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# **10 Ethics Interview Questions with Model Answers**

Free sample — with STAR answers and common red-flag alternatives

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**COMPETENCY**

Ethics, Rules of Conduct and Professionalism

**EDITION**

2026 Edition · Free Sample

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## INTRODUCTION

# How assessors use ethics at interview

Ethics is the only competency that every RICS APC candidate must declare at Level 3, and it is examined in every single final interview — typically for at least 10 minutes. Assessors are trained to probe ethics scenarios in a way that is deliberately uncomfortable: they want to see whether you freeze, whether you make excuses, or whether you follow the five RICS Rules of Conduct calmly and without hedging.

## The five RICS Rules of Conduct (2022)

Rule 1 — Members and firms must be honest, act with integrity and comply with their professional obligations. Rule 2 — Members and firms must maintain their professional competence and ensure services are provided by competent individuals. Rule 3 — Members and firms must provide good-quality and diligent service. Rule 4 — Members and firms must treat others with respect and encourage diversity and inclusion. Rule 5 — Members and firms must act in the public interest, take responsibility for their actions and act to prevent harm and maintain public confidence in the profession.

For every scenario we set out the question as it would be asked, a **safe model answer** (what assessors want to hear) and a **red-flag alternative** showing the kind of response that sends the panel deeper into tougher questioning. Learn the pattern, not the answers.

## MODEL ANSWERS

# The ten questions

## Q1. A long-standing client offers you two tickets to a Premier League match worth about £600. What do you do?

**Safe model answer.** I would decline politely in writing, citing my firm's gifts and hospitality policy. I would log the offer in the firm's gifts register, tell my counsellor, and check whether my firm's threshold (typically £100–£150) had been breached. The offer is too close to the client's current instruction to be accepted without risking perception of conflict under **Rule 1** (integrity) and **Rule 5** (public interest). If the client pushed back, I would explain that declining protects both of us and offer to attend a firm-hosted event instead.

### Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)

I'd probably accept because they are a long-standing client and declining could damage the relationship.

## Q2. You are asked to value a property where your firm already acts for the purchaser. What do you do?

**Safe model answer.** This is a classic Rule 3 conflict of interest. I would immediately disclose the conflict in writing to my line manager, and cease any further work on the instruction until informed written consent had been obtained from both parties. If informed consent could not be obtained or an information barrier could not be operated effectively, the firm would decline the instruction. I would cross-refer to the RICS Conflicts of Interest Professional Statement (2017) and the more recent (2023) updates before providing any advice.

### Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)

I'd carry on but make sure I don't talk to my colleagues about it. That way it stays separate.

## Q3. A client asks you to alter the valuation date on a red-book valuation so the number comes out higher. How do you respond?

**Safe model answer.** I would refuse. Changing the valuation date to achieve a higher figure would breach **VPS 1** of the RICS Valuation — Global Standards (Red Book, effective 31 January 2025), the RICS Rules of Conduct (Rule 1 and Rule 5), and potentially constitute fraud. I would escalate to my supervising RICS Registered Valuer, document the request and my response, and remind the client in writing of the basis of valuation required by the intended user. If the client withdrew the instruction I would still retain the file.

**Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)**

I'd check the market movement and if it's close, maybe adjust slightly if it keeps the client happy.

#### **Q4. You discover a colleague has been signing off building surveys without inspecting the property. What do you do?**

**Safe model answer.** Rule 5 requires me to act in the public interest and maintain public confidence in the profession. I would raise it internally first — with my counsellor and the firm's compliance lead — and give the firm a reasonable chance to investigate. If the firm failed to act, I would consider reporting to RICS Regulation, protected by the RICS Confidential Reporting (whistleblowing) policy. I would keep a dated contemporaneous note of each step.

**Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)**

I'd keep quiet — it's not my job to police other surveyors and I'd make an enemy at work.

#### **Q5. A client sends you a £250 hamper at Christmas to thank you for your work. What do you do?**

**Safe model answer.** I would thank the client, check the firm's gifts and hospitality policy (typical threshold £100 or £150), and either return the gift or declare and log it. If the gift was above the threshold but had already been opened, the firm would typically donate it to charity. Under **Rule 1**, I must be able to demonstrate that my decisions are not influenced by gifts from clients.

**Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)**

A Christmas hamper is a thank-you, not a bribe — I'd accept and not tell anyone.

