suit you if wish to gain recognition for your studies and research output at an early point in your career, and consider options for working towards Chartered membership at a later date. Chartered status is the highest professional membership grade conferred by the RTPI and is highly sought after by employers in the private and public sectors and academia.

Associate membership candidates need to demonstrate how their experience engages with planning. This class may, therefore, be appropriate if you:

- input and contribute ideas or evidence to others' planning research, but are not a primary driver of the research;
- deliver planning content on modules and / or courses which are designed by others e.g. by presenting lectures, responding to student queries, marking coursework.

Your academic experience can be gained anywhere in the world, not just the UK.

Can my undergraduate or postgraduate study count as academic experience?

If there was a significant taught element to your course (e.g. you studied a bachelor's or master's degree), this would be considered part of your education history, not academic experience.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE STATEMENT (PES)

The PES is the first section of the written submission, which you prepare for your Associate membership application. **For full details on the scope and structure of this section, see the main guidance at: www.rtpi.org.uk/associate.** As an academic practitioner, in the PES you would be expected to:

- provide a brief overview of the **research you conduct**, including the types of activities undertaken and / or methodology e.g. desktop research, drafting research proposals, data analysis, presenting findings at academic conferences;
- provide a brief overview of the **modules and / or courses you teach**, including an overview of content you cover, relevant materials that you prepare for sessions and the assignments or exams you facilitate;
- state who funded your research or teaching activities (if applicable).

This section should provide the assessors with an **overview** of your eligible experience. You will then select case studies from your research or teaching experience for your Professional Competence Statement (PCS).

Focus on your own role in academia

It is essential that you focus on **your role** within the academic environment, articulating your personal responsibilities rather than focusing on the role of your department, faculty or institution.

2.2 Demonstrating competencies

WRITTEN SUBMISSION: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE STATEMENT (PCS)

The PCS is the second section of the written submission, which you prepare for your Associate membership application. **For full details on the scope and structure of this section, and all competency criteria, see the main guidance at: www.rtpi.org.uk/associate.** The competencies to become an Associate are sufficiently flexible that you should be able to demonstrate them in a wide range of professional planning contexts – including an academic context. However, given the specific nature of academic practice, some additional examples have been provided to get you thinking about how to demonstrate the competencies within your case studies.

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C1 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE RTPI CODE OF CONDUCT AT <u>CORE</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Demonstrate professional behaviour through the course of your teaching activities, in accordance with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, such as through promotion of equality of opportunity, or disclosure of inducements, discounts or gifts for your teaching services.	a
Explain how you applied a specific clause of the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct when undertaking research, in relation to conflict of interest, or the confidentiality or anonymity of expert informants.	b
Reflect on how pressure from funders can shape the course of your research.	c
Consider how and why your research methods or decisions around the dissemination of your research minimised reputational risk and built trust in the profession e.g. by ensuring research outcomes were reported accurately.	c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C2 SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain the spatial planning dimensions of your research (including the policy context) and why it was needed.	a
Explain the spatial planning dimensions and policy context of a course / module you teach and reflect on the need for planners to be knowledgeable in this area.	a
Explain how and why you identified participants for your research to strengthen its value and relevance for planning practice.	b
Explain how you have taught course / module content on stakeholder involvement and the importance of this.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AT AWARENESS EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Show an awareness of how your planning research relates to the implementation or review of an Act or statute.	a
Discuss an Act or statute that you teach in your course / module and how it can impact planning decisions.	a
Describe the legal system in relation to planning and discuss the impact for your research.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C8 POLITICS IN PLANNING AT AWARENESS EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Show awareness of the political nature of planning, or describe the political context within which your planning research is undertaken.	a
Discuss the political nature of planning, or describe the content you teach on politics in planning.	a

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C9 ECONOMICS IN PLANNING AT AWARENESS EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Describe the impact that economics has on planning in your area of planning research.	a
Describe the content you teach on economics and planning.	a

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C10 REFLECTION AND REVIEW AT UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how you learned from previous assumptions, or will refine research or methodology in future.	a
Discuss feedback received from students or colleagues regarding your course delivery, and the implications for future teaching methods of planning content.	a
Reflect on your areas for development such as; the need to improve your knowledge of research best practice, improve your knowledge of the tools available to further engage students in planning education.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C11 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AT <u>AWARENESS</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Discuss how sustainability can be considered within planning research e.g. through research methodology or research outcomes.	a
Discuss the sustainability issues which arose during your teaching, and how course / module content explained the role of planning in mitigating against the effects of climate change.	a, b

