

# Royal Institute of British Architects

## Architects Registration Board: Consultation on the UK Adaptation Assessment September 2022

The Royal Institute of British Architects is a global professional membership body driving excellence in architecture. We serve our members and society in order to deliver better buildings and places, stronger communities and a sustainable environment. Being inclusive, ethical, environmentally aware and collaborative underpins all that we do.

The RIBA welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation – it is important that we get the UK Adaptation Assessment right.

The UK is a global hub for architecture and the profession contributes £4.8 billion to the UK economy every year. UK architects are leading exporters of high-quality design in the built environment, flying the flag for British innovation and quality across the world. RIBA Chartered Practices exported £535 million of architectural services in 2021.

Being able to recruit international talent is a key element of this success. International architects help fill regional vacancies, skill gaps, and have desirable soft skills, such as languages. Employing international talent can help boost an architecture practice's technical and design skills. A welcoming UK architecture sector is an important part of the soft power of our creative industries.

Getting the Assessment right is also key to ensuring that non-UK architects who join the Register are competent and appropriately skilled to guarantee life safety, tackle the climate emergency and boost housing supply. The Assessment must be thorough but not unduly burdensome.

### **1. Do the proposed UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures accurately and fairly deliver an assessment process which reflects our aims and objectives?**

The Adaptation Assessment somewhat delivers an assessment process that meets ARB's aims and objectives. The RIBA has some concerns, which are laid out in more detail below.

#### **The assessment criteria**

The RIBA believe the assessment criteria proposed are too broad and do not focus on UK specific issues. The test should be aligned with elements of Parts 1 – 3 that would not be covered by international education or training.

Proposals to include building regulations, procurement and contract law are welcome – these are UK specific and international architects are unlikely to have experience in these areas.



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Specifically, the Assessment should include understanding of the building regulations, for example fire safety, sustainability and accessibility. In addition, the political and legislative context in the planning system, procurement, regeneration, listed building consent and conservation areas, design codes and participatory design and their impact on the design process should be included.

However, sections proposed in the Assessment relating to clients and users seem unnecessary and burdensome. We would expect international architects to have a broad understanding of these topics if their international qualification is approved by ARB.

### **Clarity on the difference between the MRA and MOU routes**

The RIBA would like to see further clarity on who is required to undertake the Adaptation Assessment. *The “Future International Routes to Registration”* diagram indicates that if you are an individual from a country with an international MOU then that individual would need to undertake five years of study then move to the UK, work for two years and then take ARB Prescribed Part 3.

However, section 7.2 of the *New Approach to Registration of International Architects* states that countries with international MOUs will be required to take the UK Adaptation Assessment.

Clarity on the different MRA and MOU routes is essential to ensure certainty for practices when recruiting international talent.

### **3. Do you have any other comments about the proposed UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures?**

The RIBA has some concerns that as the consultation period was shorter than standard and the consultation was conducted over the summer, it may not have reached the practices that will be most impacted.