

# Develop your professional competencies with FRAEW External Wall Systems (EWS) assessments

Gain the qualifications required to carry out FRAEW EWS assessments





## RICS overview: Who we are

As a globally recognised professional body, everything we do is designed to effect positive change in the built and natural environments.

Through our respected global standards, leading professional progression and our trusted data and insight, we promote and enforce the highest professional standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others provides a foundation for confident markets, pioneers better places to live and work and is a force for positive social impact.

With over 134,000 highly qualified trainees and professionals, and offices in every significant financial market, we are ideally placed to influence policy and embed our standards within local marketplaces in order to protect consumers and businesses. In doing so, we can innovate and progress the development of spaces and places, so they are fit for future generations, in addition to the challenges faced in the present.

## RICS and Fire Safety

RICS has been involved in a number of initiatives, ensuring fire safety is at the heart of all that we do, and is the founder of the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition supported by the UN.<sup>1</sup>

At present, there are many contrasting approaches and requirements across the world in relation to fire safety, which have resulted in significant variations in the design, approval, construction methods, products and operation of buildings. The development of international common principles and how the impact of fire affects these, will help to build trust and confidence among the many and varied actors, including the public and finance industry, ultimately underpinning an improved quality of life and increased investment in line with UN sustainable development goals.

The adoption of the International Fire Safety Standards Common Principles (IFSS-CP)<sup>2</sup> published by the IFSS Coalition, will provide

a connected and more consistent approach that aims to improve fire safety globally.

IFSS-CP establishes overarching, performance-based common principles for fire safety design, construction, occupation and ongoing management. IFSS-CP is intended to be flexible and non-prescriptive so that it can be adopted incrementally and advance good practice. The common principles have been developed so that they are universally applicable throughout the world, regardless of the existing codes, standards and guidance already in place. The adoption of IFSS-CP will help protect people, buildings and contents, and the environment from the destructive effects of fire.

The IFSS-CP provides a performance-based framework that applies in all stages of a building's life cycle (design, construction, in use, change and demolition).

<sup>1</sup> You can find out more about the IFSS Coalition here [www.ifsscoalition.wordpress.com](http://www.ifsscoalition.wordpress.com)

<sup>2</sup> Read more here <https://ifsscoalition.wordpress.com/the-standards/>

The five IFSS-CP principles can be defined as follows:

- 1 **Prevention** – Safeguarding against the outbreak of fire and/or limiting its effects
- 2 **Detection and Communication** – Investigating and discovering of fire followed by informing occupants and the fire service
- 3 **Occupant Protection** – Facilitating occupant avoidance of and escape from the effects of fire
- 4 **Containment** – Limiting of fire and all of its consequences to as small an area as possible
- 5 **Extinguishment** – Suppressing of fire and protecting of the surrounding environment



## EWS – External Wall Systems process review

RICS Members and Registered Firms operating in this area are reminded of their professional obligations, under Rule 4 within RICS Rules of Conduct for Firms and RICS Rules of conduct for members, to possess the necessary competency (defined as skills, knowledge, experience & behaviour) in this specialist field.

Those involved in the EWS assessment process must have sufficient expertise to identify the relevant materials within the external wall and attachments, and whether fire resisting cavity barriers and fire stopping have been installed correctly. More details of this can be found in the learning module.

## Valuation and cladding

RICS has produced a **guidance note** to support valuers undertaking valuations for secured lending purposes on domestic residential blocks of flats with cladding in the UK.

The aim of the guidance is help valuers understand when an EWS assessment should be required due to the visible cladding. Whilst specifically targeted for UK valuers, the guidance will be useful for all stakeholders involved in the buying and selling of residential properties with cladding.

