

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE MODELS IN EUROPE

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Dr. Frances Plimmer¹

PART A - METHODOLOGY TO ASSESS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

1. Surveying Profession

- (a) the professional activities are diverse, encompassing a range of professional and technical skills, often practised as several professions (defined by FIG 1991);
- (b) not all of these professional activities are grouped together in the same way as professions in different countries;
- (c) professional activities which can be performed by surveyors in some countries are denied to surveyors in other countries;
- (d) surveying activities which are regulated in some countries are not regulated in other countries;
- (e) there is a large degree of ignorance in other countries about what kind of professional activities the different countries' surveying professions involve;
- (f) there is large degree of ignorance about how different kinds of surveyors achieve their professional status in different countries; and
- (g) professional organisations in different countries have not yet achieved an effective and efficient level of communication and co-operation to date.

Surveyor as a Professional

- (a) FIG's definition of "surveyor" describes the individual as a "professional". What does this mean and does it have significance for the process of mutual recognition?
- (b) The EU Directive on mutual recognition applies only to those who hold a three-year post-secondary diploma or equivalent academic qualification, but not necessarily within a surveying discipline;
- (c) It is not essential for all surveyors to belong to a professional organisation in their home countries (although the failure to belong to a professional organisation may indicate an absence of a suitable level of professional competence).

¹ Dr. Frances Plimmer, Reader in Applied Valuation, Centre for Research in the Built Environment, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, CF37 1DL, United Kingdom, Tel: +44 (0) 14 43 48 21 25 Fax: +44 (0) 14 43 48 21 69 e-mail: fplimmer@glam.ac.uk Web: www.glam.ac.uk

- (d) Current interpretation of the Directive requires "migrants" to match the professional competencies of a newly-qualified surveyor in the "host" member state.

Surveying Activities and Surveying Professions

Thus, the ability of surveying professionals to work in other countries must depend on:

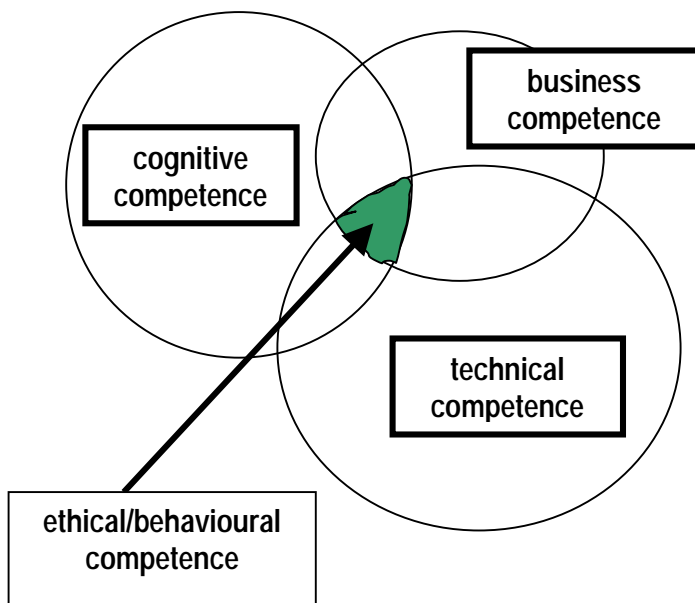
- (a) the extent to which the academic education and professional training and experience gained in their "home" state matches the surveying activities comprised in the surveying profession in the "host" state to which they seek access; and
- (b) the amount of additional academic or professional education, training and experience which they require to demonstrate competence in the range of surveying activities comprised in the professional competencies of a newly-qualified surveyor in the "host" state to which they seek access.

According to the EU Directive, such deficiencies can be remedied by either academic testing or professional practice and experience.

There must, however, be a substantial similarity between the surveying activities involved in the surveying professions in both the home and the host countries for free movement to take place.

Professional Competence

"Professional competence" is extremely hard to define, although it is something with which all surveyors are familiar. Thus, (Kennie *et al.*, 2000):



Consider:

- (a) Each surveying profession in each European state would probably vary the relative weighting of such components but it is contended that these four comprise the essence of "professional competence" everywhere;
- (b) The individual whose competence is being assessed is a fully qualified professional in the European State where the professional qualification was gained (i.e. the Home State). However, it is that individual's competence to work in another European State (the Host State) which will be assessed. Thus, it is not appropriate to assess either the professionalism or the competence of the applicant as a surveyor in the "home" state;
- (c) It is necessary merely to ensure that the applicant is as competent to undertake surveying as a newly-qualified surveyor in the "host" European state and therefore to ensure that the applicant is fully aware of and conversant with the nature and practice of the professional activities comprised in the surveying profession in the host State;
- (d) Thus, it is necessary to identify the nature and level of competence within a range of surveying activities required of a recently-qualified professional in the Host State. It is not considered appropriate to recognise the change in the nature of the professional activities undertaken by a mature surveyor (i.e. one who has been in practice for many years). Thus, it is not possible to assess a "migrant" practitioner in the light of the breadth and depth of their professional knowledge and experience, which is likely to be very different to that required of a newly-qualified surveyor in their own country.

