

RIBA



Royal Institute
of British Architects

Branch, Chapter and Regional Election Rules

Introduction

These Election Rules are made by the Board of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

They set out the process and criteria of the election by the membership for Branch, Chapter and Regional elections.

Reference to "Members" means individual members of the RIBA who have been admitted to the relevant category of membership of the RIBA by the qualifying date.

The qualifying date to participate in any Branch, Chapter and Regional election is ten days before the publication of the Notice of Election.

The Returning Officer for all Branch, Chapter and Regional elections to which these Rules apply will be the RIBA Elections officer.

Election Rules

1 Notice of Election

Not less than 35 days before the close of poll, notice shall be emailed to all members in the Branch, Chapter or Region and published on www.architecture.com/elections announcing the following: -

- a) The type and number of seats which are up for election;
- b) The timetable for the elections and how members may participate in them.

2 Eligibility and participation

- a) All elections shall be conducted online.
- b) Members must have a registered email address to participate in elections as candidate, proposer, seconder, assenter or voter.
- c) It is the responsibility of members to ensure that their "main address" registered with the RIBA is the one they wish to be used to identify the geographical location within which they are located to assess their eligibility to vote for any given election. The member is responsible for checking and updating their records in time. Updates must be completed before the publication of the Notice of Election.
- d) Only individuals admitted to RIBA membership as set out in the introduction shall be eligible to vote.
- e) Members are only eligible to stand as a candidate for an Office or seat to which that member would be eligible to vote.
- f) Further eligibility criteria for participation in an election is set out below according to the type of election.
- g) The Officers and members of the Branch or Chapter committee shall be elected bi-annually (during January, February and March).
- h) Regional Chairs shall be elected bi-annually (during October and November).
- i) No Officers shall hold the same office for more than two terms (four years).
- j) If any Officer ceases to hold office either by death or by resignation, the Branch or Chapter Committee or Regional Council shall have the power to elect a successor until the next scheduled election of the Branch, Chapter or Region.
- k) The decision of the Returning Officer shall be final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

3 Branch and Chapter Officers and Committee

3.1 Candidate eligibility and nomination

3.1.1 Branch or Chapter Chair

All Chartered members residing in or connected with the area covered by the Branch or Chapter shall be eligible for election as Chair.

3.1.2 Hon. Treasurer

All Chartered members residing in or connected with the area covered by the Branch or Chapter shall be eligible for election as Hon. Treasurer.

3.1.3 Hon. Secretary

All Chartered members residing in or connected with the area covered by the Branch or Chapter shall be eligible for election as Hon. Secretary.

3.1.4 Student Rep

All Student members residing in or connected with the area covered by the Branch or Chapter shall be eligible for election as Student Rep.

3.1.5 Branch or Chapter Committee

All RIBA members residing in or connected with the area covered by the Branch or Chapter shall be eligible for election to the Branch or Chapter Committee. The number of seats available will be set out in the Notice of Election.

Candidates can nominate themselves by submitting nomination papers using the online form set out in the Notice of Election and on www.architecture.com/elections by the deadline published on the Notice of Election.

The elements required to complete your nomination form are in the Branch, Chapter and Regional Elections Guidance Notes on www.architecture.com/elections.

3.2 Electorate

The electorate for each role shall comprise of:

3.2.1 Branch or Chapter Chair

The electorate shall comprise all current Chartered members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Branch or Chapter.

3.2.2 Hon. Treasurer

The electorate shall comprise all current Chartered members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Branch or Chapter.

3.2.3 Hon. Secretary

The electorate shall comprise all current Chartered members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Branch or Chapter.

3.2.4 Student Rep

The electorate shall comprise all current Student members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Branch or Chapter.

3.2.5 Branch or Chapter Committee

The electorate shall comprise all current members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Branch or Chapter. The number of seats available will be set out in the Notice of Election.

3.3 Term of Office

As set out in 2(i) above, the person elected shall hold office for two years and cannot hold the same office for more than two terms (four years).

3.4 Duties

The duties of the Branch or Chapter Chair are set out in the role description published on our website, www.architecture.com/elections.

4 Regional Chairs

4.1 Candidate eligibility and nomination

- 4.1.1 All Chartered members residing in or connected with the Region shall be eligible for election as Regional Chair.

Candidates can nominate themselves by submitting nomination papers using the online form set out in the Notice of Election and on www.architecture.com/elections by the deadline published on the Notice of Election.

The elements required to complete your nomination form are in the Branch, Chapter and Regional Elections Guidance Notes on www.architecture.com/elections.

