

Career Pathways for Fire Risk Assessors



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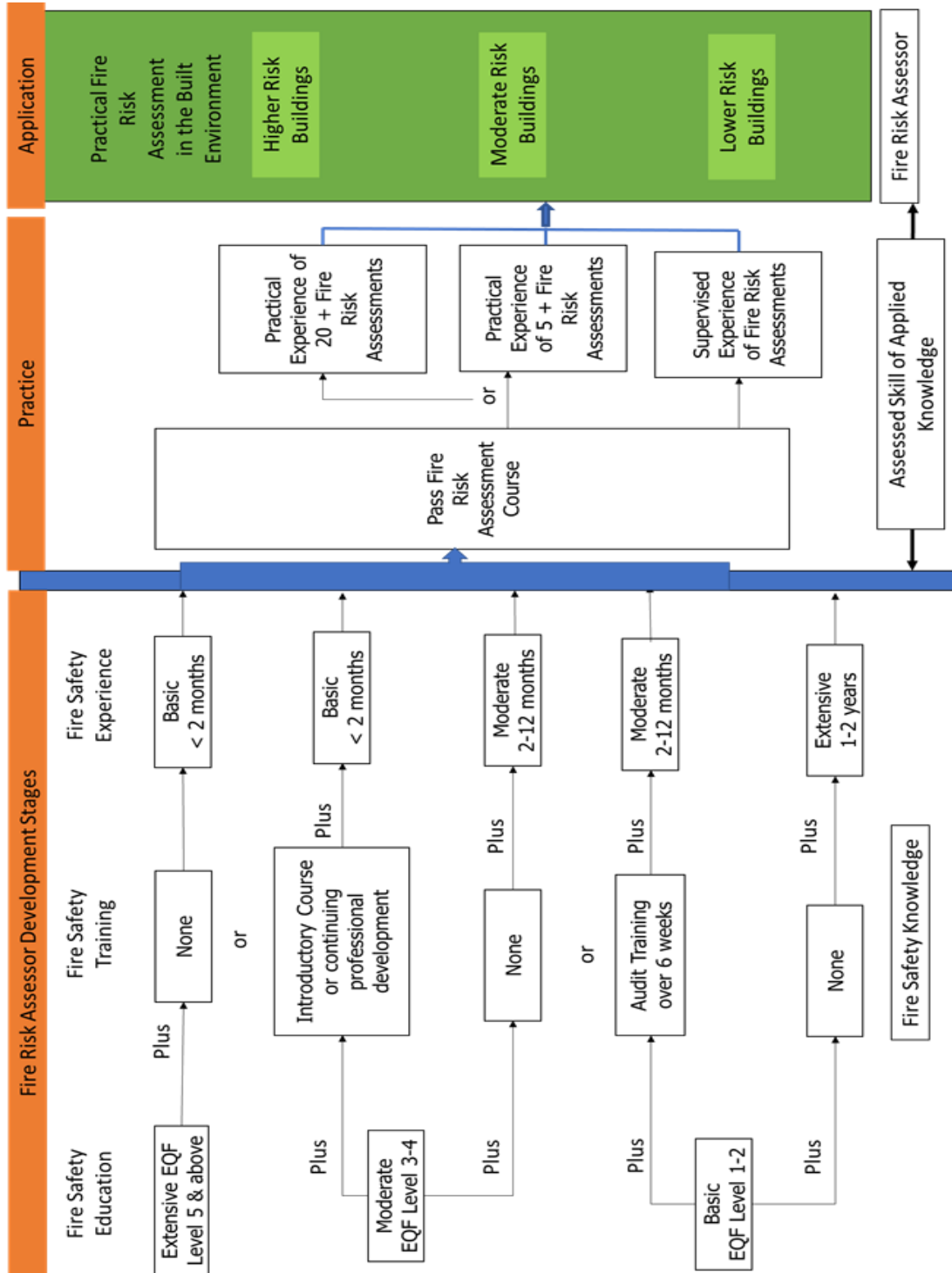
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Career Pathways – The Model

Introduction

The diagram below outlines pictorially the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) dependencies of knowledge, skills, experience and behaviour (KSEB) required.



