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A component
organization of the
Canadian Society of
Landscape Architects

APPLICANT'S GUIDE TO THE ORAL SENIOR EXAMINATION

(approved by Council, January 8, 2001, with amendments, June 16, 2003, July 11, 2005, March 13, June 12, 2006 and November 14, 2011), pages 1-11

A) GENERAL

The Oral Senior Examination of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects facilitates membership of individuals who have been practicing landscape architecture for a significant period of time. Such individuals may be employed in general practice on their own, with another landscape architecture practice, or in a multi-disciplinary firm, or they may be an educator, an administrator, or a researcher. Any and all facets of landscape architecture endeavour will be considered.

The Oral Senior Examination is the process for entrance of candidates applying under OALA's Membership Candidacy Option 3, who are "**Candidates with other qualifications – extensive relevant professional experience**".

Such candidates are deemed to be seasoned practitioners in landscape architecture with extensive relevant professional experience having a minimum of twelve (12) years of progressively responsible landscape architecture experience in a professional environment, and who possess a professional degree or diploma **in landscape architecture** from an institution recognized by the OALA.

The twelve-year equivalency (i.e. 144 months) of professional work may be reduced by the Examining Board, at their discretion, if the candidate has passed sections of the membership entrance examinations as prescribed by the OALA, currently the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE) or is or has previously been professionally registered or certified as a landscape architect.

The OALA Oral Senior Examination will be administered by the Panel of Examiners appointed by the OALA governing Council.

The Panel of Examiners will determine through the Senior Oral Examination process whether a candidate who meets all other criteria also demonstrates that he or she has extensive experience in working drawings and built work. In that case the Panel of Examiners will recommend acceptance for full membership **with custody and use of the Association seal**.

Candidates may be recommended for full membership in the OALA **with certificate of membership but without** custody and use of the Association seal through the Senior Oral Examination. A Senior Oral Examination candidate granted membership without the custody and use of the Association seal who subsequently wishes to obtain a seal will be required to take the membership exams as prescribed by OALA.

B) REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for eligibility for the Oral Senior Examination are:

1. Have post-secondary **education** (a professional degree or diploma from an institution recognized by the OALA); and
 2. Have at least 12 years of full time professional **experience** in landscape architecture;
 3. Have the **endorsement** of two OALA full members.
The candidate will give the OALA the names of two endorsers, and the Association will write to the endorsers asking:
 - How long has the endorser known the candidate?
 - In what capacity?
 - What projects or work of the candidate is the endorser familiar with?
- (For candidates applying from another jurisdiction, or another country, endorsement letters will be requested from 2 full members of the candidate's previous or current professional landscape architectural organization.)
4. Submit a comprehensive **Curriculum Vitae** that documents professional work, awards, continuing education initiatives, etc. and the names of **two client referees**.
The Association will write to the referees requesting:
 - How long has the referee known the candidate?
 - In what capacity?
 - What type of work has the candidate completed for the referee?
 - When was it done?
 - How satisfactory was it?
 5. Submit a completed application with the required **documentation and fees**, as outlined on the application form;
 6. Identify any variance from traditional practice outside the historical core of the profession **or** complete the **OALA Body of Knowledge profile**, Appendix A;
 7. Read and endorse the OALA **Code of Ethics and OALA Bylaws**; and
 8. Appear before the Panel of Examiners for an **oral examination** when requested.

C) THE ORAL EXAMINATION

The purpose of the oral examination is to evaluate the candidate's endorsements, professional references, and understanding of OALA's Code of Ethics and By-Laws, and to substantiate the equivalent of twelve (12) years of full time landscape architectural practice of a quality and character satisfactory to the Panel of Examiners. The equivalent twelve (12) years to be examined shall be the most recent period of practice and shall not include work while a student.

Applicants will be evaluated in the following 4 areas:

50% for areas #1 – 3 inclusive, and 50% for area #4

1. Recommendations from other registered landscape architects (endorsement of two OALA members, or from two members of the candidate's previous or current professional association).
2. Satisfactory response from clients of the applicant and/or users of the applicant's professional services (letters of reference).