4.2 Electorate

The electorate shall comprise all current Chartered members of RIBA on the electoral register of the area covered by the Region.

4.3 Term of Office

As set out in 2(i) above, the person elected shall hold office for two years and cannot hold the same office for more than two terms (four years).

4.4 Duties

The duties of the Regional Chair are set out in the role description published on our website, www.architecture.com/elections.

5 Declaration

Each candidate must declare the following as part of their nomination form:

- a) If elected, they are willing to serve in the role for which they are standing.
- b) That they will adhere to the Branch, Chapter and Regional Election Rules.
- c) Any sponsorship (including financial support and services in-kind) from their practices or colleagues employed or engaged by those practices to participate in this process; and any commercial interests or membership of other societies, institutes, political parties or other bodies that might be relevant if elected.

6 Election Statement

Every candidate must submit with their nomination forms standard biographical details, an up-to-date portrait photograph of themselves and an election statement. The content of the statement is at the candidate's discretion. Defamatory or unlawful content, or damaging or inaccurate or unsubstantiated remarks about any other candidates or RIBA, its staff, its volunteers, its members or its suppliers and business contacts in any form, whether within the elections statement, during hustings, during campaigning or on social media or in press articles, during the elections period are strictly prohibited. If necessary, the Returning Officer will adjudicate on contentious or erroneous content before publication, and the candidate may be allowed to make deletions or revisions.

By submitting a nomination form, candidates agree to be subject to social media screening by a third party appointed to that role by the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer shall be final, and no correspondence will be entered into. The use of prohibited content in election material and during the election process will be considered a breach of these Elections Rules, a matter of professional conduct. The Returning Officer shall refer the matter to the RIBA Professional Standards team.

7 Validity of Nominations

For a candidacy to be valid, the nomination forms, declarations, election statement and an up-to-date portrait photograph of yourself must all be received by the deadline as published by the Returning Officer. If a nomination is incomplete or deemed unpublishable at the end of the nomination period, the candidacy will be invalid. No late submission of any required document will be accepted beyond 12.00 noon, UK time, the day after the close of nominations. No new candidates will be accepted during this time.

8 Returning Officer

The Returning Officer shall determine the timetable for the election. Should a decision be necessary on the validity or acceptability of a nomination or any other aspect of the conduct of an election, it shall be taken by the Returning Officer. That decision shall be final and binding, and no correspondence shall be entered into.

9 Unopposed and Unfilled Roles

If the number of candidates matches the number of roles available, those candidates shall be deemed to have been elected to the role for which they have been nominated. If there are insufficient candidates for the roles available, the unfilled seats shall remain vacant. A vacant role may be filled by any ten members from the Branch Chapter or Region acting together and writing to the Returning Officer elections@riba.org requesting the role be filled by an election, with the successful candidate serving for the unexpired portion of the original term of office.

10 Contested elections

If there are more candidates than vacancies in any election, the Returning Officer shall announce the candidates on the RIBA website, arrange for an online ballot amongst the members eligible to vote and may authorise an independent election services provider to conduct the poll on behalf of the RIBA.

11 Conduct

Every candidate's conduct and communications in an election (including their election statements and any social media communications) shall comply with the Branch, Chapter and Regional Election Rules. The Returning Officer shall have the power to reprimand, caution or disqualify any candidate who does not meet these expectations. Any such decision made by the Returning Officer shall be final and binding.

12 Campaigning

- a) Candidates seeking election cannot declare or publish themselves as a candidate for election until they have received confirmation of their nomination being accepted by the Returning Officer.
- b) Any candidate using any other RIBA assets is responsible for ensuring they have the correct membership category and use those assets in line with the relevant licence or requirements.
- c) Candidates must not accept commercial sponsorship to support their campaigns but may receive support from their practices or colleagues. The value of this support, either in cash or in kind (such as hours/days spent in support), must be disclosed on the election return form.
- d) Within ten working days of the close of poll, a candidate must make and submit a return of election expenses, setting out the amount of expenditure that they have spent in cash or kind and confirming that-
 - d.1 They have complied with the Branch, Chapter and Regional Election Rules and any Guidance Notes published on www.architecture.com/elections; and
 - d.2 They have not taken commercial support to support their campaign, which could be interpreted as seeking advantage or influence.

13 Ballots and Voting

- a) All ballots will be held online only.
- b) Candidates' election statements shall be available on www.architecture.com/elections and the voting platform.
- c) Candidates shall be ordered alphabetically within each category on the ballot paper.
- d) For Branch and Chapter elections, voting shall be "First Past the Post."
- e) For Regional elections, voting shall be a "Single Transferable Vote."
- f) An elector can only vote once in each election.