3. Academics applying for Chartered membership

3.1 Is your academic experience eligible?

Academic and practice-based experience alike is assessed for its relevance to planning and the professional level at which it takes place.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

In a research context, it can be helpful to consider the following questions in determining the eligibility of your experience:

- How could my research impact upon planning? What implications may it have for the development of planning policy and practice? How could it impact on the discipline's intellectual base and resources?
- How does my research use and develop my knowledge and understanding of planning? Why must the research be carried out by someone who has working knowledge of, and an in depth understanding of, planning rather than any other researcher?

As with practice-based candidates, assessors will be examining your experience for the scope it provides you to exercise **independent professional judgement**. Within an academic research context this could include judgements on methodology or methods appropriate to the planning results or outcomes sought, as well as the extent to which you use your knowledge and experience of planning in order to draw conclusions in your research.

Research experience can be gained anywhere in the world, not just the UK.

Can my undergraduate or postgraduate study count as academic experience?

If there was a significant taught element to your course (e.g. you studied a bachelor's or master's degree), this would be considered part of your education history, not academic experience.

The same tests of relevance and professionalism apply for teaching experience.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

You may be teaching a module and / or course that deals with the broad principles that govern planning operations outlined below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Social science as an analytical framework
- The interplay between land use and transportation
- Design and the realisation of place
- Economic issues relating to development
- Environmental challenges
- Legal and institutional frameworks

If the module and / or course material you are teaching is within a specialist area of planning you will need to ensure you draw out the spatial element of planning. For example, if you are teaching a module and / or course in urban design, this should explicitly draw out the role of planning and its interaction with good design, rather than being overtly focused on architecture or building design.

You **must** be able to demonstrate experience of module and / or course **design** (or redesign) as well as **delivery**; it will be here that you will most easily be able to demonstrate the kind of professional planning judgements used to determine the most appropriate material and mode of delivery for the module and / or course. You also need to demonstrate that you have the planning knowledge and understanding in order to deliver the material (through seminars, project work, study trips, student assessment, PhD supervision etc.).

Whilst it is accepted that a certain amount of course administration or programme management may be involved in a teaching role, the primary purpose should be the design and delivery of planning modules and / or courses.

Teaching experience can be gained anywhere in the world, not just the UK.

Don't focus on generic teaching skills or responsibilities

Remember, assessors are not looking to establish the professional competence of *teachers per se*. Assessors are looking to establish the competence of *planning professionals*, whether that is in a practice, research or teaching-based context. You should therefore focus your application on planning elements rather than generic teaching or assessment skills.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE STATEMENT (PES)

The PES is the first section of the written submission, which you prepare for your Chartered membership application. **For full details on the scope and structure of this section, see the main guidance at: www.rtpi.org.uk/l-apc, www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc or www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc.**

As an academic practitioner, in the PES you would be expected to:

- provide a brief overview of the **research you conduct**, including the types of activities undertaken and / or methodology e.g. desktop research, drafting research proposals, data analysis, presenting findings at academic conferences;
- provide a brief overview of the **modules and / or courses you design and deliver**, including an overview of content you cover, relevant materials that you prepare for sessions and the assignments or exams you set;
- state who funded your research or teaching activities (if applicable).

This section should provide the assessors with an **overview** of your eligible experience. You will then select case studies from your research or teaching experience for your Professional Competence Statement (PCS).

Focus on your own role in academia

It is essential that you focus on **your role** within the academic environment, articulating your personal responsibilities rather than focusing on the role of your department, faculty or institution.

3.2 Demonstrating competencies

WRITTEN SUBMISSION: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE STATEMENT (PCS)

The PCS is the second section of the written submission, which you prepare for your Chartered membership application. **For full details on the scope and structure of this section, and all competency criteria, see the main guidance at: www.rtpi.org.uk/apc.** The competencies to become Chartered are sufficiently flexible that you should be able to demonstrate them in a wide range of professional planning contexts – including an academic context. However, given the specific nature of academic practice, some additional examples have been provided to get you thinking about how to demonstrate the competencies within your case studies.