Following consultation with the fire safety industry, insurers and lenders, in the UK it provides criteria that can be used by valuers during a standard residential mortgage valuation inspection to identify buildings where additional specialist advice, is likely to be required.<sup>3</sup>

## EWS training assessment programme

Chartered building surveyors and building control surveyors can now further progress their knowledge in fire safety to help thousands of homeowners by completing a new training course created to help speed up the EWS process. The decision to create the programme was inline with the requirements of the Fire Safety Act 2021 now mandating the need for external walls to be assessed. RICS seeks to increase the number of professionals who will be required to complete future mandatory fire safety checks on external walls.

The training programme is designed for chartered building surveyors and building control surveyors who already have a base knowledge to undertake external wall system assessments for low to medium risk residential buildings up to 18m; increasing the number of professionals to support the current market demand. Buildings over 18m or those which require specialist testing may still require a qualified fire safety engineer to carry out the EWS assessments.

RICS has been working in collaboration with the UK Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to upskill professionals through the External Wall System Assessment training programme. Obtaining a formal qualification in External Wall System Assessment is one of the steps we are taking to, not only make a difference to the public, but support professionals and firms operating in this space in order to increase confidence from insurers and other key stakeholders such as investors, lenders, valuers, owners and tenants.

<sup>3</sup> You can find out more about Fire Safety and the work that we do via our website [www.rics.org/news-insights/current-topics-campaigns/fire-safety](http://www.rics.org/news-insights/current-topics-campaigns/fire-safety)



## Learn how to complete an FRAEW External Wall System (EWS) assessment



### What is the External Wall System Assessment Training Programme?

This UK Government funded free<sup>4</sup> Level 6 Award qualification has been designed to increase the number of professionals who have the skills and knowledge required to carry out EWS assessments for buildings under 18 metres including producing FRAEW EWS reports (and signing EWS1<sup>5</sup> forms for Option A and Option B where required) in buildings with low or medium risk only.

*This is an Ofqual regulated qualification accredited by ABBE (Awarding Body for the Built Environment).*



### Who is this programme for?

The programme has been designed for RICS Chartered Surveyors who qualified through the Building Surveying or Building Control pathways, work in the UK and are regulated by RICS.



### RICS members

If you are a Chartered Surveyor qualified through a different pathway, but with equivalent skills and experience and believe you should be considered for this programme, please contact [ewstraining@rics.org](mailto:ewstraining@rics.org)

Additional evidence and detailed information will be required for an adequate eligibility review.



### Non-members

RICS is working with other industry bodies to find ways of extending the programme to other professionals with equivalent qualifications and knowledge. The programme has currently been extended to specific membership grades from CABE, IFE and CIAT. If you are a member of one of these institutions and would like to apply, please contact your respective body directly for further instructions.

If you don't meet the eligibility criteria, please do not apply as all applications are vetted in line with the criteria defined.



### You will learn how to:

- Define the scope of work effectively through contracts and terms of engagement when taking instructions
- Identify the legal framework and key standards affecting fire safety, and legal liability.
- Assess an external wall system including the materials, the construction and their fire safety performance
- Identify and interpret effective information required for inspections from stakeholders
- Undertake the inspection process and intrusive inspection processes
- Understand and assess the fire risk presented by external wall materials and systems
- Prepare a comprehensive FRAEW report in accordance with PAS9980 recommendations.



### How will it work?

This online self-study programme comprises of interactive eLearning content, technical support from tutors, reading materials and knowledge checks.

Following completion of all training materials activities, you will be assessed through a knowledge-based test, and separate written case study assessment, to verify you meet the requirements to carry out EWS assessments, provide FRAEW reports, and work to a standard methodology process in your region.

We recommend a study period of up to twelve weeks minimum to complete the programme.



### Key Contacts

[www.rics.org/training-events/training-courses/external-wall-systems-assessment-training-certificate-programme](http://www.rics.org/training-events/training-courses/external-wall-systems-assessment-training-certificate-programme)

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<sup>4</sup> apart from notional assessment fee

<sup>5</sup> EWS1 forms refer to the UK process