However, the individual being assessed for this purpose is both a professional in the country which awarded the original surveying qualification and a practitioner. The professional organisation in the home state should assure other professional organisations of the professional standing of applicants. Once this has been done, it is not for the professional organisation in the host state to challenge the professionalism and personal integrity of the applicant. Their role is merely to establish that the applicant has become fully conversant with the professional ethics and codes of practice it requires and to ensure that the applicant has achieved the threshold standards it requires of a newly-qualified surveyor.

Conclusions

The potential impact of the WTO disciplines as a device to achieving mutual recognition of qualifications and thereby free movement of professionals and the current interpretation of the EU's Directive on mutual recognition have informed this discussion. The inevitability of WTO legislation to ensure the free movement of surveyors on a global basis is assumed, as is the presumption that if a methodology can be established within a European context, such a methodology can be applied world-wide.

There are major issues of principle (not the least of which is that of mutual recognition itself) which need to be embraced with commitment e.g. the apparent equivalence (according to the EU Directive) of academic testing and professional practice and experience to make up any deficiency in professional knowledge will challenge traditional professional education principles.

There are, however, a number of principles which should be observed, and these include the absence of any form of discrimination against any individual surveyor who seeks a state license to practice simply because qualification has been earned in another country.

PART B - THRESHOLD STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE FOR THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF SURVEYING.

Threshold standards of professional competence for the different areas of surveying cannot be investigated until certain other issues have been identified. Thus, it is necessary to identify for each European state:

- (a) the nature of the various distinctive surveying professions which are pursued within its borders.
- (b) the main professional activities pursued within each distinctive surveying profession.
- (c) how professional qualification and/or licensing is achieved for each distinctive surveying profession and the role of professional organisations in each European country, including any requirements, such as professional indemnity insurance, adherence to codes of conduct;
- (d) the level of competence required for each of the main professional activities. It is suggested that this requirement will be extremely hard to articulate. Levels of competence are, to a large extent, subjective, unless of a highly technical nature and therefore easily proven e.g. correctly identify all symbols on a map. Because what is currently tested are the professional competencies required of a newly-qualified surveyor, there are a range of skills, probably largely managerial, which will be disregarded when mature practitioners seek to use the terms of the Directive.

It is likely to be a requirement that all applicants hold either a diploma in a relevant surveying profession or a diploma which prepared the individual for the surveying profession in their home country (refer Part A above). Unless there is some form of licensing arrangement e.g. the carte professionnelle in France or the diploma awarded by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in the UK, which can be interpreted as a "diploma" under the terms of the Directive, some surveying professionals will be denied the right to relocate across national boundaries if acquired their professional qualification by a lesser qualification or solely by experience. (The potential of the bridging arrangements between the technical directive and the professional directive is ignored in this paper.)

There are two main issues which need to be discussed.

1. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF A PRACTITIONER

Setting to one side the potential difficulties in identifying the professional activities and level of knowledge and skill required of a newly-qualified surveyor, it is very obvious that the breadth and depth of the knowledge and skill of an experienced practitioner has developed and changed since initial qualification.

It is suggested that very few professionals (if any) retain the high level of skill and knowledge across the full breadth of professional activities which is normally required at the time of qualification. It is hypothesised that the majority of surveyors specialise in one or several areas of professional practice which then become the focus of their careers.

Levels of expertise in some areas are matched by levels of relative ignorance in others, particularly in new developments in those areas. Surveyors remain "competent" because they work only within their areas of expertise and do not undertake work for which they do not have sufficient up-to-date knowledge and skill. Indeed, they would be negligent and unprofessional were they to do otherwise.

Thus, the practitioner whose competence is being assessed in another member state, will be an experienced practitioner in a range, but not in all, of the areas of professional practice which comprise the surveying profession. However, the current interpretation of the directive means that it is as a newly-qualified surveyor that the applicant must be assessed. Thus, it is necessary for the mature applicant to demonstrate a full range of knowledge and skill across all aspects of the surveying profession as practised in the host state. It is not merely necessary to establish that, within the areas of expertise in which they are experienced and in which they practice, they are competent to undertake those professional activities in the host state and that they are aware of the broader issues which affect the profession of surveying in the host state. It seems that this may place mature professionals at a disadvantage.

