

# Examination Procedures

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### Contents

Prescribed Examinations – Parts 1 and 2: ARB Procedures  
Appendix 1 – Re-Examination and Referral to Lead Examiner  
Appendix 2 – Appeals

## Annex A of original paper

### 1. Introduction

The Architects Act 1997 states in section 4(1) that a person is entitled to be registered if:

- (a) he holds such qualifications and has gained such practical experience as may be prescribed;
- or
- (b) he has a standard of competence which, in the opinion of the Board, is equivalent to that demonstrated by satisfying paragraph (a)."

Section 4(2) of the Act states:

"The Board may require a person who applies for registration on the ground that he satisfies subsection (1)(b) to pass a prescribed examination in architecture."

The Act places on the Architects Registration Board (the Board or ARB) the responsibility for prescribing the qualifications and practical training experience required for entry to the UK Register of Architects. The Board also has a duty to ensure that those who apply for registration without prescribed qualifications have an equivalent standard of competence to those who enter the Register with prescribed qualifications. For those without prescribed qualifications from Schools of Architecture, the Board prescribes examinations, under section 4(2) of the Act, at two key stages – commonly called Part 1 and Part 2.

The Board publishes criteria which set out the minimum levels of knowledge, understanding and ability that students of architecture must acquire at each stage. These criteria form the basis upon which the Board makes decisions as to whether or not qualifications from Schools of Architecture can be prescribed. The same criteria must also be met at each stage by all those who pass the Board's prescribed examinations. The criteria are organized in two sections, with general criteria applying to Part 1 and Part 2 as a whole and graduate attributes which describe the level differences between Part 1 and Part 2 applications.

The underlying framework for the criteria is to be found in Article 46 of the European Union Council Directive 2005/36/EC (the Professional Qualifications Directive). That Directive sets minimum requirements for the length and core areas of study for architectural qualifications across the European Union. The Board's criteria and point of entry requirements which determine who is eligible for the Board's examinations are intended to ensure that all successful candidates satisfy these requirements.

The Directive facilitates the mutual recognition of architectural qualifications across the European Union and the right of establishment and freedom to provide services across the European Economic Area. The Board is the competent authority for the Directive in the UK, and as such has responsibility for ensuring that all relevant UK professional qualifications comply with the requirements of the Directive.

The following Procedures, including the appendices, are rules of the Board made pursuant to section 23(1) of the Architects Act 1997. They set out what a candidate must do in order to be examined under section 4(2) of the Act at Parts 1 and 2 for the purposes of gaining entry to the UK Register of Architects under section 4(1)(b). In order to be eligible to be admitted to the Register, candidates must gain a prescribed Part 3 qualification and satisfy the Board's requirements for practical training.

The Procedures came into effect on 01 January 2012 and apply to all applications for examination received after 31 December 2011.

## Annex A of original paper

### 2. The Procedures for Examination

#### 2.1 Principles

- 2.1.1 The material upon which candidates will be examined will be:
- A Comparative Matrix stating where and how the candidate believes the Supporting Material demonstrates compliance with each of the criteria;
  - Supporting Material created by the candidate which may include design projects, technical essays and dissertations, or any other material that the candidate deems relevant;
  - The Board will specify in its guidance the maximum amount of supporting material permitted;
  - Oral Explanations on the Comparative Matrix and supporting material given by candidates at interview, if required (see paragraphs 2.6.3-2.6.5 below).
- 2.1.2 The candidate decides, and identifies explicitly and clearly in the Comparative Matrix, what supporting material is to be examined against which criteria. No supporting material will be examined which is not clearly identified in the Comparative Matrix. Supporting material will only be examined against the specific criteria identified by the candidate in the Comparative Matrix. The Comparative Matrix and the supporting material must be the candidate's own work; this requirement may need to be established in the course of the examination.
- 2.1.3 A candidate whose work is found to be plagiarized at any point in the examination process will not be permitted to continue with their application. Re-application will be at the discretion of the Registrar.
- 2.1.4 The Board will publish guidance on the nature of the Comparative Matrix. However, candidates must submit a Comparative Matrix, and supporting material, which is their own work. The Comparative Matrix must be completed on the Board's form.
- 2.1.5 No guidance or advice can be given by the Board in relation to the nature of the supporting material. However, the Board publishes guidelines as to the acceptable formats in which such material may be presented. Such guidelines are published on the Board's website.
- 2.1.6 The Board will not give any advice or guidance to candidates beyond that set out in the published guidelines.

