



QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND
CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

BUILDER-LOW RISE APPLICATION GUIDE

INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENCE

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BACKGROUND

About this document

This application guide is a resource for helping applicants understand what is needed in their applications in order for the QBCC to be satisfied that they meet both the technical qualification, and experience requirements, specific to the Builder-Low Rise contractor or nominee supervisor licence types.

The information in this document reflects the legislation made by government including the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991* (the Act) and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018 (the 'Regulation'). The QBCC does not create or maintain the legislated requirements. The QBCC performs the function of applying the legislation including assessing applications for licences to ensure proper standards are maintained within the building and construction industry.

Role of a Low-Rise Builder

As a low-rise builder, **you are responsible for overseeing and managing all parts of the construction project** within the licence scope. This includes ensuring projects:

- comply with statutory and regulatory requirements; and
- meet contractual obligations, industry standards and follow best practice.

These responsibilities are essential for achieving quality outcomes and play a critical role in safeguarding the health and safety of occupants, workers, and the broader community.

To do this effectively, builders need a strong understanding of construction processes, techniques, materials, and technologies to guide projects toward completion and deliver a safe, compliant, and satisfactory product delivery.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Scheduling and coordination:** Builders schedule and coordinate different trades, ensuring all work is completed safely, on time and to proper standards. They act as the principal contractor, the main point of contact for coordinating and supervising all trade activities during construction, particularly managing the interfaces between trades, which is where many defects commonly arise.
- **Managing subcontractors:** Builders manage and supervise subcontractors such as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters, ensuring contracts are in place, payments are transparent, and quality documentation is maintained to ensure that accountabilities are clear

- **Project management:** Builders ensure all aspects of the project progress smoothly and according to the projected timeline. They oversee all aspects of the construction process, including procurement, budget management, and progress reporting, ensuring projects meet design specifications and legal requirements.

Scope of work

The scope of work covers all the work you can undertake with a Builder-Low Rise licence:

- Building work on a class 1 or class 10 building.
- Building work on classes 2 to 9 buildings with a gross floor area not more than 2000m² but not including Type A or Type B construction.
- Building work consisting of non-structural work on a building, regardless of:
 - » the class of the building
 - » the gross floor area of the building.
- Prepare plans and specifications if the plans and specifications are:
 - » for the licensee's personal use
 - » for use in building work to be performed by the licensee personally.
- Temporarily until 2 May 2030—for the building work described above, install, and maintain:
 - » fire collars, fire-rated penetrations, and fire-rated joint sealing
 - » fire and smoke walls and fire-rated ceilings.

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The technical qualifications for licensing are set by the Department of Housing and Public Works and can be found at the Business Queensland website. The qualifications needed are periodically reviewed and can change from time to time.

Currently, to obtain a contractor or nominee supervisor licence type within the Builder–Low Rise licence class applicants need to hold:

- a Certificate IV in Building and Construction (CPC40120); or
- a qualification the QBCC considers **at least** equivalent to the course mentioned above.

What do I need to submit for an equivalent qualification or historical qualification consideration?

Applicants wanting the QBCC to recognise a qualification as being at least equivalent to the Certificate IV in Building and Construction (CPC40120) qualification should make sure their application includes a copy of the completion certificate and an official academic transcript evidencing the units/subjects completed as part of the course of study; or

For university qualifications awarded prior to 2013—an official course transcript and a certificate of completion (if available), as well as a description of the subjects completed (course outcomes), will need to be provided to the QBCC to enable an equivalency assessment.

The QBCC has dedicated staff specifically trained in assessing course equivalency, and providing this supporting information enables a proper comparative analysis. **Please note** that although qualifications sit within different hierarchical levels within the Australian Qualifications Framework, equivalency in this context is determined by comparing the course content against that of the prescribed qualification. For example, a degree in engineering or architecture, while hierarchically superior, would not be considered at least equivalent to the Certificate IV in Building and Construction.

HISTORICAL QUALIFICATIONS

If you have completed or hold an historical qualification, the QBCC may accept the qualification. Historical qualifications **may** include:

- a recognition certificate issued under the repealed *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000* as a builder qualified to carry out the scope of work for the licence class that has not been cancelled
- a qualification or statement of attainment of required competency for the class of licence.

EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Experience timeframes

To apply for a Builder–Low Rise licence you need:

- **two years of experience** in the scope of work for the Builder–Low Rise (or work the QBCC considers equivalent) **if you have a trade qualification in carpentry or bricklaying and blocklaying**;

or

- **four years of experience** in the scope of work for the Builder–Low Rise **if you do not hold one of those trade qualifications.**



NOTE: Under the legislation only carpentry or bricklaying and blocklaying trade qualifications result in reduced durational requirements.

What experience to provide

To gain suitable experience the QBCC expects that your primary role was as the full-time engaged site supervisor on each site. Your experience must include supervising work through the different stages and subtrades of the project.



NOTE: Experience as a leading hand or supervising a single trade is generally insufficient unless you can show that your primary role and main responsibility was supervising the full construction process as a site manager.

CONSTRUCTION STAGE	
PRELIMINARY BUILDING STAGE	
Experience in submitting plans for approval (including assuring appropriate documentation has been prepared to the standards and approvals as required)	
Dealing with engineers, designers, building certifiers, workplace health and safety etc.	
Preparing contracts	
Developing safety plans	
BASE STAGE	
Applying site surveys and set out procedures to building and construction projects	
Managing earthworks	
Supervising footings and concrete slab/timber base of building	
Supervising the installation of initial services	
FRAME STAGE	
Supervising framing contractors and understand the requirements of the same	
Supervising truss/roofing contractors	
Supervising and understanding rough-in of service	
Duplex—Fire Separation Wall Construction (60/60/60)	
Applying applicable construction principles	
ENCLOSED STAGE	
Supervising window and cladding installations and requirements	
Bushfire zones constructions/methodology and requirements	
FIT OUT STAGE	
Supervising finishing trades such as joiners, plumbing, electrical, plastering and painting, tilers, cabinet maker	
PRACTICAL COMPLETION STAGE	
Manage statutory requirements, dealing with certifier and engineers during the construction process	
Conducting defect inspections	
Submitting documentations for final approval	
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	
Managing projects for the construction of a class 1–9 building, including coordination of the trade contractors	
Administration services experience, including managing associated finances, e.g. quotes, invoicing, tenders, timely financial management, contracts, administration, lodging forms and applications	
Implementing safety management systems	
Waste management for residential projects.	
Note: Red indicates the mandatory experience examples.	

Broadly, you will have demonstrated experience in the scope of work for the Builder-Low Rise licence if you have supervised and managed the following:

- the construction of **new class 1 buildings**, or
- the construction of **new class 2–9 buildings** within the scope of work for a Builder-Low Rise licence, or
- the construction of **new class 2–9 buildings** within the scope of a Builder-Medium Rise or Builder-Open licence, provided the applicant has demonstrated experience supervising the construction from site set out to completion.

It is recommended you do not rely entirely upon experience with renovations, additions or similar. It is necessary to adequately demonstrate you have the necessary experience across all construction stages. Renovations and additions typically do not involve all facets of construction within the Builder-Low Rise scope of work.

References to support your application

WHO SHOULD BE YOUR REFEREES?

Ideally, the licenced builder responsible for the projects in your examples would be your referee. The QBCC checks referees to make sure they have the right qualifications and licences for the experience being assessed. They also look at the relationship between the referee and the builder on-site to ensure the reference is credible.

For each experience example you provide, include the details of a referee who:

- held a licence or qualification at the same (or higher) level than the Builder-Low Rise licence class you are applying for
- was a qualified builder or principal contractor on the project and was actively licensed as a builder at the time
- can confirm your onsite experience by signing the referee declaration in the experience record on your licence application.

Other experience examples

If you would like the QBCC to consider experience gained from other types of construction work, you will need to provide the additional information and supporting documentation. The details you submit must clearly demonstrate your involvement across all stages of the work from site set out through to completion.

Once your information is submitted, the QBCC will then assess your experience based on the material you have provided.

Renovations and additions

Experience with renovations, additions, or other scenarios, that are not a new construction within classes 1–9 may be relevant if it involves a structural alteration or work impacting the building's compliance with the NCC. In these cases, you may be required to provide supporting information demonstrating your appropriate experience. This may include, providing material explaining the project's complexity.