14 Counting and Results

- a) Having counted the ballots and determined the results, the electoral services provider shall provide the following information to the Returning Officer:
 - i. the total number of ballots returned;
 - ii. the number of ballots declared void;
 - iii. the quota required to be elected;
 - iv. the number of first-count votes for each candidate;
 - v. the number of counts required to determine a complete result;
 - vi. the final number of votes retained or held by each candidate elected; and
 - vii. the candidate or candidates elected.
- b) If the result is tied, the Returning Officer shall determine the successful candidate by tossing a coin.

- c) As soon as the election results are available, the Returning Officer shall formally declare them on www.architecture.com/elections and email members in the Branch, Chapter or Region. The results shall be final and binding on all parties.

15 Disputes relating to the conduct of the poll

If a dispute arises about the conduct of any election, the Returning Officer shall decide whether the poll has been appropriately conducted per these Rules. Such decision shall be final and binding, and no correspondence shall be entered into.

16 Conduct Rules, including the use of Social Media

Candidates must not:

- a) breach the Branch, Chapter and regional Election Rules;
- b) publish or circulate offensive, demeaning, defamatory or untrue comments about individuals;
- c) make unsubstantiated allegations which are damaging to the reputation and integrity of the RIBA, its staff, volunteers, members and business contacts;
- d) disclose confidential information you are privy to during your communications or association with the RIBA.

Candidates must:

- a) act in the best interests of the RIBA and not place your personal interests ahead of those of the organisation;
- b) be respectful of others;
- c) remember that you are legally responsible for anything you publish, and this, in turn, can be quoted or published by the media;
- d) respect the decisions of the Returning Officer

For these Rules, social media and networking sites can include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+, blogs and forums.

Candidates are accountable and legally responsible for their actions and activities when using social networking sites. They are expected to observe the standards, conduct and behaviour outlined in the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct, Policies, Regulations, Charter and Byelaws, as well as national legislation such as the Data Protection Act and Equality Act, at all times.

The RIBA has no direct control over the information candidates disclose online or on social media. Candidates must respect the need to protect the reputation of the RIBA, their own privacy, the privacy of staff, volunteers, members and business contacts of the RIBA, and the confidentiality of RIBA information or data in any communications or statements they make available to members of the general public (including private accounts and closed or secret groups).

Candidates must not:

- a) engage in activities on the internet or social media, both personally and professionally, which might bring the RIBA into disrepute;
- b) make any politically sensitive statements;
- c) disclose private or confidential information without prior written consent from the individual to which the information relates and from whom the information from obtained (if different);

- d) use the internet or social media to disparage staff or volunteers or members, or business contacts of the RIBA in any way;
- e) imply RIBA endorsement of personal views and views that the RIBA would not wish to be associated with; nor
- f) violate the terms and conditions of the social media network being used.
- g) Candidates must be respectful of others and courteous at all times.

17 Complaints Regarding Elections

RIBA is committed to providing a high-quality service to all of our members. When something goes wrong, please tell us about it. This will help us address what has gone wrong and improve our standards.

If you have a complaint, don't hesitate to contact us in writing with the details. To help us undertake our investigation, it will be helpful if you can provide as much detail as possible at this stage.

You must provide your name, address and RIBA Membership No. We will not deal with anonymous complaints. In addition, any complaints that are considered to be vexatious or of a repeat nature will not be considered.

What will happen next?

- a) We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within three working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this document.
- b) We will then investigate your complaint. This will usually involve passing your complaint to the Returning Officer, who will carry out a review. If the complaint relates to the actions of the Returning Officer, the matter will be referred to another member of the RIBA Governance Team for review. If the complaint relates to the actions of any staff members, the matter will be referred to their line manager for review.
- c) Within 14 working days of sending you the written acknowledgement, you will receive details of the initial investigation into your complaint. We will allow you to comment or provide us with any further information.
- d) We will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint within 28 working days of sending you the written acknowledgement. The level of detail included in our written responses will be at our sole discretion, taking into account the nature of your complaint, the individuals involved, the need to process personal data and all other relevant circumstances, including any legal or other advice we may have received.
- e) If you are still unsatisfied at this stage, you should contact the President, who will further review the decision or arrange for someone unconnected with the matter to do so. If the original complaint was made against a member of staff, you should contact the Chief Executive, who will undertake a further review of the decision or arrange for someone unconnected with the matter to do so.
- f) We will write to you within 14 working days of reviewing the decision, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. This decision shall be final.
- g) Please send your complaint by email to the Elections/AGM Officer at elections@riba.org.uk