Guidance for Institutions on Fire & Life Safety Design

Introduction

1. Fire and life safety design issues are of central importance to the work of an architect. Anyone engaging an architect is entitled to expect that the appointed individual will have the competence to provide them with a service that will keep them safe, regardless of the type or scale of the project. Fire and life-safety design is one of the key risks that architects must be competent to manage as part of successful, safe building delivery.

2. ARB has decided that, as the UK statutory body responsible for setting the standards of entry to the Register of Architects, it should take action to ensure that all of those admitted to the Register have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required to design safe buildings for people to live and work in.

The Criteria for the Prescription of qualifications in architecture

3. The ARB/RIBA Criteria for the Prescription/Validation of Qualifications in architecture (the Criteria) are a succinct but comprehensive outline of the knowledge and skills necessary for registration as an architect and membership of the RIBA. The Part 1 and Part 2 Criteria cover the knowledge, understanding and skills that must be achieved by the end of formal university education. The Part 3 Criteria cover the additional skills and knowledge that must be demonstrated in a final examination after a prescribed period of professional experience before entry to the Register of Architects.

4. ARB is currently undertaking a significant review of the competencies required for joining and remaining on the Register but, given the urgent need for concerted action to ensure that future architects are competent to design buildings that are safe for people to use, it is necessary to issue supplementary guidance to support the interpretation of the existing Criteria at all levels that cover an architect's responsibilities in relation to fire and life safety design.

Who does this guidance apply to?

5. This guidance is important for all institutions offering ARB-prescribed qualifications at all levels as well as those that are considering applying for prescription. It is also likely to be of interest to students/candidates and apprentices who are undertaking ARB-prescribed qualifications.

When does the guidance become effective?

To be confirmed

Status of Guidance

6. This Guidance sets out the subject material that institutions should ensure that students/candidates have covered at Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 levels. They are not in addition to the existing Criteria at each level but a further explanation as to the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours expected of students/candidates to design buildings that are safe for people to use.

7. Institutions should demonstrate, through the prescription process, how their existing or proposed qualification/s addresses the subject matter set out in Schedule 1 to a standard commensurate with the level of award.

How will ARB use the guidance within its prescription process?

8. There is no assumption that this guidance will be used as a curriculum in itself. Currently institutions routinely map their qualifications (learning outcomes/assessments) to ARB's Criteria as a means of demonstrating to the ARB that the Criteria at the requisite level are being addressed when seeking prescription for the first time or are seeking to renew prescription. ARB understands that institutions will already be taking these issues seriously and share the objective to give students the best possible knowledge and skills in this important area of architectural practice.

9. On the basis that this is guidance, institutions should include the areas outlined below within their mapping material. Alternatively, institutions may provide a narrative outlining how the areas outlined below will be met by those successfully achieving their qualification/s.

Evidence

10. With reference to evidencing that the guidance has been covered by the prescribed learning outcomes/assessments, institutions should apply the same principles as they would with all the General and Professional Criteria and Graduate Attributes.

11. For example, at Part 1 and Part 2, to meet the requirements of GC1.0 'The ability to create architectural designs that satisfy aesthetic and technical requirements'

evidence should be included of knowledge and understanding of the principles of Fire and Life Safety Design:

i) in Comprehensive design projects (GC1.2); and
ii) that integrates and satisfies….the needs of the user' (GC1.3)

at the appropriate level as well as in other relevant assessments such case studies, assignments and studio design projects to suit the teaching and learning strategies of the school.

12. With reference to the Graduate Attributes, evidence should be included to meet all the Graduate Attributes at the appropriate level of Part 1 and Part 2.

13. With reference to the Professional Criteria at Part 3, to meet the requirements of all the Professional Criteria evidence should be included of the principles, and where relevant, the application of Fire and Life Safety Design at the appropriate level in relevant assessments such as assignments and case studies.

Guidance to institutions on fire and life safety design

Qualifications should address:

A ETHICS and PROFESSIONALISM

FA1 The importance of an ethical approach; that the health and safety of building constructors, users and the public must always outweigh any other obligations of an architect

FA2 The potential health and safety consequences of poor design decisions

FA3 The significance of maintaining competence, and challenging the competence of others

B MANAGING RISK

FB1 The principles of risk management

FB2 The key pieces of legislation and regulations relating to health & safety

FB3 The risks and benefits of different procurement routes

FB4 The role of the architect within the design team

C FIRE & LIFE SAFETY DESIGN

FC1 The science of fire, smoke generation and spread

FC2 Design principles to minimise the risk of smoke and fire

FC3 Means of escape in case of fire

FC4 Appropriate access to buildings and facilities for emergency services

FC5 The significance of product specification to fire safety and performance as part of a construction system

FC6 Protecting building users from hazards during use and maintenance