Class 10 Building work

Experience gained from building Class 10 structures can be considered as part of your overall background. However, this should not be relied upon exclusively, as Class 10 projects generally lack the complexity of Class 1 buildings. It is essential you provide evidence of experience covering all stages of construction associated with Class 1 structures (refer to the Construction Stage table above).

PREFERRED PATHWAY TO GAIN EXPERIENCE

Site supervisor pathway to gain experience

There are different pathways for meeting the experience requirements, including variations in the required duration of experience depending on the qualifications you hold.

For experience based in Queensland, the recommended approach is to first obtain a site supervisor licence. Possessing this licence indicates that you have completed units of study specifically focused on the supervision and management of building projects, giving assurance that your

oversight and coordination work meet the required professional standards.

However, it is not a legal requirement to hold a site supervisor licence before gaining the necessary experience. The experience can still be lawfully obtained and verified as meeting the required standard, although this process may take longer due to a greater reliance on referees and other supporting information.

OPTION 1: STARTING WITH A QUALIFICATION

Carpentry or Bricklaying and Blocklaying technical qualification (completed through apprenticeship or RPL)

Study Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Building) CPC40120.

Apply for and obtain a QBCC Builder—Low Rise Site Supervisor licence. This will enable you to lawfully supervise building work as an employee within the building low-rise scope of work.

Obtain at least 24 months full-time experience in the Builder—Low Rise scope of work as an employee.

Apply for and obtain a Builder—Low Rise contractor or nominee supervisor licence.

OPTION 2: STARTING WITH NO QUALIFICATION

No qualification in Carpentry or Bricklaying and Blocklaying.

Study Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Building) CPC40120.

Apply for and obtain a QBCC Builder—Low Rise Site Supervisor licence. This will enable you to lawfully supervise building work as an employee within the building low-rise scope of work.

Obtain at least 48 months (4 years) full-time experience in the Builder—Low Rise scope of work as an employee.

Apply for and obtain a Builder—Low Rise contractor or nominee supervisor licence.

What if I do not hold a site supervisor licence prior to gaining my experience?

For the QBCC to be satisfied that your experience is sufficient and meets the required standard, it is important to provide clear explanations of the work you carried out (as outlined earlier in this guide), along with reliable means of verifying those claims.

If the projects you have submitted as experience were completed under a licensed builder for this class of building or higher, and that builder is able to verify your experience, this will generally result in a faster assessment process.

In situations where you did not hold a site supervisor licence, deeper analysis/verification of your experience claims with the employing builder may be required.

On rare occasions, it may not be possible to easily verify experience. In such cases, a licensing officer may seek alternative methods of verification.

ASSESSING YOUR EXPERIENCE

How will the QBCC assess my experience?

Each individual site is unique and your experience on each site will go through a detailed assessment. This includes calculating project timeframes, reviewing all documentation and evidence, and contacting your referees to verify the statements given.

To assess your application for a Builder–Low Rise licence, the QBCC will evaluate:

EXPERIENCE ACROSS EACH PROJECT:

- Was the construction work within the acceptable standards defined by the relevant regulations and building codes (builder class, rise in storey, type of construction, fire rating and project description)?
- Was the construction work you performed or supervised within the acceptable scope for a Builder–Low Rise licence?
- Is there enough detail to demonstrate your role, responsibilities, and the project timeframes?
- Does it include details on your involvement in supervising different stages of construction, project management, and quality control?

Key verification is typically done with the head contractor for the sites listed in your experience usually your employer and often a QBCC licensee. They can confirm essential details such as the dates, location, type of building work, your role, and your working relationship with them.

If this verification is not available, supporting evidence to confirm the responsible builder and verify the accuracy of your claims is required. For example, you might be able to include evidence that:

- verifies the builder, site, and project commencement date—such as copies of building contracts
- confirms timeframes through inspection stages—such as building permits across different stages of the project
- verifies your role and confirms your connection to the builder—such as copies of employment contracts and payslips.

