INSTITUTE OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS SRI LANKA

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE (APC)

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Critical Analysis

1. What does 'Critical' mean?

In the context of the Critical Analysis, 'Critical' does not merely mean negative criticism or finding fault with an issue you encountered in your practice. It is a comprehensive examination, constructive analysis and careful judgement of a problem you encountered and dealt with. The assessors will expect to see how capable you are in using your knowledge in core and other QS competencies to find solutions for challenging issues which could arise in your industry practice

The analysis either can find fault with or praise the project, its processes, the team members, and your decisions and actions. If it is the former, the assessors would expect you to understand what went wrong and why, that you have learnt lessons from the problems encountered, and that in finding fault you are able to criticise in a constructive and professional way. If it is the latter the assessors would expect you to understand why it was so successful and why you avoided the problems and pitfalls encountered on your construction project. The Critical Analysis may even include both negatives and positives as well.

The critical appraisal of the outcomes and the lessons learnt are viewed as the most important aspects of the report and it is viewed as good practice to focus more on these areas in writing the report.

2. What type of a project should I choose?

You will be expected to have in depth awareness about the project you are going to discuss. Note that you are required to appraise an issue/s which 'you' encountered during your practice and hence the assessors will assume that you have in depth knowledge about the issue. Hence it is recommended to choose a project where you had thorough involvement in. The size/scale of the project, or the type of the project will not have any concern or impact on the success of the critical analysis. The success will depend on how you demonstrate your understanding of the issue/s and how you dealt with them in a professional way.

3. What is a Key Issue?

A Key Issue is an issue the action or inaction on which has/may have a major impact on the project as a whole or in part. It shall be an issue/s with a genuine challenge of resolving with thorough involvement/ use of QS competencies

A Key Issue might not be something like proposing a procurement route to a typical construction project or preparing a client's budget as these are customary work a Quantity Surveyor engages in generally.

A Key Issue might be something like proposing a procurement strategy to ensure cost, quality and time expectations when the appointed contractor refuses to undertake the work after the award or something like reconciliation of the budget against the revised design information which came about due to an unavoidable design change after two months from the commencement of the project.

You may choose a maximum of two Key Issues and they may not be from the same project.

4. How should I structure the report?

The Critical Analysis is recommended to have the format of a professional report including a cover page, contents page, and appendices (if any). Note that it is advised that the appendices should only include supporting information relevant to the issue discussed and need not include information such as all drawings, specification, conditions of contract, BOQ, etc which do not have a direct link to the issue discussed.

According to the Guideline for Critical Analysis issued by IQSSL, the Critical Analysis should generally include:

 i. Declaration by the Candidate
 ii. Introduction
 iii. Key Issue/s
 iv. Proposed Options for Solution
 v. Recommended Solution
 vi. Appraisal of the Recommendation
 vii. Implementation of recommended solution
 viii. Lessons Learned
 ix. Conclusion

The Declaration by the Candidate is a disclosure clause that you have obtained due permission (from your employer, client or any relevant entity) to disclose whatever the facts you have mentioned in the report.

In the introduction of the report it is expected that you will provide a brief description of project, the client's objectives and your role on the project.

After identifying the key issue/s, the assessors will expect that you have looked at all possible options which are available to find a solution, and that you recommended a solution after a thorough analysis of all the options available. It is expected that your recommended solution will be critically appraised and the implications in implementing the recommended solution will also be discussed.

It is expected that the final part of the report will include a reflective analysis about the overall management of the issue. This could include a discussion on areas such as why the particular problem took place & how can it be avoided in the future, if things happened well why did it happen well, what things would you do differently in future projects, etc. Also it is expected to state the experienced you gained and the lessons you learnt from the overall analysis.

5. What should be the writing style of the report?

This report is expected to be a critical appraisal of an issue which 'you' were involved in your practice. Hence the assessors would like to check 'your' involvement and how 'you' managed it. Hence it is preferable to use "I" as much as possible. For example if you requested a rate breakdown from the Contractor's QS, you may state that "I requested a rate breakdown". If your team members or supervisor requested such information, you may use "we." Use "I" whenever you can whilst keeping in mind that what you write must be a true reflection of what you actually did.

It is preferred to have Font Type 'Arial' with size 12. It is expected that there will be clearly marked headings/ sub headings, uniform paragraph breaks, contents thoroughly checked for spellings and grammer, and numbered pages. It is advised to state the Word Count at the end of the report and the word limit shall be 2,000 words excluding declaration, content page and appendices.

Special Note:
The above answers to the FAQs are for information only and are only a guide to good practice. The decision of the panel of assessors will be considered final