3. Explanation by the applicant of the scope of his/her practice, including: philosophy and method of practice; involvement with professional organizations; related public and community service; working relationships with clients, professional colleagues, users, contractors and the general public; and his/her role in the three projects listed in the application form.
4. Presentation by the applicant of three projects listed in the application form. The three projects shall be of the applicant's own choosing, and shall demonstrate diversity of practice over the twelve-year equivalent period, not just a brief time during that period. The applicant is required to present three projects which represent the greatest range/breadth of work within the candidate's portfolio. The examiners may also ask questions about other projects within the following categories:
 - Landscape planning
 - Site planning
 - Urban design
 - Regional landscape planning
 - Park and recreation planning
 - Land development planning
 - Ecological planning and design
 - Heritage conservation
 - Landscape reclamation and restoration
 - Social/behavioral aspects of landscape design
 - Consultant services, expert testimony and facilitation of project implementation

The applicant is encouraged to demonstrate:

Diversity
Ecological approaches
Variety of skill levels
Design
Details
Documentation
Grading/drainage
Inventory
Knowledge of plant material

The Project Data Sheets (see below) for these three projects are part of the examination and will be evaluated for effective written communication. Applicants who are engaged in education or research may present reports, dissertations and methods of teaching as projects. Applicants who have worked in the public realm may present projects that they have reviewed or on which the applicant was an integral member of the project team or a firm's project staff. Presentations should include drawings, photographs, specifications, reports, records, computer generated presentations, a list of team members, and any other materials necessary to demonstrate competency and to describe these projects during the 60-minute examination. Three projects must be presented, or the examination will be declared incomplete.

D) PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

During the oral examination, the examiners will discuss the applicant's background as documented and will ask questions about the presented projects. The applicant's presentation of projects is restricted to no more than 30 minutes of the 60-minute examination.

The **60-minute examination** will generally follow this format:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Panel of Examiners introduction and examination context | 5 minutes |
| b) Discussion led by panel | 25 minutes |
| - nature of practice | |
| - professional organizations and credentials | |
| - community service | |
| - professional relationships | |
| - Candidate's body of knowledge: general & development of specific expertise | |
| Breadth of experience | |
| Writing | |
| Teaching | |
| Publications | |
| Course development | |
| Research areas | |
| c) Candidate's presentation of 3 projects | 30 minutes |
| d) Conclusion | |

Applicants will also be questioned on their understanding of regulations and responsibilities connected with the practice of landscape architecture.

In addition to the materials above, the applicant is required to present the following data for each of the three projects, on a single sheet of standard (letter) size paper:

1. Project name, location, cost, date completed, and owner's name;
2. Brief description of project (client's needs, program, rationale, concept, key issues);
3. Site (specific problems and solutions, relationship to surroundings);
4. Elements of the design, designer's goals, and materials involved; and
5. Candidate's role in the project.

These Project Data Sheets must be submitted 30 days prior to the examination. They will be forwarded to and will be retained by the examiners. All other illustrative materials should be brought to the examination and will be retained by the applicant. The applicant is responsible for any and all technical aspects of their visual presentations (slides, projector, power-point, overhead projection, other multimedia, etc.). Slides, computer presentations, or as-built photographs of completed projects are highly recommended.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines will adversely affect the outcome of the examination.

The Oral Senior Examination will be administered at a time and place to be determined by the Panel of Examiners, in consultation with Council, and will generally be scheduled twice a year, or as the number of applications warrants, at the OALA office in Toronto or elsewhere as may be determined by the Panel of Examiners.

E) GRADING AND REPORTING

Upon completion of the oral examination, the Panel of Examiners will make a recommendation to OALA Council. Where the Panel of Examiners is recommending the candidate be granted full membership, the Panel of Examiners will recommend to OALA Council whether it is appropriate to grant the **candidate membership with** the custody and use of the Association seal, or membership **with certificate of membership but without** custody and use of the Association seal.

The applicant will be notified of the OALA Council's decision in writing. A complete report of the examination, prepared by the Chair of the Panel of Examiners, will be kept on file, and will be available for review by the candidate, if requested.

F) FEES

The application and processing fee shall be \$1,500.00, and the Examining Board shall determine if the application is complete and that credentials are recognized by the OALA. If the application does not proceed to the oral examination stage, \$1,200.00 of the fee will be refunded to the applicant, and the applicant will be advised in writing by the Chair of the Examining Board.

Appendix A: OALA Body of Knowledge Profile

To be completed by Senior Oral Examination Candidate, to assist the OALA Examining Board in reviewing his/her application.