Having established this, there is a need to contextualise how this process relates to the role that will be undertaken in practice when carrying out fire risk assessments in different types of premises and buildings, from low, through medium or normal and upwards to higher risk buildings. In addition, there needs to be a way of setting out a true developmental pathway that defines a career in fire risk assessment.

There also must be requirements for specialised knowledge, skills and experience in specialist and sector specific environments e.g., historic buildings, social and private housing sectors, nuclear power plants, building construction sites, etc.

The following diagrams with explanations have been made which consider how to introduce fire risk assessors to a formal and competent career pathway. The proposed approach is to align career pathways to stages according to risk where attainment of the appropriate KSEB are described as part of entry into the various stages of the career pathway.

Stages of The Fire Risk Assessor's Career Pathway

It is proposed to have 3 stages in the career pathway:

1. Stage 1 - Technician or 'Beginner' (simple, less complex buildings)
2. Stage 2 - Certified Competent Assessor (normal risk buildings including those that may be sector specific)
3. Third Party Certificated Competent Assessor (all buildings including high risk and 'in scope' or legislative controlled¹ buildings)

(Note: see definition in Appendix B for definition of different risk buildings).

Beyond these stages are the fire engineering specific sector competences which will include fire engineering apprenticeships and fire engineering degrees.

The flow diagram (Appendix A) shows how a person should progress through the various stages of their career at different levels of increasing competency and KSEBs.

Qualifications in the diagrams are shown in the Qualification and awards chart in the flow diagram at Appendix A which uses, for explanation purposes, 'Gold', 'Silver' and 'approved' titles to differentiate. (See section on Qualifications and Awards).

¹ Currently defined with the Building Safety Bill

Stage 1

The diagram shows the flow which starts with pre-qualifications for entry based on years of experience, awards and other knowledge-based qualifications.

Mentoring is either via a national mentoring scheme 'set up' or an individual 'locally' approved scheme. Either way, this is a compulsory element and is marked off through recording of CPD with minimum of 10 hours mentoring per year in addition to normal CPD recording.

There is a maximum timeline to achieve full competency at Stage 1 so that there can be progression to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Entry is through the 'entry requirements' column in the diagram and can be via Stage 1 but also for non-Stage 1 entrants. Entry requirements are self-explanatory from the diagram.

This Stage also introduces entry for sector specific entrants who will progress into the Stage 2 via their own defined specific route and 'entrench' into their own Sector Specific Group.

Stage 3

Movement into Stage 3 (which is the top-level career stage of operation for fire risk assessors) will be via third party certification (TPC) of individual fire risk assessors. Assessors will either progress through the Stage 2 process into Stage 3 or enter directly using a facility for non- Stage 2 entrants to enter Stage 3. CPD and specialist training will be ongoing as required by the individual assessors to widen their skills, knowledge and competency base.

For sector specific assessors, TPC will either be through the generic TPC route, or via specific awards and qualifications at Level 4 in their chosen specialism.

The Stage 3 flow diagram shows movement beyond this stage into the fire engineering sector.

Timelines

Timeline limits are set at Stage 1 with a maximum of 4 years to progress. There will also be a 'fast track' option of 1 year for those who are able to dedicate full time study to progress in the different options.

For Stage 2 and Stage 3 there is no fixed timeline as the model recognises that some assessors will be comfortable in Stage 2 whilst others want to progress to the next stage. Progression from Stage 2 to Stage 3 fixes a timeline of experience of at least 5 years at Stage 2 or equivalent.

Awards, Qualifications Etc.

The bottom part of the flow diagram in Appendix A shows the recognition given to various awards, certificates and other qualifications and courses within the fire risk assessment sector.

To distinguish them, the system uses categories of Gold, Silver and Other.