2. PROFESSIONAL NATURE OF PRACTITIONER

The concern for competence is generally considered to be that of the professional organisation and the other surveyors in the host state. However, it is suggested that the applicant too is concerned to demonstrate competence, not merely to secure the title or qualification of the host state, but also because of the high moral code of conduct required of a professional within Europe.

Historically, the nature of a "professional" implied high moral conduct and provided a standard of service on which the public and governments relied to ensure socially correct and ethical behaviour. Recently, professional organisations impose codes of conduct on their members, and it is the resulting level of conduct and moral behaviour which provides the very core of the status accorded to professionals (refer Kennie, *at al.* 2000). It must be remembered that all applicants whose professional competence will be assessed are also professionals and it should be possible to rely on them to undertake appropriate preparation for any relocation to another European state.

However, it is also recognised that, for consumer and public protection, professional organisations establish and administer codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures to deal with serious breaches of their codes of conduct. Within the process of establishing the nature of the professional qualifications of migrant surveyors, it is necessary for the home professional organisation to certify the standing of the migrant surveyors in relation to any alleged breaches of their codes of conduct and the outcome of the subsequent disciplinary procedure.

Conclusion

It must be recognised that the applicant seeking to move from one European state to another is a fully-qualified professional and cannot be expected to re-qualify in another country. Indeed, the principles of mutual recognition of qualifications specifically seek to avoid this.

The current interpretation of the Directive requires that the "migrant" surveyor is required to meet all of the threshold professional competencies required of a newly-qualified surveyor in the "host" member state.

Thus, the professional profile of each applicant should be considered in the light of the totality of the academic and professional education, training and experience gained in the home state as at the date of application. A comparison can then be made between this level and degree of professional competence and the level of knowledge and skill required of a newly-qualified surveyor in the host state to perform the range of professional activities which are comprised within the surveying profession for which the applicant

Council of European Geodetic Surveyors - International Federation of Surveyors
Comité de Liaison des Géomètres Européens - Fédération International des Géomètres
seeks access;

Where an applicant does not have the necessary knowledge and skill to undertake a relevant professional activity, an appropriate adaptation mechanism, either supervised work experience or an examination, can be required. It should be noted that the EU directive does not permit competent authorities to require an aptitude test as the adaptation mechanism for surveyors. Having been required to remedy a deficiency in certain areas of professional activities, the applicant surveyor is free to choose whether to do this by supervised work experience or by undertaking an aptitude test.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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APPENDIX A

This extended definition was based on the approved FIG 1991 definition and produced (Plimmer, 1996) to reflect the varied and evolving nature of the work undertaken by surveyors world-wide for the purposes of international classifications of professionals and professional activities. Because it provides more details of certain surveying activities (e.g. environmental and construction), it could provide a basis for the identification of professional activities incorporated within distinct surveying professions purposes of this research.

A surveyor is a professional person with the academic qualifications and technical expertise to practice the science of measurement; to assemble and assess land and geographic related information; to use that information for the purpose of planning and implementing the efficient administration of the land, the sea and structures thereon; to manage the construction process and the maintenance of landed assets; to manage the use, transfer, disposal, development and redevelopment of land and buildings; to advise interested parties on all financial aspects of landed property; and to instigate the advancement and development of such practices.

Practice of the surveyor's profession may involve one or more of the following activities which may occur either on, above or below the surface of the land or the sea and may be carried out in association with other professionals.

1. The determination of the size and shape of the earth and the measurement of all data needed to define the size position, shape and contour of any part of the earth's surface.
2. The positioning of objects in space and the positioning and monitoring of physical features, structures and engineering works on, above or below the surface of the earth.
3. The determination of the position of the boundaries of public or private land, including national and international boundaries, and the registration of those lands with the appropriate authorities.
4. The design, establishment and administration of land and geographic information systems and the collection, storage, analysis and management of data within those systems.
5. The study of the natural and social environment, the measurement and management of land and marine resources and the use of the data in the planning of development in urban, rural and regional areas.
6. The planning and implementation of the use, development and redevelopment of the environment, whether urban or rural and whether land or buildings.
7. The assessment of value for all purposes, including the taxation of and the investment in landed property and the management of property throughout its life, whether urban or rural and whether land or buildings including chattels, plant and machinery and livestock.
8. The planning, measurement and management of the development and construction works process, including the estimation of costs, procurement of materials and labour and the control of budgets.
9. The planning and implementation of the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of existing buildings.
10. The production of plans, maps, files, charts, management systems, valuations and reports.

In the application of the foregoing activities surveyors take into account the relevant legal, economic, environmental, financial, managerial, and social and technical aspects affecting each project.