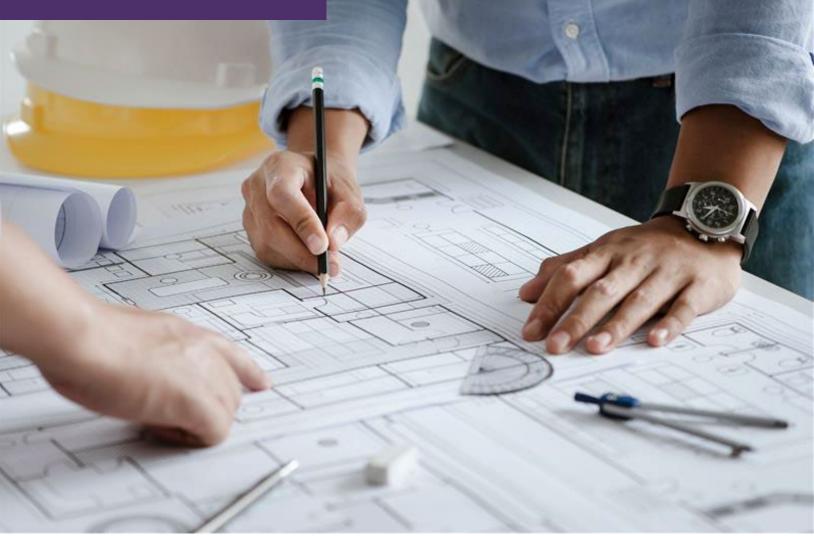# Certificate in principal designer

RICS®

Course guide

Certificate in principal designer

Enrolment duration: 08 months

Language: English

CPD: 40 hours

Market sector: Building surveying

Course type: Cohort training programme

Welcome

We are delighted that you have chosen to study the **certificate in principal designer**.

This guide provides key information about your learning journey and course materials to help you get the most from your course.

First steps

To get started, follow these steps:

1. Introduce yourself to your peers and tutor in the **Introduction Forum** to start building connections.

2. **Bookmark** the course page for quick and easy access.

3. Use **Google Chrome** for the best experience.

4. Download the **course calendar** and save the dates.

5. **Disable pop-up blockers** in your browser settings to ensure all course features function properly.

Course description

The **certificate in principal designer** provides you with the knowledge and skills to fulfil the role of Principal Designer in construction projects. It is designed for building surveyors undertaking the **Principal Designer (Building Regulations) role**, as well as those working in multi-disciplinary teams alongside a Principal Designer.

The course covers the **competence requirements** introduced in **PAS 8671**, along with the **additional competence thresholds** needed for work on **higher-risk buildings** (HRBs). You will gain practical insights into meeting these requirements through **checklists, practical tools, and building regulations protocols**, helping you carry out the Principal Designer role effectively.

After completing the **technical modules**, you will apply your knowledge in a **case study assignment**, allowing you to examine the role in practice and consolidate your learning.

Upon passing the final online exam, you will receive a **certificate of completion**, demonstrating industry-standard skills and a clear understanding of a Principal Designer's responsibilities.

Note: course is **not** an accredited qualification. RICS does not provide a competency framework for assessing Principal Designer competency.

Mode and duration of study

This training programme is designed to be completed within **eight months**, including time for the final online exam.

- The course consists of **five modules**, released every **four weeks** to support steady progress.
- A **case study assignment** will be released with Module 5, and you will have **four weeks** to complete and submit it on the course page.
- To get the most out of this course, we recommend dedicating at least **seven hours per module** and completing the final exam before the course expires.

In total, this programme requires a minimum commitment of 40 hours to achieve the learning outcomes.

Each module offers a blend of engaging learning activities, such as:

- Pre-reading materials
- Multimedia eLearning modules
- Practical examples and expert tips
- Practice activities
- End-of-module knowledge checks
- Live Q&A and consolidation sessions
- Live case study consolidation session
- Discussion forums

- Case study assignment (non-graded)

- Final assessment (graded)

Support available

Your **course tutor** can be reached through the discussion forum and will respond within **3 to 5 working days**.

For any additional queries, a **dedicated support team** is available to assist you at onlineacademy@rics.org.

Course structure

This course is divided into five modules:

Module 1 – Behavioural competence

- Part 1 – Evaluating behavioural competence and organisational capability

- Part 2 – Practising integrity in work acceptance and safety occurrences

- Part 3 – Creating collaboration strategies to achieve design work compliance

- Part 4 – Interpersonal communication skills for design compliance

Module 2 – Legislative and regulatory framework

- Part 1 – Legislation and regulations

- Part 2 – Dutyholder compliance

- Part 3 – Regulatory procedures

Module 3 – Management of design work compliance

- Part 1 – Client, brief and planning

- Part 2 – Organisational and human resources capability

- Part 3 – Consultant appointments and procurement, insurance and legal limitations

- Part 4 – Design risk assessment and compliance management

Module 4 – Technical framework for design work compliance

- Part 1 – Design compliance and performance
- Part 2 – Managing and coordinating design work
- Part 3 – Information management and compliance control

Module 5 – HRB requirements

- Part 1 – Legislative and regulatory framework for HRBs
- Part 2 – Building control regime for HRBs
- Part 3 – The golden thread
- Part 4 – Mandatory occurrence reporting
- Part 5 – Building control approval and completion certificate applications

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

Module 1 – Behavioural competence

1. Define behavioural competence in the context of BS8670-1:2024 and PAS 8671:2022.

2. Identify the individuals and groups whose competence and organisational capability need to be evaluated.

3. Recognise the need to assess the limits of your own and others' behavioural competence and, where applicable, their organisational capability.