Without limiting the nature and experiences of a candidate, and an overall evaluation of candidate documentation submitted, the scoring process will have regard for a senior practitioner as one who may be characterized as follows:

- The candidate may have reached a level of experience where he/she may not currently participate in practice on a day-to-day basis, but will be taking responsibility for the work of others and be validating this work through the final endorsement by sealing of documentation.
- The candidate may have specialized in a distinct area of landscape architecture in a recognized specialty.
- The candidate may not practice in an environment resulting in distinct outcomes.

The candidate is requested to:

either:

Identify any variance from traditional practice outside the historical core of the profession.

or:

Complete the attached Body of Knowledge Profile Checklist.

Appendix A, page 2. Body of Knowledge Profile Checklist:

	High	Medium	Low
Legal and administrative Issues			
Basic construction law			
Construction contracts			
Professional liability issues			
Ethical standards			
Analysis			
Behavioral factors relating to design			
Psychological and sensory implications of landscape design			
Natural site conditions and ecosystems			
Resource preservation			
Flood plain management principles			
Topography			
Hydrology			
Soils			
Design Issues			
Basic design principles			
Aesthetic principles of landscape design			
Regional, urban and community planning principles			
Influences of internal and external views on land use and development			
Functional relationships among program elements			
Elements of vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems			
Code requirements and design principles for universal accessibility			
How previous, existing, or potential uses surrounding a site affect land use and development			
Micro and macro climate conditions and systems			
Principles of sustainability			
Characteristics of plant materials (size, shape, texture, colour, etc.)			
Plant materials, including hardiness, moisture requirements, soil requirements etc			
Construction Methods and Processes			
Construction methods and techniques			
Methods of installation of construction materials			
Principles of grading and drainage			
Factors influencing selection of plant materials			

Appendix A, page 3 Profile Checklist:	Body of Knowledge	High	Medium	Low
Documentation and Administration				
Presentation techniques				
Common graphic symbols				
Components of specifications for a project				
Specification types				
Details				
Typical constructions details (e.g. materials fasteners, finishes, assemblies)				
Site construction materials, including availability, costs, basic characteristics and applications				
Playground equipment and their design requirements				
Decks, walls and overhead structures				
Structural considerations below grade (e.g. soil bearing, footing foundations systems)				
Structural considerations above grade (e.g. walls, handrails, spans, decking)				
Pavement design and materials				
Structural considerations for small structures				

I certify that the above information is correct.

Applicant's Signature



APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

OPTION #3b Extensive relevant professional experience

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Residence Address: _____
City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal Code: _____
Residence Telephone: _____
Name of Employer /Business: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal Code: _____
Business Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Name of the professional organizations you currently belong to:

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

B. EDUCATION

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Degree/Diploma</u>	<u>Received</u>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

C. EXAMINATION or OTHER PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

List any professional registration, certification, previously or currently, or examinations successfully passed

1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____

D. EXPERIENCE

List all employment after graduation starting with the most recent; use additional pages if required

	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Employer or Supervising LA</u>	<u>Nature of work</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

E. THREE PROJECTS (see definition in Applicant's Guide) FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE PANEL OF EXAMINERS

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____

F. OTHER RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDING AN ANNOTATED LIST OF ALL PROJECTS AND INVOLVEMENT IN THEM

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____

(use additional sheets if necessary)

G. ENDORSERS

Names of endorsers: 1. _____
Address _____
2. _____
Address _____

H. CLIENT REFEREES

Names of referees: 1. _____
Address _____
2. _____
Address _____

I. FEES AND C.V.

Application fee attached: \$1,500.00 _____ (yes) (\$1,200.00 refundable if application does not proceed to Oral examination)
Curriculum Vitae attached: _____ (yes)



OALA MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE AND PROFESSIONAL SEAL

I hereby apply for enrollment as a full member of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects and for a certificate of membership and professional stamp describing me as follows:

(Please print your name as you wish it to appear on the certificate)

(Please print your name as you wish it to appear on the seal)

My home address is (please print):

My business address and employer are:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

I wish correspondence to be addressed to: My home address

My business address

I undertake to forthwith provide you with any change in either my home or business address.

I acknowledge that the certificate of membership and professional stamp, will remain the Association's property and I agree to return them forthwith upon demand and without demand should my membership be terminated or suspended.

I undertake to employ the certificate and stamp only in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association and for no improper purpose.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____ DATE: _____