#### 2.2 Eligibility

##### 2.2.1 Part 1

Candidates are eligible for examination at Part 1 if they have gained a non-prescribed qualification in architecture at first degree level after completing a course of at least three years' full time duration or part time equivalent.

Candidates with qualifications at first degree level with an architecture component which has been studied alongside other subjects, may also be eligible for examination. In such circumstances, the candidate must submit a completed form from the awarding institution evidencing that the candidate has been examined against requirements comparable to the Board's criteria for Part 1 in terms of the subjects covered and the levels of achievement required, and that the course of study leading to the qualification awarded was concerned principally with architecture. This must also be accompanied with a statement from the registration or professional body in the country of award (for those outside the UK only) to confirming that the qualification awarded supports access

## Annex A of original paper

to the profession of architect in that country. These documents will be reviewed and where they are found to provide the necessary level of assurance candidates will be permitted access to the examination.

Candidates who have undertaken a course of study to degree level principally in architecture, but where completion of that course of study does not lead to the award of a qualification, may be eligible for examination if they can provide a transcript from the institution confirming that they have passed all examinations, modules and assessments related to architecture.

### 2.2.2 Part 2

Candidates are eligible for examination at Part 2 if:

- (a) they have gained a non-prescribed qualification in architecture at second degree or diploma level or above after undertaking a course of study of no less than two years' full time or part time equivalent, subsequent to their being awarded a first degree qualification; or have undertaken at least five years' study if no prior qualification has been awarded; and have
- (b) either passed the Board's prescribed examination at Part 1; or have gained a qualification prescribed by the Board at Part 1.

Candidates with qualifications at second degree or diploma level or above with an architecture component which has been studied alongside other subjects, may also be eligible for examination. In such circumstances, the candidate must submit a document from the awarding institution certifying that the candidate has been examined against requirements comparable to the criteria at Part 2 in terms of the subjects covered and the levels of achievement required, and that both the course of study leading to the qualification awarded and the qualification as awarded was concerned principally with architecture. This must also be accompanied with a statement from the registration or professional body in the country of award (for those outside the UK only) to confirming that the qualification awarded supports access to the profession of architect in that country. These documents will be reviewed and where they are found to provide the necessary level of assurance candidates will be permitted access to the examination.

### 2.2.3 General Requirements

- (a) The fee for examination shall be as determined by the Board. No candidate will be eligible for examination unless they have paid the prescribed fee. The fees payable are published by the Board and are obtainable from it on application or from its website.
- (b) A scrutiny fee will apply to all applications and will be deducted from the application fee in the event that a refund is made where an application for examination at Part 1 or Part 2 is found not to meet the Board's eligibility requirements.
- (c) Candidates whose first language is not English are required to submit a valid International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate of 6.5 or above with their application for examination.

Exemptions from the Boards IELTS requirement may be considered and candidates will be required to complete the Board's English Language Exemption Form and provide evidence as listed on the form. The Board will then decide whether or not the IELTS requirement should be dispensed. The Board's decision will be final in this respect.

- (d) Whilst candidates may submit work for examination which has been undertaken in an architect's practice, time spent in an architect's practice cannot be considered in lieu of satisfying the minimum requirements for time spent in formal study set out in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above.

## Annex A of original paper

(e) Candidates who have undertaken a course of study principally in architecture leading to either first degree level qualification or second degree or diploma level qualification, but who have not received a qualification because they failed any examination, module or assessment leading to that qualification (other than in a subject unrelated to architecture), are not eligible for examination.

Candidates who have-

- i. transferred from a course of study leading to a prescribed qualification, to an alternative course of study concluding in a non-prescribed qualification for failing to meet the necessary standard of attainment, or for failing to submit a necessary course requirement, or
- ii. received a non-prescribed qualification after following a course of study leading to a prescribed qualification for failing to meet the necessary standard of attainment, or for failing to submit a necessary course requirement,

are not generally eligible to be examined.