4. Recognise your own and others competence limitations to justify the refusal to accept design work or accept a dutyholder role for building projects that do not conform to relevant requirements and report safety occurrences to the appropriate parties.

5. Develop strategies for cooperating with all dutyholders to ensure design work compliance.

6. Apply interpersonal communication skills to formalise contractual arrangements and agree responsibilities, address unethical behaviour, and challenge non-compliance from project stakeholders.

Module 2 – Legislative and regulatory framework

1. Locate legislation which governs new dutyholder and procedural requirements.

2. Apply understanding of dutyholder responsibilities under the Building Regulations and the duties and the typical skillset required by the principal designer.

3. Explain competence requirements when appointing dutyholders and accepting appointments.

4. Apply understanding of the purpose, structure and scope of the legislative and regulatory framework to appraising and challenging evidence of design work compliance.

5. Explain how to locate and apply information from the legislative and regulatory framework governing design work compliance, and the duties expected of principal designers and other dutyholders.

6. Explain procedural differences for the appointment of dutyholders on domestic projects.

7. Explain the basic definition of a higher risk building and understand the associated legislation providing the definitions.

8. Identify the different legislative and regulatory framework governing design work compliance for higher-risk buildings (HRBs), and the duties expected of principal designers and other dutyholders.

Module 3 – Management of design work compliance

1. Analyse the project scope and understand the aspects of Building Regulation Approval that may be required.

2. Utilise programming methods to plan, programme and allocate activities which meet the project programme.

3. Assess the design team's contractual responsibilities and identify where gaps require additional competent resource.

4. Evaluate the organisational procedures and resources within your organisation, and those sub-contractors you appoint, to ensure this will meet project output requirements.

5. Analyse the consultant's appointments to identify potential gaps in requirements or specific exclusions which may leave compliance incomplete.

6. Apply procurement appraisal procedures to assess appropriateness for design compliance for a specific project.

7. Understand the principles of PII and warranties which may apply to designer appointments.

8. Implement appropriate systems and controls within your business and protocols to manage external designers.

9. Apply change control procedures to maintain design compliance with the Building Regulations.

10. Analyse designer outputs and managing procedures for achieving compliance.

Module 4 – Technical framework for design work compliance

1. Analyse how building design relates to purpose and performance, and how to use guidance to assess compliance with regulatory requirements.

2. Explain how to manage design work compliance and identify technical risks.

3. Apply information management systems to manage compliance strategies and control changes, while recording information according to the principles of the golden thread.

Module 5 – HRB requirements

1. Identify the legislative framework governing construction projects in relation to HRBs.

2. Explain the dutyholder responsibilities for HRBs in occupation and its relationship to construction projects.

3. Outline the information required for HRBs in occupation.

4. Analyse the suitability of building surveyors for dutyholder responsibilities on construction projects and identify when these responsibilities should be assigned to another party.

5. Explain the requirements of the golden thread and how it is created, managed, maintained and transferred.

6. Develop methods to guide reporting persons on mandatory safety occurrence reporting for work on HRBs.

7. Evaluate methods to establish and maintain a system for inspecting HRB design work for safety occurrences and promptly reporting them during the construction phase.

9. Identify the legislative and regulatory framework related to design work on HRBs, including prescribed procedures and information.

Learning resources

Each module follows a structured format, offering the same types of learning resources presented in the recommended order for optimal progression.

Pre-reading

Before you start the eLearning module, take some time to go through these key reading materials.

Completion requirement: Open and review the reading files.

eLearning module

Engaging and interactive eLearning modules bring theory to life with practical insights. Delivered in bite-sized sections, they feature real-world examples, expert tips and practice activities to reinforce your learning.

Completion requirement: Complete all modules.

End-of-module knowledge check

Test your understanding with a short quiz designed to reinforce key concepts from each module.

Completion requirement: Must attempt each quiz at least once.

Live Q&A and consolidation sessions

Join these dynamic 1-hour live web classes to review key takeaways from each module and ask questions to your tutor.

Recordings will be available for on-demand viewing.
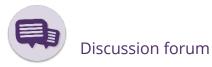
Completion requirement: Optional

Live case study consolidation session

Join a 1-hour live session where the tutor will give general feedback based on a small selection of submitted case studies and answer any questions. Check the course calendar to save the date.

A recording will be available for on-demand viewing.

Completion requirement: Optional

Discussion forum

Engage with fellow learners and your tutor through dedicated forums for each module.

Tutor response time: 3 to 5 working days.

Guidelines: Refer to the "**Discussion Forum – Guidance and Code of Conduct**" on the course page.

Case study assignment

Put your knowledge into action with a hands-on case study exercise based on real-world scenario.

Collaborate & learn: Share your work in the Case Study Exchange Forum for peer feedback and learn from diverse insights and approaches.

Completion requirement: To unlock the model answer and the tutor's debrief video, you must first submit the case study.

Note: The tutor will review a small selection of case studies submitted by the deadline and discuss them in the live case study consolidation session.

Final assessment & certificate

The final online exam will be released on the date shown in the course calendar.

Format: 50 multiple-choice questions

Passing score: 75%

Duration: 60 minutes (includes an additional 10 minutes for reading the questions)

Attempts: Two attempts, with a 24-hour gap between them.

If you need further attempts, please contact onlineacademy@rics.org

A **certificate of completion** is awarded upon passing the final assessment and submitting the course feedback.

We hope you enjoy your learning experience!