#### **Q6. You realise after submission that a dilapidations schedule you signed contained an arithmetic error overstating the claim by £18,000. What do you do?**

**Safe model answer.** I would notify my supervisor immediately, draft a corrected schedule, and write formally to the other side explaining and apologising for the error. Rule 3 (good-quality and diligent service) and Rule 1 (honesty) both require prompt correction and transparency. I would check the firm's PII notification rules — most policies require notice of a circumstance that could give rise to a claim. I would then review the checking process that allowed the error through.

**Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)**

I'd wait and see if the other side spot it before saying anything.

## Q7. A client refuses to pay your final fee invoice, and your firm has their documents and a draft report. Can you withhold them until paid?

**Safe model answer.** This is about the professional lien vs. Rule 3 (diligent service) and Rule 5 (public interest). A solicitor-style lien on client papers is rare for surveyors and can easily be challenged. I would instead pursue the debt properly — a reminder, then a formal letter before action, then county court proceedings if necessary. I would continue to give the client anything they needed for statutory or safety reasons (e.g. asbestos information) and would not withhold documents in a way that could cause them harm.

### Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)

Yes, hold their file until they pay. No pay, no papers.

## Q8. You are asked to provide a reference for a former colleague you believe was dishonest at your previous firm. What do you do?

**Safe model answer.** I would either decline to act as referee, or give a factually accurate and verifiable reference limited to matters I personally observed. Under **Rule 1** I must be honest, and under Rule 4 I must treat others with respect — a factual, dated reference balances both. I would avoid opinion, would not repeat unproven allegations, and would advise the requesting firm to seek independent verification. I would keep a copy.

### Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)

I'd write a glowing reference to get them out of my life and not have the awkward conversation.

## Q9. You notice your firm has been engaging a subcontractor who has no PII cover. What do you do?

**Safe model answer.** Firms regulated by RICS must ensure adequate PII in accordance with the **RICS Rules for the Registration of Firms** and the current RICS PII requirements. I would immediately raise with my line manager and the firm's compliance lead, check the subcontract terms, and stop using the subcontractor on any current instruction until cover was evidenced. I would confirm the firm's own PII was unaffected by the subcontracting arrangement.

### Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)

It's the subcontractor's problem, not ours — we carry our own PII and that should be enough.

## Q10. What would you do if you made an ethical mistake that no one else had noticed?

**Safe model answer.** Ethics is about what you do when no one is watching. I would self-report the mistake to my counsellor and supervisor as soon as I recognised it, correct the error if possible, and reflect on what changed my judgement. Rule 5 requires me to take responsibility for my actions. This is exactly the kind of entry that should go in my CPD record, not just as hours but as a genuine reflective lesson.

**Red-flag alternative (what NOT to say)**

If nobody noticed, I'd quietly fix it and move on — no point creating drama for myself.

## USING THIS SAMPLE

## How to practise these

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- Record yourself answering each one aloud in under 90 seconds. Time it. Edit.
- Rehearse with a colleague playing the assessor. Insist they interrupt you with follow-ups — that is how the real panel behaves.
- For every answer, be able to name the relevant Rule of Conduct and one piece of RICS guidance. If you can't, you don't understand the answer yet.
- Write your own answers. These models are patterns, not scripts. Assessors spot rehearsed scripts in three sentences.

## Members get the full pack

The members' Ethics Scenario Bank contains 40 scenarios covering bribery, conflicts of interest, complaints handling, whistleblowing, AML, PII, CPD honesty, and social media conduct — with a rules-of-conduct mapping table and an assessor-style follow-up set for each. Lifetime access is £25 at [apcrevision.com](https://www.apcrevision.com).

## Sources

1. RICS Rules of Conduct (2022) — <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rules-of-conduct>
2. RICS Conflicts of Interest Professional Statement (2017) — <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/sector-standards/real-estate/conflicts-of-interest>
3. RICS Valuation — Global Standards (Red Book, effective 31 January 2025) — <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/valuation-standards/red-book>
4. RICS Confidential Reporting policy (Whistleblowing) — <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/regulation/raise-a-concern>

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## About this download

This workbook is part of the APC Revision members library — 178 articles and 13 downloads covering all 11 RICS APC mandatory competencies. Lifetime access is a one-off £25. APC Revision is a non-profit resource built by MRICS assessors and recent high achievers.

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