The QBCC may rely on third-party information to verify building sites. Examples may include information obtained from Google Maps and RP Data, which can provide satellite imagery and property data to corroborate the existence of construction sites and activities.

How to calculate your experience timeframes

The QBCC counts experience by calendar months at a full-time capacity to ensure you meet the required competency standards. A good way to calculate whether you have enough experience is to add the total number of individual calendar months your experience covers.

OVERLAPPING EXPERIENCE

The QBCC appreciates that there may be times when projects overlap. If you seek to rely on projects with overlapping experience, the QBCC may ask you to provide further evidence to help decide how your experience should be calculated.

If further material does not adequately explain the overlapping experience, then overlapping projects will not be counted separately as the two- or four-year duration will not have been met.

Example: You are a site manager working full-time for your employer on the projects below:

- Project 1 timeframe—January 2024–March 2024
- Project 2 timeframe—February 2024–June 2024

Total experience timeframe evidenced is six months.

PROJECT DURATIONS

The QBCC may require supporting material to support the amount of experience claimed for a project.

If the relevant supporting material cannot be produced to support the amount of experience claimed, the QBCC may not count the entire amount claimed or at all.

OTHER APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to meeting the technical and experience requirements, to be entitled to a licence, you must also demonstrate that you:

- are a fit and proper person to hold the licence
- satisfy the minimum financial requirements for the licence (i.e. contractor applicants only)
- can lawfully work in Queensland
- are not an excluded individual for a relevant event or a permanently excluded individual
- are not a disqualified individual
- are not a banned individual
- you do not have an unpaid judgment debt for an amount the QBCC may recover, relating to a payment made under the statutory insurance scheme.

Further information on **fit and proper person** assessments can be found on the QBCC website.

LIMITATIONS ON ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE

Experience the QBCC generally does not accept

Generally, the following types of experience are not **recognised** as they do not demonstrate sufficient responsibility for quality and compliance on a project, and are not supervised by an appropriate licensee:

- ✗ Experience that does not meet the standards of an appropriately licensed person (for example, unlawful building work)
- ✗ Unpaid experience (for example, volunteering)
- ✗ Experience gained as an owner builder or supervised by an owner builder
- ✗ Experience gained as part of a training course
- ✗ Experience supervising a single trade (e.g. leading hand carpenter only engaged to supervise and perform carpentry work)
- ✗ Experience as a trade contractor within the scope of a trade **licence** (e.g. concreter)

The table below demonstrates differences between experience of a site manager and a trade contractor.

	DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR A BUILDER-LOW RISE LICENCE	MEETS REQUIREMENTS FOR A BUILDER-LOW RISE LICENCE
RESPONSIBILITIES	✗ Specialise in a specific area of construction (e.g. plumbing, HVAC) ✗ Performs specific tasks or installations as assigned by the contractor or site manager ✗ Work on-site alongside other trades people to complete tasks according to the project timeline and specifications ✗ Seeks and takes direction from the leading contractor or site manager ✗ Not responsible for the completion of the project	✓ Oversee the entire construction project from start to finish ✓ Manage and coordinate all site activities, including scheduling, budgeting ✓ Ensure compliance with safety regulations and building codes ✓ Interpret construction plans and liaise with architects, engineers and subcontractors ✓ Resolve issues that arise during construction
SKILLS	✗ Technical proficiency in their trade ✗ Understanding of codes and regulations relevant to their trade ✗ Attention to detail and problem-solving abilities ✗ Ability to work effectively within a multi team environment	✓ Effective communication ✓ Project management and leadership ✓ Problem-solving and decision making ✓ Broad understanding of all construction aspects including codes and regulations ✓ Ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously



NOTE: If upon assessment the QBCC is not satisfied you meet the requirements, you may be requested to provide further information within a reasonable time frame. Typically, a request would be made by email, telephone call or both. Please ensure correct contact details are entered into applications.

If, after enquiries, the QBCC remains unsatisfied the requirements are met, you will receive a refusal letter outlining:

- the reasons for the decision
- your rights including allowing you to request a review of the decision through either the QBCC's Internal Review Unit or the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

Need more information?

Visit qbcc.qld.gov.au / call **139 333** / write to **PO Box 5099, Brisbane Qld 4001** /    