Gold

Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body which have been cross mapped to the levels set out in the National Framework ACoP document. RQF Level 2-4 and upwards (and equivalents).

Silver

Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body but have not been wholly mapped to the levels set out in the National Framework ACoP document. RQF Level 2-4 and upwards (and equivalents).

Other

Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body but only cover partial fire safety elements. RQF Level 2-4 and upwards (and equivalents).

Non-Regulated Qualifications and Courses

These can be:

1. Specific fire risk assessor/fire risk assessment courses accredited or recognised by a professional body in fire.
2. Specific fire risk assessor/fire risk assessment courses but not accredited or recognised by a professional body in fire.
3. Other fire related courses that have a fire safety element but must have fire risk assessment as a core subject for the course.

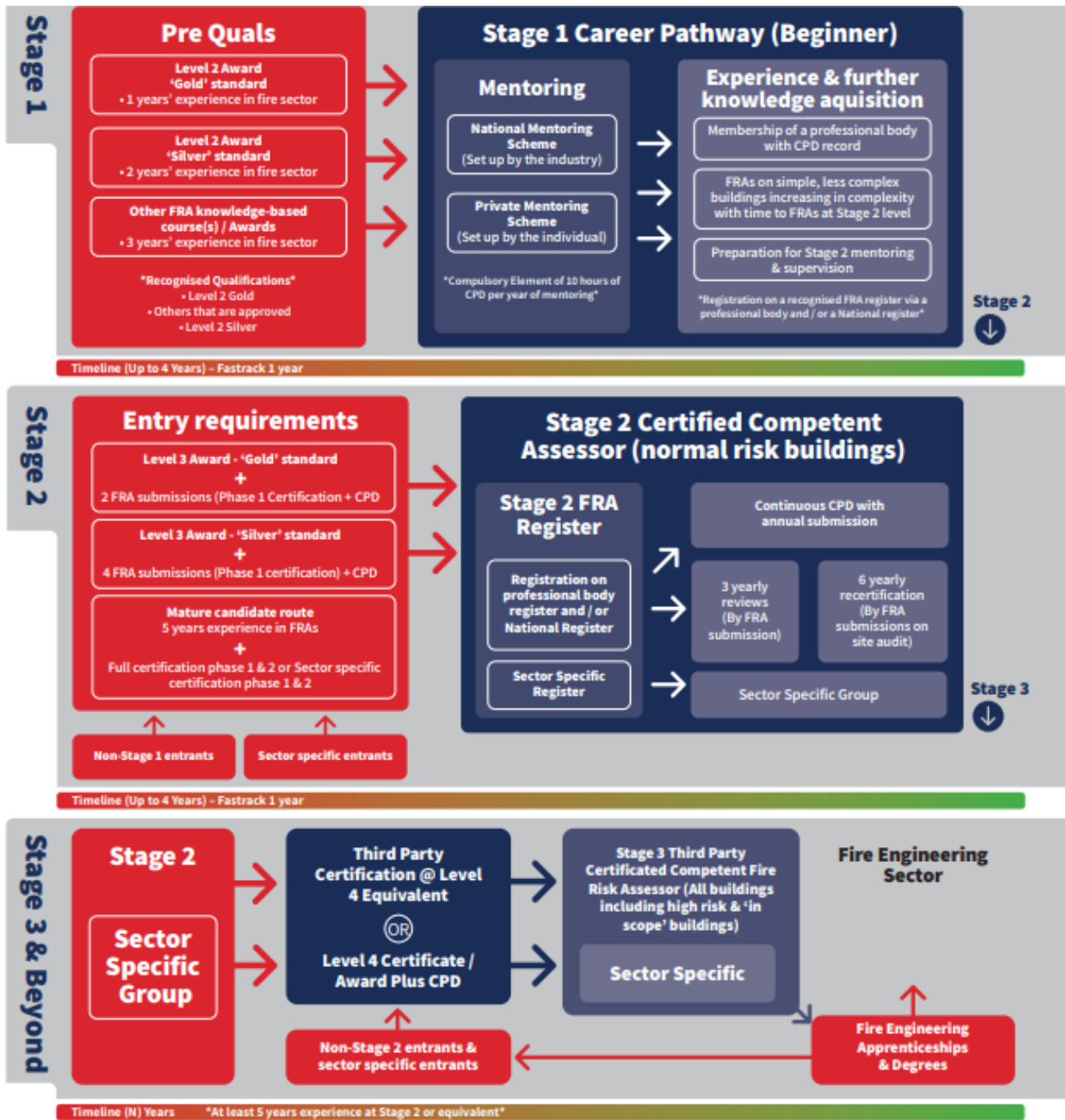
Implementation and Governance

Implementation and Governance of the career pathway model can be done in a number of ways:

1. Accepted and supported by all bodies and government as a national initiative.
2. Individual companies and professional bodies adopt the approach as a national initiative.
3. Professional bodies use the career pathway document as a template and 'drive' the initiative internally according to their own processes.

All fire risk assessors within the system should be registered with individual professional bodies but also be entered onto the national register for fire risk assessors where their Stage development and progress can be recorded.

Appendix A



| Fire Risk Assessor - Career Pathway Awards, Qualifications and Courses Chart | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awards and Certificates via Regulated Awarding Bodies | | | |
| GOLD | Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body which have been cross mapped to the levels set out in the National Framework ACoP Document. RQF Level 2-4 and upwards (and equivalents) | SILVER | Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body but have not been wholly cross mapped to the levels set out in the National Framework ACoP Document. RQF Level 2 -4 and upwards (and equivalents) |
| | | OTHERS | Qualifications that have formal accreditation from a regulated awarding body but only have partial fire safety elements included. RQF Level 2 -4 and upwards (and equivalents) |
| Non-Regulated Qualifications & Courses | | | |
