
RIBA Regulation of Architects Policy Note

February 2022

The Royal Institute of British Architects champions better buildings, stronger communities and higher environmental standards through the practice of architecture and our 40,000 members. We provide the standards, training, support and recognition that put our members – in the UK and overseas – at the peak of their profession. With government and our partners, we work to improve the design quality of public buildings, new homes and new communities.

Overview

- 1. The RIBA is a global institute that represents the international status and reach of the UK architecture profession and the worldwide recognition and relevance of the RIBA's education and practice standards.**

- 2. The RIBA is an acknowledged world leader in:**

Culture – architectural collections and library, architecture awards – student, national, international and the Royal Gold Medal.

Education – the RIBA has developed a framework for architectural education which has had worldwide influence, setting the pattern throughout the Commonwealth, and through direct validation of courses at fifty international schools and the delivery of the validation service of the International Union of Architects. The RIBA sees building on this work to make education more accessible and affordable and relevant to the profession as a high priority.

Practice – setting global carbon standards for RIBA members and architects around the world, delivering Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses nationally and internationally, and developing a comprehensive competency framework for education and practice – set out in *The Way Ahead*.

Lobbying and Public Affairs – engaging with UK Government and international standards setting bodies on the regulatory framework for architectural practice and the construction industry.

- 3. The Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the RIBA need to work together to avoid duplication and inefficiency – in education and practice.**
- 4. The ARB needs to work with the RIBA on behalf of UK architects to establish mutual recognition of RIBA qualifications.**

Developments in the Regulation of Architects

5. There are four important pieces of current work in relation to the Regulation of Architects in the UK:

Government Review (DLUHC) of Architects Regulation

Building Safety Bill (introducing new ARB powers on competence)

Professional Qualifications Bill (introducing new ARB powers on recognition of international qualifications)

New RIBA education and professional development framework, set out in ***The Way Ahead***

Key issues

6. A number of key issues have been identified by the RIBA:

RIBA and UK architecture – maintaining the status and recognition of the RIBA as a global standard and brand for UK architecture

The case for **regulation of function** and the definition of reserved activities

Enhancing competency

A fair and efficient ARB disciplinary process

An accessible and inclusive profession

The RIBA and UK architecture – a global standard and brand

7. RIBA and UK architecture is a global standard and brand which should not be undermined by developments in regulation.

Collaboration between the ARB and RIBA is important to avoid duplication and inefficiency.

ARB's current proposals for education and CPD will result in prescriptive, inflexible and expensive parallel systems to RIBA validation and CPD systems.

ARB should prescribe the RIBA's qualification, providing a system level route to registration for graduates of UK and international schools of architecture validated by the RIBA.

ARB should certify the RIBA CPD scheme for compliance with its requirements.

The case for regulation of function and reserved activities

- 8. In much of the world certain tasks for which an architect is educated and trained may only be carried out by a person qualified to practice.**

In the UK there are no restricted architectural activities, creating confusion about the status of individuals and companies, the nature of an architect's services and the value of registered architect status.

Regulation is important for safety and welfare reasons and the wider social and environmental impact.

There is a strong public interest that the professional function of the architect should be regulated and key activities reserved to qualified and competent professionals – similar to the Legal Services Act.

Enhancing competency

- 9. There is a need to enhance competency in the profession through pre-qualification education and professional development – including health and life safety and climate literacy – as set out by the RIBA in *The Way Ahead*.**

Both RIBA and ARB recognise the need for greater rigour in monitoring professional development and the maintenance of competence.

ARB has a duty to safeguard entry to the profession, but a newly qualified architect cannot reasonably be expected to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that develop with years of practice experience.

The entry point to the register cannot realistically be set at anything higher than the acceptable minimum standard.

A fair and efficient ARB disciplinary process

- 10. ARB's disciplinary processes need to be fairer and used more effectively against those falsely purporting to be architects.**

ARB's Investigations Panel should be impartial, in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The role of the ARB Case Presenter must be redefined, including a requirement for the Case Presenter's review and presentation of the evidence to be balanced and fair.

It is essential that architects are able to be represented at ARB Hearing Panels, with no restriction on the qualifications of such representatives.

An accessible and inclusive profession

11. Initial education and training needs to be flexible and affordable to support access, inclusion and diversity.

ARB should without delay implement the recommendations of the 2017 Government Periodic Review of the ARB and Architects Regulation to:

- explore opportunities to streamline the prescription of qualifications;
- consider a reduced frequency of renewing prescription and monitoring where qualifications are unchanged;
- consider the flexibility in length and structure of qualifications

Architects' education must retain the underpinning theoretical knowledge base and design skills of architecture as an academic, theoretical and technical discipline and design-based profession.

ARB should remove the requirement for a retrospective Part 1 Examination for those who have already achieved a recognised Part 2 (or Part 2 and Part 3) – it is an unnecessary barrier and financial burden and does not support diversity and inclusion.

The RIBA's Education Review identified that the test of professional competence (or Part 3) could be completed at the culmination of the Part 2, as already adopted in the apprenticeship model.

ARB must establish a clear and efficient process for signing mutual recognition agreements with the UK's trading partners.