



## **Institute of Surveyors Tasmania**

### **TLSAB update to supervisors, mentors and candidates**

#### **Executive Summary**

The Tasmanian Land Surveyors Accreditation Board has commenced a review of the procedural and administrative aspects of the candidate accreditation pathway, in part due to an increasing occurrence of candidates failing to comply with basic documentation and assessment requirements for pre-exam and exam submissions outlined in published instructions.

The Board considers strict compliance by candidates with the documented accreditation process essential as it demonstrates professional competence.

Revised instructions to supervisors, candidates and mentors will be prepared in the next twelve months and in advance of the publication of the amended documentation clarification of existing requirements is provided.

#### **Issues Observed**

1. Increasing non-compliance by candidates and supervisors in their formal dealings with the TLSAB prescribed in the Professional Training Agreement (PTA) and described in the Guidelines to Candidates and Supervisors, such as :
  - a. Form 1 Statement of Professional Development not in accordance with basic requirements. Examples include:
    - I. Forms not signed by both the candidate and the supervisor.
    - II. All experience gained in a reporting period not shown, only the cadastral experience.
    - III. Experience expressed in days rather than weeks.
    - IV. Entries along each row and column not adding up to the totals at the end, and / or
    - V. The total of weeks exceeding the number of weeks in the period – for instance, a form covering 12 months claimed 57 weeks.

- b. Pre-exam / Project examinations lodged without the certification required in relation to responsibility and/or all the required submission documentation.
  - c. Failing to comply with the requirement for payment to the Board, via the Executive Officer (EO), when a pre-exam survey is submitted to a mentor.
2. Advice from mentors that pre-registration exam survey submissions did not include all the information prescribed in the guidelines e.g. Absence of field observations and computations, incomplete survey search.
3. Comments from mentors that some pre-exam surveys were not of sufficient complexity to obtain an understanding of the candidate's capabilities and development.
4. Feedback at the Mentors workshop in February 2019, followed up by individual correspondence by several mentors with Board members, expressing concern with apparent inadequate instruction and / or supervision of some candidates. These observations derived from comments made by the candidates in discussion with the mentor and / or the mentor's determination that some pre-exam submissions were simply not compliant with the minimum legal requirements for a cadastral survey.
5. As a result, mentors have queried whether they were able to consider a pre-exam survey as unsatisfactory in fulfilling the necessary requirements i.e. whether they could refuse to accept it as one of the five pre-exam surveys after it had been assessed.
6. If it was possible to refuse to accept a pre-exam survey on the basis it was unsatisfactory, and an additional pre-exam survey was required to be submitted, did the candidate need to pay an additional pre-exam submission fee?
7. Difficulty encountered by the Board in determining a candidate's progress towards the submission of examination surveys due to the absence of interim reporting by mentors i.e. currently mentors are not expressly required to report to the Board when they have assessed an individual pre-exam but only provide a statement when a candidate has satisfied the pre-examination requirements.
8. Inappropriate requests of the Candidate Liaison Officer e.g. a small number of candidates seemingly regarding the CLO as their agent with the Board and its EO for all matters pertaining to a submission.

The Board acknowledges that there are inconsistencies in existing documented instructions to Candidates, Mentors and Examiners that may have contributed to some of the above issues.

Accordingly, the Board has determined that revised instructions concerning its requirements be issued to supervisors, candidates, and mentors.

In advance of the provision of amended documentation clarification of existing requirements follows.

### **Instructions to Candidates**

The Board regards strict compliance with pre-exam and exam submission requirements as essential since it indicates the competence of the candidate and the level of professionalism that will be required in communication with allied professions and a registering authority once a candidate becomes a Registered Land Surveyor.

Accordingly, all submission requirements outlined in the PTA and the various guidelines and any clarifications in this communique must be satisfied or the submission will not be accepted.

General submission requirements applying to pre-exam and exam surveys:

- Candidates must provide a “...separate detailed report detailing the methodology and re-instatement decision process” with all pre-exam and project submissions. That is, a standard re-instatement report in the survey notes does not fulfil this requirement and separate report must be prepared.
- A hard copy of a completed Plan of Survey checklist available from <https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania/land-titles-office/plan-documentation/plan-of-survey-checklist> certified by the candidate that they have checked all aspects applicable to the particular survey.

Pre-exam surveys:

- A candidate must advise the TSLAB Executive Officer (EO) in writing when a pre-exam survey is provided to a mentor, outlining which elements in the guidelines the pre-exam survey addresses and arrange payment for the pre-exam submission fee.
- A pre-exam submission must include a hard copy of all the survey search material (not just a pdf), including any relevant survey control information, organised in some order of priority or other classification and “marked up” with highlighters or colours to indicate all evidence considered / searched / measured.
- Candidates are also encouraged to take photographs of occupation and other relevant physical features during the field survey and include them with their submission in electronic or hard copy format.
- The information requested above simplifies the assessment process and in conjunction with the separate methodology and reinstatement report aids the mentor in posing hypothetical scenarios. This latter element is particularly pertinent where a pre-exam survey does not incorporate a great deal of re-instatement complexity.
- The Board confirms there is no complexity requirement for pre-exam surveys, but candidates are encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge of pertinent re-instatement and property law considerations when making final pre-exam survey selections or provide additional

documentation or points of discussion that indicate this knowledge in the methodology and reinstatement report.