| Specific Fire Risk Assessor/Assessment courses accredited or recognised by a professional body in fire. Specific Fire Risk Assessor/Assessment courses but not accredited or recognised by a professional body in fire. Other fire related courses that have a fire safety element but have to have fire risk assessment as a core subject for the course. | | | |
| Stage 3 Third Party Certification | | | |
| Competent Fire Risk Assessor All buildings including where appropriate, High Risk and 'In Scope' Buildings (Level 4 Equivalent) | | | |

Appendix B

Simple, Less Complex Buildings.

The definition of simple, less complex buildings which has been accepted is:

Buildings of up to 3 storeys (which may include a basement) in height with straightforward layouts and containing lower risk single or multiple occupancies. For example: office and industrial premises, small and medium sized shops, sports premises and arts centres.

They should have routine, but not excessive, public access and for which the Fire Risk Assessments and actions plans can be developed using the current guidance documents and codes, such as those published by the relevant legislative bodies and cross-referenced to appropriate sections of British Standards and other significant and relevant accepted guides. The use of compensatory measures to produce risk proportionate or alternative solutions will be understood and applied in more straightforward situations.

Normal Risk/Non-Complex Buildings.

Conventional premises including for example:

Large shops and shopping centres, art centres and museums, leisure centres, assembly buildings, theatres, cinemas, hotels, care homes, factories, large offices etc.

High Risk and Complex Buildings.

High risk and complex buildings are those that include many different types of premises across many different industries depending on the process performed, materials stored and occupancy type. Examples are care homes, specialized housing schemes, places where there is a high risk to life from fire, hospitals, large building and industrial complexes, fire engineered large buildings etc. The list is not exhaustive but also includes those defined by the Government as 'in scope building'. The Government definition of 'in-scope' buildings include high risk residential buildings (HRRBs) and others which can be described as life safety critical buildings and include, for example, health and social care hospitals and homes, multi-occupied high-rise residential homes and residential educational and student accommodation. High Risk/designated/in-scope Buildings will be defined from time to time by the Government. There will always be 'specialist' High Risk Buildings which will require their own specialist Fire Risk Assessors who are competent in their own specialised field.