

BUILDER LOW-RISE APPLICATION GUIDE

INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENCE

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About this guide

This application guide for the Builder — Low-Rise is a resource for helping you understand what you need to provide to meet the technical qualification and experience requirements to hold a Builder — Low-Rise contractor or nominee supervisor licence.

Included are pathways to gain your experience, as well as helpful tips and examples on how to provide enough evidence of acceptable experience to demonstrate that you have the knowledge and skills to be entitled to hold a Builder — Low-Rise licence.

The requirements to obtain a licence outlined in this document comply with the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991* (the Act), which includes that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) must be satisfied that you meet, amongst other requirements, the technical qualification and practical experience requirements to be entitled to a contractor's or nominee supervisor's licence. The experience requirements outlined in this document comply with the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018* (the 'Regulation')¹.

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.

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

Key responsibilities:

- **Scheduling and coordination:** Builders schedule and coordinate different trades, ensuring all work is completed safely and to proper standards. They act as the Principal Contractor, the main point of contact for coordinating and supervising all trade activities during construction.
- **Managing Subcontractors:** Builders manage and supervise subcontractors such as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters.
- **Project management:** Builders ensure that all aspects of the project progress smoothly and according to the projected timeline.

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 that consists of non-structural work on a building, regardless of—
 - » the class of the building; or
 - » the gross floor area of the building.
- Prepare plans and specifications if the plans and specifications are:
 - » for the licensee's personal use, or
 - » for use in building work to be performed by the licensee personally.
- Temporarily until 2 May 2025 – 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.

1. Refer to Schedule 2, Part 4, Section 5 of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018

TIPS FOR GAINING ACCEPTABLE BUILDER LOW-RISE EXPERIENCE

In Queensland, the law requires that licensed contractors ensure building work is personally supervised and adequately supervised. Who can personally supervise building work, and how the adequacy of that supervision is determined, is found within section 43 and 43A of the Act. A licensed contractor has responsibility to ensure this supervision is undertaken by an appropriately licensed person, and for a company licensee, the nominee also has the responsibility to ensure this occurs.

WHICH PATHWAYS CAN I FOLLOW TO GET A BUILDER LICENCE?

Site supervisor preferred pathways to gain experience

There are two preferred pathways available to you for getting a builder licence. Your choice will be determined by the trade qualifications you may be completing or already hold.

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) CPC040120
- Apply for and obtain a QBCC builder—low rise site supervisor licence.
- 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 or 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 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 are the benefits of following the site supervisor pathways?

There are several benefits to following one of these pathways:

- By holding a site supervisor licence before you start supervising building work, you are lawfully gaining the experience you need to apply for your Builder low-rise licence.
- Your experience will be obtained after you have completed your qualification, which means it is easy to claim this as being Relevant Experience.

What if I do not follow the site supervisor pathways to gain my experience?

In this case, it is essential that you provide as much supporting documentation as possible to demonstrate your experience and involvement in each construction project, having regard to the broad responsibilities of a builder and the totality of the work. Things that can assist in verifying claims about projects include:

- evidence of Home Warranty Insurance (if undertaken interstate)
- copies of contracts
- building permits across different stages of the project
- copies of employment contracts and payslips
- photos, floor plans and other supporting documents.

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The technical qualifications to obtain a contractor or nominee supervisor licence type within the Builder low-rise licence class are currently:

- 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, will need to be provided to QBCC to enable the equivalency assessment.

Having this supporting information enables the QBCC to compare the relevant course content.

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.

OTHER APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the 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; and
- satisfy the minimum financial requirements for the licence (NB Contractor applicants only); and
- can lawfully work in Queensland; and
- are not an excluded individual for a relevant event or a permanently excluded individual; and
- are not a disqualified individual; and
- are not a banned individual; and
- you do not have an unpaid judgment debt for an amount the commission 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.

Experience timeframes

To apply for a Builder low-rise licence you need:

- 2 years of experience **if you have a trade qualification** in Carpentry, Bricklaying or Blocklaying (not others)
- 4 years of experience **if you do not have one of those, a trade qualification.**



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 2 or 4 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 – Jan 2024 – March 2024
- Project 2 timeframe – February 2024 – April 2024

Total experience timeframe evidenced is 4 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 experienced claimed the QBCC may not count the entire amount claimed or at all.

NOTE: Tips and pathways for how to gain acceptable experience can be found on page 4.

What experience to provide

To qualify for a Builder low-rise licence, you must provide evidence and examples of your experience. Your experience must demonstrate that you have the experience and technical skills to undertake the role and responsibilities of a licensed builder.

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

The QBCC requires your experience to be verified with supporting evidence. This evidence must show:

- that the work was undertaken
- what your roles and responsibilities were as stated in your application
- that the project details and timeframes are true and correct.


Common types of evidence include:


- Home Warranty Insurance (HWI) records
(Note: the QBCC keeps records of all HWI taken out for residential work in Queensland)
- verification by a qualified referee
- proof of employment in the stated role.

Demonstrating your experience

You must provide enough examples to clearly show that you have sufficient experience in supervising building work in all stages of construction for a Builder low-rise licence. The list below outlines the experience the QBCC expects you to demonstrate.

For each project, provide specific details describing the experience and technical skills you demonstrated across all stages to carry out the work. You can also include copies of floor plans, photos of your work on the job and other documents to support the details you provide.