- Candidates are advised that a mentor may report to any or all of the supervisor, the Board or the Surveyor-General any concerns that he/ she has that a survey which is an actual working job undertaken in the course of the candidate's employment and that has been lodged with a registering authority may not satisfy the minimum legal requirements of a cadastral survey. That is, there is no confidentiality aspect to the relationship between the candidate and the mentor that overrides the professional responsibilities of the mentor.
- If a report is provided to the Board expressing concern that an actual working job may not have fulfilled the minimum legal requirements, then the Board may refer the survey to the Surveyor-General for consideration under Section 23 of the Surveyors Act 2002.
- The Board intends to develop guidelines for dealing with such pre-exam surveys which will include specifying a process for their refusal to be considered as one of the five pre-exams and formally requiring a candidate to lodge another pre-exam survey and pay an additional pre-exam lodgement fee.

#### Exam surveys:

- Proposed urban and rural exams inclusive of all requirements specified in the guidelines to candidates must be submitted directly to the Board via the EO, accompanied by a covering letter that is addressed to the EO. That is, under no circumstances shall candidates submit an exam project to the Candidate Liaison Officer (CLO).
- An exam survey must include the following certification, required per Section 17(2) of the Surveyors Regulations 2014 or it will not be accepted by the EO :

I, ....., of .....  
in Tasmania, a registered TLSAB candidate, HEREBY CERTIFY that –  
(a) this survey is based upon the best evidence that the nature of the case admits; and  
(b) the survey notes have been truly compiled from surveys made by me without supervision; and  
(c) this survey and accompanying survey notes comply with the relevant legislation affecting surveys and are correct for the purpose required.

- The EO will not forward the exam to the CLO until all submission requirements are met.

#### Instruction to Candidates and Supervisors

- Candidates and supervisors effectively share responsibility for submission of the Form 1 certificates outlining experience gained and the Board notes the requirements specified for the forms must be strictly complied with.
- Form 1 certificates must be submitted within 28 days of the end of the reporting period. If this requirement is not met then a request for an exemption must accompany the form, noting that it is optional for the Board to accept a form lodged under this circumstance.
- If a pre-exam survey is an actual working job undertaken in the course of the candidate's employment the supervising surveyor must certify that the survey was one for which the candidate was primarily responsible.

### **Instructions to Supervisors**

- The Board re-iterates the requirements of supervisors outlined in part 6. *Level of supervision and 7. Responsibilities of The Supervisor* of the Professional Training Agreement which are accepted and agreed by the supervisor when entering into the agreement.
- The Surveyor-General has expressed an interest in joining with the TLSAB to review the supervision related content in the Professional Training Agreement. This combined review reflects that supervision requirements of a candidate are not purely in support of the registration process but also the over-arching obligations of a Registered Land Surveyor under Section 16 of the Surveyors Act 2002.

### **Instructions to Mentors**

- Mentors are reminded their role is to assess a pre-exam survey, not mark it, with an aim of discussing matters pertaining to cadastral surveying generally and provide independent feedback and assistance to the candidate as they develop their knowledge and skills.
- To encourage a candidate's general professionalism and procedural practice mentors should not commence assessment of a pre-exam survey until all documentation outlined in the instructions to candidates, including in this advisory, are provided.
- To facilitate the Board's awareness of the level of development of a candidate, mentors are requested to advise the EO when they have assessed each pre-exam survey including a statement of which criteria the pre-exam satisfied.
- It is preferred, but not mandatory, that a pre-examination survey assessment report (included in the Guidelines for Mentors) is provided to the Board, particularly if any deficiencies have been discussed with the candidate. These reports provide an insight into a candidate's progress and may be used to refine the professional practice oral exam to target specific areas of practice or knowledge. A copy of this report will be provided to the candidate.

- Mentors may alternatively include a summary report of a candidate's development, including any areas where deficiencies were observed, when they advise the Board the candidate has completed the required pre-exam surveys. A copy of this report will be provided to the candidate.
- The Board confirms there is no complexity requirement for pre-exam surveys and mentors cannot refuse to consider a survey based upon a low level of re-instatement complexity. However, mentors can have a candidate demonstrate their knowledge of pertinent re-instatement and property law considerations by posing hypothetical changes to the documentary and physical evidence found in the survey (e.g. occupation and measurement details, owner advice) to provide points of discussion that indicate this knowledge.
- There is no confidentiality aspect to the relationship between the candidate and the mentor that overrides the professional responsibilities of the mentor to the cadastre. A mentor may take any or all the following actions where it is considered that a pre-exam survey which is an actual working job that has been lodged with a registering authority does not meet the minimum legal requirements of a survey of land:
  - Advise the Board via a pre-examination survey assessment report describing how the survey is considered deficient.
  - Advise the supervising surveyor.
  - Advise the Surveyor-General in accordance with Section 23 of the Surveyors Act 2002.
- The Board intends to develop guidelines for dealing with such pre-exam surveys which will include specifying a process for their refusal to be considered as one of the five pre-exams and formally requiring a candidate to lodge another pre-exam survey and pay an additional pre-exam lodgement fee.

#### **Clarification of Role of Candidate Liaison Officer (CLO)**

- The CLO is employed by the Board to work in conjunction with the EO to administer the TLSAB candidate accreditation process. That is, the CLO is acting on behalf of the Board, not the candidate.
- Specifically, the CLO is required to supervise the survey specific components of that process, undertaking a range of administrative tasks including reviewing PTA's and exam proposals and providing recommendations to the Board, allocating mentors and examiners and assisting with candidate progress reviews.
- The CLO does not receive exam submissions or payments.