There is only one competency within the main guidance which has been amended to refer specifically to academics. Competency *C6 Initiating and implementing a course of action* (which contains criteria a - c) has been amended to *C6 Dissemination of knowledge* (which contains criteria d - f). For C6, academic candidates have the choice to demonstrate either criteria a - c or criteria d - f (see [section C6](#)).

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C1 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE RTPI CODE OF CONDUCT AT <u>CORE</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Demonstrate professional behaviour through the course of your teaching activities, in accordance with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, such as through promotion of equality of opportunity, or disclosure of inducements, discounts or gifts for your teaching services.	a
Explain how you applied a specific clause of the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct when undertaking research, in relation to conflict of interest, or the confidentiality or anonymity of expert informants.	b
Reflect on how pressure from funders can shape the course of your research.	c
Consider how and why your research methods or decisions around the dissemination of your research minimised reputational risk and built trust in the profession e.g. by ensuring research outcomes were reported accurately.	c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C2 SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Reflect on how you engaged with the spatial planning dimensions of your research (including reflection on different spatial scales), identification of the need for the research, and explain how you framed research questions with the wider context in mind.	a, c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C2 SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Demonstrate how you engaged with the spatial planning dimensions of your teaching, explaining the need for planners to be knowledgeable in this area and how you incorporated discussion of the wider context into your module and / or course content.	a, c
Explain how you identified participants for your research and how their views were incorporated into your findings.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C3 IDENTIFYING AND ANALYSING ISSUES AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how you framed your research question, identifying the key areas for exploration, and analysed the relationship of your research to key professional debates.	a, b, c
Explain how you decided on which module and / or course content to include or discount and demonstrate its relevance.	a, b, c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C4 GATHERING APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain the data gathering phase of your research, including justification of your methods for data gathering and why other options were not chosen, any limitations or problems with this phase, and how you handled these.	a, b, c
Explain how you gathered relevant source material and case studies to inform module and / or course content.	a, b, c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C5 IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how you came to a series of conclusions and / or recommendations; make clear how you reached these conclusions, and alternative conclusions which could have been reached, drawing on your research findings.	a, b, c
Explain how you considered options to deal with a problem arising within your planning research e.g. lack of data.	a, b, c
Explain how you have analysed and selected specific teaching methods, delivery modes and / or assessment strategies relevant to the module and / or course content.	a, b, c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C6 INITIATING AND IMPLEMENTING A COURSE OF ACTION AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Reflect on how you negotiated agreements or mediated between stakeholders to progress the application / project or realise delivery.	a, b, c
Reflect on challenges, barriers or constraints to delivery within the case study and how you overcame these.	a, b, c
Explain how you engaged with other built environment professionals to seek their input and to move the project forward.	b, c
Explain a situation where you made recommendations to a client or colleague, explained the implications, and took the project forward in some way.	b, c
Reflect on the method(s) you used to keep track of activities and ensure critical paths were achieved.	b, c
Explain how you developed relationships with colleagues, applicants etc. or responded to issues arising from consultation to put ideas into practice.	b

FOR C6 DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE (APPLICATION) SEE SECTION C6

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how relevant legislation was taken into consideration within your research or incorporated into your teaching.	a
Consider the legal aspects of the planning content of your research including, for instance, the statutory basis for the aspect of planning which relates most directly to your area of interest.	b
Explain the legal angles of the planning content of your module or course material, including, for instance, aspects of planning statutory context, and / or related statutory contexts such as for pollution control.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C8 POLITICS IN PLANNING AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Discuss the political angles of the planning content of your research and how this influences planning.	a, b
Reflect on the political angles highlighted within your module and / or course content as it relates to planning, including e.g. issues of power, public engagement and democratic working.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C8 POLITICS IN PLANNING AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C9 ECONOMICS IN PLANNING AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain the potential economic or financial implications of your research for planning practice e.g. the cost of implementing research outcomes.	a
Discuss the economic or financial aspects of your module or course content as it relates to planning e.g. issues of the economic value of development etc.	a

