

Session 2: The Building Safety Act 2022: Competencies

Questions & Answers from the Session

1. **Could you please provide the definition for 'Building' and for 'Structure'?**
 - *A building is something that can be entered and occupied with the principal aim of providing shelter from the external environment. A structure is something that has been designed and constructed to provide support of other elements, such as a floor, a road, a rail line, or a pipeline.*
2. **Can you clarify why the competency register has a 'time-served' requirement post-chartership, why is it not based solely on technical ability?**
 - *The reasoning behind the time served is based on the required code of conduct a candidate for the register has been working within. This provides some level of comfort that the candidates behaviour is in accordance with what is expected of a built-environment professional.*
3. **The UK Spec website shows 1st edition of this document not 4th Edition shown here? Which is the current version?**
 - *The 1st edition that is being referred to is the contextualised competencies for HRBs, whilst the original UK SPEC is now in its 4th edition.*
4. **Do you know how many engineers are currently on the register?**
 - *There are at the time of writing this response 3 structural engineers on the register. There are also engineers from other disciplines, but the exact numbers are not yet publicly known. This will change as the register is released to the public by the Engineering Council.*
5. **How is this all going to impact PI cover and the ability to obtain such?**
 - *This can only be answered by your current insurance provider. It is too early to determine if the register will affect premiums for PI insurance.*
6. **What are the costs of application, review, and renewal?**
 - *For the application for Chartered Engineers, the cost is £200. The fees for IEng and EngTech are currently being reviewed and determined. The fees for reviews have not yet been decided upon. Once they are, they will be advertised on the IStructE website.*
7. **Is there a distinct difference between HRB competences and those required for chartership?**

- *Yes, they competencies for HRB focus expected knowledge and understanding in relation to the design, construction, operation, maintenance, modification, and demolition of a specific form of building. They have been created to demonstrate that candidates understand the issue of occupancy safety in HRBs, which is the core aspect of working on such buildings.*

8. Who conducts the Professional Reviews?

- *At present members of the Joint Committee for HRB Competency are carrying out the HRB Reviews. Over time, once more people become registrants, the roster of reviews will grow beyond the joint committee.*

9. Once on the register, can this be shown as a title you can add to the end of your name?

- *There is no post-nominal for those on the HRB competency register, however, there is a protected title, which are as follows:*

Chartered Engineer HRB

Incorporated Engineer HRB

Engineering Technician HRB

An example use case for these titles would be:

John Smith MEng CEng MStructE

Chartered Engineer HRB

10. How do I sufficiently demonstrate competence generally, for non-HRBs?

- *Competency is demonstrated by complying with Section 11F of Building Regulations (Amended 2023). To quote:*
“(1) Any person carrying out any building work or any design work must have—
(a)where the person is an individual, the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours necessary,
(b)where the person is not an individual, the organisational capability,”
Therefore, it is required for Designers to demonstrate their competence by presenting experience on previous projects and membership of a relevant professional engineering institution to a suitable grade.

11. Does the HRB experience need to be within a certain time period, or can it be historical?

- *The experience is not time limited; however, recent experience is preferred as the candidate will have familiarity with current and relevant regulations and guidance texts.*

12. Does a graduate membership with the IStructE or ICE count towards the 5 years of experience, or do I need to be chartered for 5 years before applying?

- *No, it does not. The time period dates from the candidate's election as a Chartered Engineer/Incorporated Engineer/Engineering Technician to the IStructE or ICE.*

13. Is there an intention to introduce the Competency register also for In-occupation HRBs?

- *No, the HRB Competency register is for those working on such buildings, be they existing or new-build.*

14. How does this tie in with other international registers, e.g., IEAust, IPEnZ, PE/SE in the US?

- *If there is a mutual agreement in place with the IStructE or ICE for members of these international professional engineering institutions, then this will count towards the 5-year period of membership. This, however, has not been formally agreed upon and more work needs to be done within this matter.*

15. Who is the competent person for the specific project, is it the project manager or Director of the company?

- *It is a specific person involved with the design and/or assessment of the HRB development, not an organisation as the latter has not been pier review*

16. What is the best route to gain competency on HRB if you need proof of competency to work on HRB?

- *Gain experience in working on them in some capacity. This is where knowledge and understanding are gained. This can be then demonstrated by citing this within accompanying documentation for competence statements.*

17. Are companies really aware, let alone competent, of their legal duties in 2025?

- *Generally, Duty holders are aware due to the risks they are exposed to. This leads to Designers responding to requests for competency statements, which highlights to them their duties under the Building Safety Act.*

18. What does this system mean for people or practices without experience of HRBs who'd like to begin working on them?

- *Structural engineers can still work on HRBs who are not on the register. Being on the register demonstrates to those who commission structural engineers to work on HRBs that they have been assessed independently by their peers. Those that are not will have to rely on their work to date and references from past and current clients.*

19. Is there a similar competency list defining what is being assessed with regard to HRBs?

- *The Contextualised competency for HRBs for various disciplines has been published by the Engineering Council. It can be accessed here: <https://www.engc.org.uk/media/4901/uk-spec-hrb-standard.pdf>*

20. Is it intended that having the lead engineer on the register will become a legal obligation for all HRB projects in the future?

- *This is not likely to occur. We would stress that the HRB register presents evidence that staff members of a Designer have undergone independent assessment to determine their competency.*

21. Will not being an HRR registrant eventually become a barrier to career progression?

- *That is not the intention. Similar to the Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers, those that work on heritage structures are not required to be on that register, but it is preferred that they are.*
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22. How would competency experience work for those not working for design practices?

- *The kind of experience is quite broad as the HRB register is not limited to Designers. Those that assess the design documentation made by others for example will have experience that can and will align with the 5 objectives.*

23. Is all HRB experience relevant? For example, is experience in a 7-storey building equivalent to a 25-storey building?

- *Yes, any experience of an HRB, which includes hospitals and care homes will be regarded as relevant.*

24. Would insurers and duty holders expect the structural engineer to be on the register going forward, making it a requirement and excluding those who are yet to work on HRBs?

- *That is up to insurers. Again, a fair comparison would be with CARE registered engineers, cited in response to Question 21, where those working on heritage buildings are not required to be on that register. It is assumed the same will occur for HRBs. However, it remains to be seen how insurance providers will react to the requirements of the BSA with respect to who they cover.*

25. Are the BR's and BSA going to be aligned?

- *The building regulations are undergoing review, especially Parts A and B to reflect the requirements of the Building Safety Act.*

26. Where do we find the list of competencies that an applicant needs to satisfy?

- *Please see the response to Question 19.*