The Board reserves the right where it has doubt about a candidate's eligibility under 2.2.3(e) to request that the candidate obtains a statement from the head of the awarding school, or a person of equivalent responsibility, to confirm that neither subsection i. nor ii. applies to the candidate.

### 2.3 Submitting an application

2.3.1 Before dates for the examination are set, candidates must submit:

- a completed application form with the prescribed material to confirm eligibility (certificates, transcripts information about the curricular content of the course of study completed etc.)
- a completed Comparative Matrix
- the prescribed fee.

No application will be accepted unless the Comparative Matrix, all prescribed material and the prescribed fee are submitted with the application form. A full list of prescribed material will be supplied as part of the application documents

2.3.2 Candidates must not submit supporting material with the application form and the Comparative Matrix. See section 2.5 below. Supporting material submitted by the candidate with the application form will be returned to the candidate immediately it is discovered.

2.3.3 In addition to submitting a Comparative Matrix and supporting material for examination, candidates should note that they will be required to attend an interview or feedback session as part of the examination.

### 2.4 Notification of examination date

2.4.1 Available dates for examination will be listed on the application form. Candidates will identify on the form their preferred dates for examination in order of preference. Candidates should not identify dates earlier than six weeks after submission of the application form, nor later than six months after the submission date. The Board will try to allocate to candidates their first choice dates for examination, but this may not always be possible. Dates for examination will be allocated by the Board on a "first come, first served" basis. Candidates will normally be notified of the dates of examination within three weeks of the application being received and accepted by the Board. No examination dates will be allocated until the application is received and accepted.

**Annex A of original paper**

2.4.2 Candidates must notify the Board in writing within seven days of receipt of the notification of examination dates if they are unable to be examined on the allocated dates. Candidates must identify in their notification which other dates of those listed on their application form they are available to be examined. Within three weeks of receipt of this notification, candidates will then be notified of the revised dates of examination.

2.4.3 Candidates who are unable to attend on the allocated dates, and who fail to notify the Board within seven days of receipt of the notification of the examination date that they cannot attend, may forfeit the fee for examination. Complete failure to notify will always result in the candidate forfeiting the examination fee.

**2.5 Submission of supporting material**

2.5.1 Candidates must submit all supporting material by the prescribed deadline

2.5.2 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that all supporting material is clearly labeled and identifiable from the Comparative Matrix. Material which, in the opinion of the examiners, is not clearly identifiable may not be examined. Materials included together with the supporting material that are not cited in the candidate's Comparative Matrix will not be examined.

2.5.3 Supporting material must be submitted in a format which complies with the Board's guidelines. Material which, in the opinion of the examiners, does not comply with the Board's guidelines will not be examined.

2.5.4 Supporting Material which exceeds the published guidelines may not be examined in its entirety where examiners are likely to exceed the maximum time permitted for examination. Examiners will decide amongst themselves which supporting material is most relevant in these circumstances.

**2.6 The Examination**

2.6.1 The Board will appoint a pool of examiners who will be registered architects from both practice and academia. Three examiners from the pool will be chosen by the Registrar to form the examination team (henceforth the examiners) for each candidate. One examiner will lead the examiners and be responsible for ensuring that all time limits are adhered to; that the appropriate administrative work of the examiners is completed, and will act as the main point of contact between the examiners and the Board's staff. The examiners will be required to make a judgment as to whether or not they are confident that the candidate has demonstrated compliance with all the Board's criteria and graduate attributes, and will report that judgment in writing to the Registrar.

2.6.2 The examiners, in the first instance within a period of up to 60 minutes, will make a judgment as to whether or not the Comparative Matrix and supporting material demonstrate that either:

(a) all the criteria are met; or

(b) half or more of the criteria are met.