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C10 REFLECTION AND REVIEW AT <u>CORE</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Consistent reflection on how you have learned from prior research or practice, such as identifying instances where you learned from previous assumptions, or changed a course of action in light of new information. This may also include how you will refine your research or methodology in future.	a, b
Consistent critique of your teaching practice, such as identifying the need to review module or course content and delivery, including how and why it needs to be revised.	a, b
Consistent reflection on your areas for development such as; the need to improve your knowledge of research best practice, improve your knowledge of the tools available to further engage students in planning education, and how these areas for development were identified.	a, b

3.3 Demonstrating additional competencies for A-APC and EP-APC

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C11 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how issues of sustainability were taken into account within your planning research e.g. how your research methodology or outcome could have been adapted to incorporate sustainable principles.	a
Explain how you incorporated sustainability issues into course design and delivery e.g. through setting module or course work or preparing a lesson plan.	a

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C11 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how you teach about the implications of climate change and the role of planning in mitigation and adaptation at a local level.	b

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND EQUALITY AT <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain which tools can be used to engage with hard-to-reach groups within your research.	b, c
Discuss the equality and diversity implications of the planning content of your research, and how to engage different social groups in planning research.	a
Discuss the challenges of engaging participants in your planning research, and ways in which this can be overcome.	b
Explain how your teaching covers engagement and participation techniques within the planning process.	c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C13 SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND PLANNING THEORY AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Evaluate the key debates at the forefront of your specialism, and explain how the specialist area links with wider spatial planning issues. It is important to explain how this research links to planning policy or practice.	a, b
Discuss the technical aspects of your research, within a specific identified topic area.	a
Explain how you have engaged students to debate the key issues arising from the specialism e.g. through particular module or course work or class discussion.	a
Explain how your teaching of a specialist area of planning links with wider spatial planning issues. It is important to explain the relevance or applicability of your module or course content to planning policy and / or practice.	b
Consider the theoretical basis of your planning research and / or teaching, citing relevant texts.	c

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C14 LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING AT APPLICATION EVIDENCE TYPE (OPTIONAL COMPETENCY ONLY FOR EP-APC CANDIDATES)	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Explain how you have led the discipline and shaped national policy through publication and application of your original research e.g. by giving evidence to government.	a, b, d
Demonstrate how you have designed the curriculum for current and future courses in a school, university or other educational institution; highlight the challenges you faced in balancing different views on curriculum development.	a, b, d
Demonstrate how you have guided students and other academics, inspiring them through your teaching to develop their planning knowledge to its full potential.	c, d

C6 Dissemination of knowledge, for academics only (Application)

Competency note

If you are using a case study from work experience gained as an academic, for example as a planning researcher, lecturer, teacher or equivalent, you have the choice to demonstrate for C6, criteria d - f below instead of criteria a - c (which can be found in the main guidance).

DESCRIPTOR

The practice of good planning requires clear thinking, reflection on the available evidence base, determination of appropriate solutions and strong project management skills to ensure delivery. For academics, this includes making sure that research is utilised and shared and that planning education is taught in an appropriate and credible way.

CRITERIA (only for planning academics)

In your case study, you **must**:

- d. Show how you have effectively communicated your planning research findings or delivered planning education to a relevant audience; **and**
- e. Explain the implications of your research or teaching for planning practice; **and**
- f. Evidence **more than one** method of planning knowledge dissemination.

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY C6 AT <u>APPLICATION</u> EVIDENCE TYPE	COULD DEMONSTRATE CRITERIA
Reflect on how your research findings have been utilised and shared through presentations at conferences and published work.	d, e, f
Reflect on how your research, such as into delivery of housing, environmental management or the value of planning, contributed to national, regional or local policy making.	d, e
Reflect on how you have designed module or course content to give students a full understanding of a particular planning topic or debate, including the potential relationship of content with practice, or the potential application of content to practice.	d, e
Explain the implications of having your research peer reviewed or published in academic journals.	e



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ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
ADVICE NOTE
RESOURCES



**Access all resources including main
guidance at:**

**www.rtpi.org.uk/apc
www.rtpi.org.uk/associate**

Contact the Membership Team:

**membership@rtpi.org.uk
[+44\(0\)20 7929 9462](tel:+44(0)2079299462)**

Thank you for reading this guidance.

**FIND OUT MORE:
www.rtpi.org.uk/apc
www.rtpi.org.uk/associate**