

# Richard Cakar, Senior Building Surveyor, talks to us about his journey to becoming Chartered with RICS.



Kaizon



We met with one of our newly-qualified Chartered Surveyors, Richard Cakar MRICS of Kaizon, to discuss the APC process and what he learned along the way.

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## ***1. Congratulations, Richard, on achieving your MRICS status. Why did you decide to pursue your APC and become chartered by RICS?***

For me personally I always wanted to become chartered and be a professional surveyor. It was through word of mouth and family friends how I first heard of RICS. I saw RICS as an institute that showcased professionals. The fact they are globally-recognised was another reason I wanted to qualify. I wanted to show a certain level of professionalism and competence within my career.

## ***2. What did you learn during the APC process that you think will benefit you as your career evolves?***

I learnt that you've got to be very organised and accurate throughout the APC process. There's a lot that goes into it - you record a diary every week which logs exactly what projects you're working on, so you have to be on top of it to ensure that you're keeping up-to-date with the requirements of becoming chartered. You've also got to be very accurate in the APC process with your reporting and submission – this puts you in good stead within your career as accuracy is vital as a Building Surveyor or similar roles.

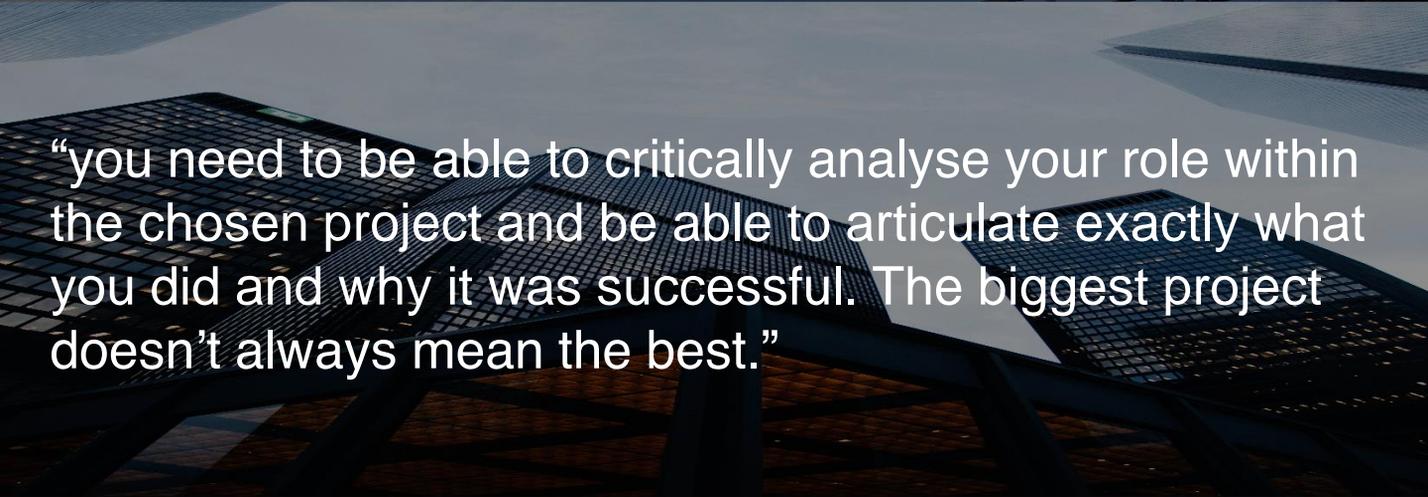
Another thing that is needed to be successful in the APC process is learning a broad range of skillsets and competencies. You require experience and exposure in different areas, so it makes you a better all-round surveyor.

The skills you need in order to complete the APC process reflect the skills you need for your job.

## ***3. What was the greatest challenge you faced during your APC, and how did you overcome this?***

One of the biggest challenges I faced in the APC process was picking a suitable case study which you are to present not only in the submission document but also within the interview itself. There's a tendency to pick one of your biggest projects and the most 'impressive', for example a large-scale high rise project. However, you should narrow it down into what RICS is actually asking for.

You need to be able to critically analyse your role within the chosen project, articulating exactly what you did and why it was successful. The biggest project doesn't always mean the best.



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### *The chosen case study*

I ended up choosing a car renovation scheme where I acted as a Contract Administrator on the job. I chose two key issues from the project, as you only have a short amount of time to present. You need to pick the right areas of the project to cover what the assessors want to know. The key part is the analysis: You need to narrow it down and be able to articulate and analyse your performance.

The other big challenge is undertaking the final interview. It can be quite daunting. You’re sitting in front of two or three assessors so preparing yourself mentally is a challenge.

### *How did you compose yourself in the interview, what techniques did you use to ensure you got through the interview?*

I tried to use relaxation techniques and not to stress myself out. I also made sure I understood all the questions. It’s important to make sure you fully understand, take a step back and listen to what the assessors are asking, then take the time to answer. The other thing is to ask for questions to be rephrased if you don’t understand the first time – helping to ensure you understand before you answer.

### *4. How did Kaizon support your APC?*

Firstly, the opportunities I have been given at Kaizon have been great. I've been given a wide range of opportunities and job roles here from project management to building surveying. The level of exposure and experience has allowed me to hit the competencies needed for the APC process.

Another way I was supported by Kaizon was an in-house councilor and mentor who are both Chartered Surveyors (Darren who is Kaizon’s Associate Director and Simon who is Kaizon’s Director). Having that in-house experience was very useful and encouraging.

We also conducted mock interviews with some internal Building Surveyors and an Architect. That gave me the opportunity to present and allowed me to experience the scenario before the real thing. Having a trial run was very useful and helped me prepare for the interview.

### *5. Do you think the APC process helped you to grow in your current role? If so, how?*

It’s really important for your clients and prospective clients to see that you are chartered. It provides that extra level of assurance and credibility, not only for yourself but also for your organisation.

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#### *6. What was a highlight for you going through the APC process?*

I really enjoyed presenting. I got the opportunity to present about a project that I was proud of. Mentoring was also helpful, as I think it’s good to sit down with your councilor and supervisor and look at yourself holistically. It’s an opportunity to work out where you may be lacking and where you can improve yourself.

#### *7. What advice would you give to others pursuing their professional qualification through RICS?*

- **Be organised:** The first thing I would advise is to ensure that you’re organised. You should mirror the organisational skills required in the industry within your APC application to ensure you keep on top of everything. I highly recommend anyone going through the APC to be proactive with it and be organised because it’s a fairly big submission in the end.
- **Tailor your experience:** Try and tailor your experience around the competencies because you need to cover off a range of things. You need to get varied experience to meet the competency requirements. Review yourself in your job and work out if there are any areas that you need to get more experience in and raise that with your company.
- **Showcase your ability:** Pick projects and jobs that really showcase your ability to act competently. It’s quite easy to blurt out everything that you’ve done in your submission document, but it’s more important, in my opinion, to pick the right projects to demonstrate that you’ve got the experience *and competence*. Make sure you pick the things to talk about wisely.
- **Mock interviews:** My mock interview before the APC final interview was invaluable, because it got me used to the pressure of presenting and sitting in front of a panel. You get to answer questions and think on your feet as you’ll have to in the final interview.

#### *Would you recommend people to go through the process and become chartered?*

Definitely, I think becoming Chartered with RICS helps to showcase yourself as a professional. With RICS being globally recognised, I think they are a great organisation to align yourself with. For me, to be part of RICS was always my ambition even before I started studying. There’s huge satisfaction and a sense of personal achievement when you come out the end.