 **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.**

 **NOTE: Red indicates the experience examples that are mandatory**

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 & requirements

Bushfire zones constructions/methodology & 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.

Broadly, you will have demonstrated experience in the scope of work for the Building – 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.

Other experience may be considered and this is outlined on page 10 (Other Experience Examples).

References to support your application

Who should be your referees?

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 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 personally verify the work you carried out and the competencies you demonstrated on the project.

Ideally, the licenced builder responsible for the projects in your examples would be your referee. If the licensed builder cannot provide a supporting reference, the QBCC may accept a report from another qualified person involved in the project for its full duration.

How many referees do I need?

Your work on each project should be supported by a referee report, preferably from the licensed builder who was in charge of the site. Information is used to check that the examples you have provided match what is reported by your referee to demonstrate that you meet the skills and years of experience required for a Builder low-rise licence class.

! Experience the QBCC does not accept

Due to insufficient responsibility for quality and compliance, the following types of experience are not recognised:

- ✗ Experience that does not meet the standards of an appropriately licenced 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 states the differences between the 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)	☑️ Oversee the entire construction project from start to finish
✗ Performs specific tasks or installations as assigned by the contractor or site manager	☑️ Manage and coordinate all site activities, including scheduling, budgeting
✗ Work on-site alongside other trades people to complete tasks according to the project timeline and specifications	☑️ Ensure compliance with safety regulations and building codes
✗ Seeks and takes direction from the leading contractor or site manager.	☑️ Interpret construction plans and liaise with architects, engineers and subcontractors
✗ Not responsible for the completion of the project	☑️ Resolve issues that arise during construction.
SKILLS	
✗ Technical proficiency in their trade	☑️ Effective communication
✗ Understanding of relevant codes and regulations	☑️ Project management and leadership
✗ Attention to detail and problem-solving abilities	☑️ Problem-solving and decision making
✗ Ability to work effectively within a multiple team environment	☑️ Broad understanding of all construction aspects including codes and regulations
	☑️ Ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously

What if my experience was gained before having a technical qualification?

It is preferred that experience relied upon is obtained after completion of the required technical qualification. This is because the QBCC must be satisfied that, at the time of gaining the experience, you had the necessary competencies and expertise for the experience to properly fall within the scope of work for the Builder low-rise licence (**Relevant Experience**).

These competencies and expertise are best demonstrated by holding the technical qualification prior to the experience.

In circumstances where you intend to rely on experience obtained prior to obtaining the required technical qualification, the QBCC may require further information reasonably to determine the relevance of your experience. The QBCC may consider whether you were carrying out work as an employee of an appropriately licenced contractor, the nature of that proposed work and your responsibilities in the role.

OTHER EXPERIENCE EXAMPLES

You may have experience from other kinds of construction work that you would like the QBCC to consider. You must provide extra information and documentation to support these examples and the details you provide must demonstrate your experience from site set-out to completion.

What if my experience relies on renovations, additions or similar?

Sometimes, you may have experience with renovations, additions or other scenarios that are not a new construction within classes 1-9. In these cases, you may be required to provide supporting information to demonstrate that your experience is appropriate. This may include, providing material explaining the project's complexity.

It is recommended that you do not entirely rely upon experience with renovations, additions or similar as it is necessary to adequately demonstrate that 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.

Is class 10 building experience accepted by QBCC?

Experience building class 10 structures can contribute to **some** of your experience. However, it is not recommended that you rely entirely on experience in building class 10 structures. It is critical that you supply evidence of experience across **all stages of construction** encountered within class 1 structures (see Construction Stage table above).

Experience gained when not licensed?

Unless a licensing exemption applies, you need to hold an appropriate licence for the type of building work carried out (including supervision).

For the purpose of demonstrating experience on your licence application, experience gained without a licence may be accepted, however you will be required to demonstrate, to the QBCC's satisfaction, that not only the experience stated is true and correct but that the experience was to an equivalent quality to that expected from a licensed person.

Please refer to page 5, (What if I do not follow the site supervisor pathways to gain my experience) for information on what documentation can be provided to demonstrate the experience occurred as stated.

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 story, 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?
- » Is there sufficient supporting evidence to confirm the responsible builder on site and demonstrate the information you have provided is true and correct? For example:
 - » Home Warranty Insurance records – supports that the building work took place
 - » building permits - inspections required to obtain permits at different stages assist in verifying timeframes
 - » copies of contracts - assist with verifying the builder, site and when the project commenced or will commence
 - » floor plans, photos and other supporting documents
 - » If you are unable to provide documentation evidence or Home Warranty Insurance records, 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.

References:

The QBCC checks referees to make sure they have the right qualifications and licenses 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.

Your referee's evidence will be assessed to verify:

- 🔗 Does the referee hold a QBCC licence or equivalent?
- 🔗 Does the referee hold a qualification equivalent or higher to the required qualification for the licence applying for?
- 🔗 What work did you carry out and what competencies did you demonstrate.
- 🔗 That your experience and involvement on the project aligns with your timelines.
- 🔗 How is the referee linked to the builder or site?



NOTE: If you do not provide enough experience, fail to demonstrate your experience or are missing supporting evidence or references when you apply you will receive a letter requesting you to provide additional information within 21 days.

If you fail to meet the experience requirements for the licence the QBCC may decline your application. In this instance you will receive a refusal letter outlining:

- **the reasons for the decision AND**
- **your rights 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 us on **139 333**
or write to **GPO Box 5099, Brisbane Qld 4001**