2.6.3 If the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is not considered by the examiners to meet the requirements of (a) or (b) above, the examiners will recommend that the candidate fail the examination, and the candidate will not be required to offer Oral Explanations at an examination interview, however, the examiners may make use of this time to offer feedback. The examiners will identify on the Board's form where, in relation to specific criteria, compliance has not been demonstrated, and may comment briefly on the nature of the deficiencies. Examiners may make use of this time to offer verbal feedback. Feedback will be given only in relation to the criteria which have not been met.

## Annex A of original paper

- 2.6.4 If the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is considered by the examiners to meet the requirements of (a) above, the examiners will prepare a series of questions to ask the candidate orally at the examination interview. This interview will be for a period of up to 45 minutes. The candidate's oral responses to these will form the basis of the examiners' judgment as to whether or not they can be confident that the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is derived from a sufficient understanding of all relevant matters. Candidates will be expected not merely to show familiarity with the work, but also be able to explain and justify their work.

If the candidate's response to questioning is sufficient to enable the examiners to be confident that the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is derived from a sufficient understanding of all relevant matters, then the examiners will recommend that the candidate pass the examination. If the candidate's response is insufficient, then the examiners will recommend that the candidate fail the examination.

The examiners will identify in writing on the Board's form the reasons as to why, in their judgment, the candidate's response to questioning was insufficient to enable them to be confident that the Comparative Matrix and/or supporting material was derived from a sufficient understanding of all relevant matters.

- 2.6.5 If the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is considered by the examiners to satisfy (b) above, the examiners will prepare a series of questions to ask the candidate orally at the examination interview. The responses will form the basis of the examiners' judgment as to whether or not those criteria that were not clearly met prior to interview can now be considered to have been met following the candidate's oral explanations.

The responses to questions will also form the basis of the examiners' judgment as to whether or not they can be confident that the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is derived from a sufficient understanding of all relevant matters.

If the candidate's response to questioning is sufficient to enable the examiners to be confident that all the criteria have been met, the examiners will recommend that the candidate be recognised as having passed the examination. If the candidate's response to questioning is either insufficient to enable the examiners to be confident that all the criteria have been met, and/or the Comparative Matrix and supporting material is derived from a sufficient understanding of all relevant matters, then the examiners will recommend that the candidate fail the examination.

The examiners will identify in writing on the Board's form the reasons as to how, in their judgment, the candidate failed to meet the required standard.

Where examiners do not discuss or reference any specific piece of supporting material, this does not imply that properly identified and cited material has not been taken account of as part of the examiners' deliberations.

- 2.6.6 Decisions of the examiners are made by majority in the event of disagreement between them.

## 2.7 Independent Examiners

- 2.7.1 The Board will appoint independent examiners who will be registered architects with experience of examining within United Kingdom Schools of Architecture. Independent examiners will report to the Registrar and to the Board's Prescription Committee on the following matters:

- the consistency of examiners' judgments
- the conduct of examiners and the fairness of the examination process
- the quality of the feedback offered to candidates
- the performance of candidates

## Annex A of original paper

- 2.7.2 At least one independent examiner will be present for each session of examinations. Independent examiners will sample Comparative Matrix and supporting material and will observe a selection of interviews. The extent of the samples will be at the independent examiner's discretion, but it will be extensive enough to allow the independent examiner to have sufficient confidence to comment on and confirm whether or not all candidates passing the examination have met all the criteria.
- 2.7.3 Independent examiners will not intervene in the examination of individual candidates by the examiners. However, they may report to the Registrar any concerns arising from the examination of individually named candidates, and provide advice to him or her in relation to such candidates.

### 2.8 The Registrar

- 2.8.1 If the Registrar is satisfied, taking into account the report of the examiners and any reports or advice from the independent examiner(s), that the candidate has demonstrated the required standard of competence, he or she shall notify the candidate that the relevant examination has been passed.
- 2.8.2 If the Registrar is satisfied, taking into account the report of the examiners and any reports or advice from the independent examiner(s), that the candidate has not demonstrated the required standard of competence, he or she shall notify the candidate that the relevant examination has been failed.
- 2.8.3 If the Registrar is unable to decide on the basis of the material before him or her as to whether or not the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has met all the criteria, the Registrar may consult with the Prescription Committee and may require that the candidate be re-examined. Re-examination will not normally incur payment of the prescribed fee, but this shall be at the Registrar's discretion.
- 2.8.4 Candidates will normally be notified in writing of the Registrar's decision within three weeks of the examination.
- 2.8.5 The Registrar or the Board may, in exceptional cases, be satisfied that a person is entitled to be registered, notwithstanding the fact that that person does not meet one or more of the requirements of these rules and procedures, and direct registration accordingly.
- 2.8.6 In accordance with Section 4(5) of the Act, the Registrar shall refer to the Board any application which it would be inappropriate for him or her to consider.
- 2.8.7 The Registrar or the Board may, in exceptional cases, waive any requirement of eligibility to undertake the examinations referred to in these rules.

### 2.9 The Board's Prescription Committee

- 2.9.1 The Board's Prescription Committee, on behalf of the Board, shall oversee the operation of these procedures. The Committee will:
- appoint examiners and independent examiners
  - receive reports from the independent examiners and decide on any action in response to these
  - convene appeals panels (see Appendix 2)
  - receive feedback from those affected by these procedures
  - advise the Board on any amendments required in relation to these procedures
  - and consider any other matters in relation to these procedures that the Board may request.

### 2.10 The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and others



**Annex A of original paper**

- 2.10.1 The Board's Examinations are for those who intend to register as an architect in the United Kingdom. However, passing the Board's Examinations may also be used by the RIBA and others for the purposes of deciding eligibility for membership where a candidate's qualifications are not already recognised by that body. Candidates will be made aware of this. The Board will notify the RIBA of the Registrar's decisions under 2.8.1- 2.8.2 of this procedure, where a candidate notifies the Board that they wish the RIBA to be informed of that decision.
  - 2.10.2 So that the RIBA and others can maintain their confidence in the examination process, the RIBA and others may nominate persons for appointment by the Board to its pool of examiners. Up to 50% of the Board's pool of examiners may be nominees of others.
- 2.11 Diversity
- 2.11.1 The Prescribed Examination will conform to the Board's published equality scheme.

**Annex A of original paper****Appendix 1– Re-Examination and Referral to Lead Examiner****Re-Examination**

1. In the circumstances that a candidate receives notification under section 2.8.2 that they have failed the examination, they may apply to be re-examined at any stage following receipt of the notification. No candidate shall be permitted to apply to be re-examined more than twice, unless the Registrar is satisfied that there is substantial evidence that the candidate's level of competence has materially improved since the last examination.  
Where a candidate applies to be re-examined, the application will be considered under these rules or any others which the Board may approve for that purpose at the time of application.

**Referral to Lead Examiner**

2. At Part 1 level, where candidates have met graduate attribute 1.1 and four further attributes, subject to the decision of the majority of the examiners, the candidate may be offered the opportunity of satisfying the outstanding criteria by referral to the lead examiner, who will consider a single further submission made by the candidate. Where the lead examiner finds that all the graduate attributes have then been met in accordance with 2.6.2(a), he or she will report that finding to the Registrar. Candidates eligible for referral to lead examiner at Part 1 must satisfy the outstanding criteria within 12 months following receipt of the notification of failure.
3. At Part 2 level, where candidates have met graduate attribute 2.1 and five further attributes, subject to the decision of the majority of the examiners the candidate may be offered the opportunity of satisfying the outstanding graduate attributes by referral to the lead examiner, who will consider a single further submission made by the candidate. Where the lead examiner finds that all the graduate attributes have then been met in accordance with 2.6.2(a), he or she will report that finding to the Registrar. Candidates eligible for referral to lead examiner at Part 2 must satisfy the outstanding criteria within 12 months following receipt of the notification of failure.
4. Where the lead examiner finds at a referral that the remaining criteria have not been satisfied, he or she will recommend (subject to eligibility) that the candidate be re-examined for all criteria.
5. Where time limits are specified in 2, 3 and 4 above, candidates who do not completely satisfy the outstanding criteria within the specified period, either for reasons of achievement or by failing to complete the process within the specified time, will be required to make an application for re-examination against all the criteria.
6. No candidate will be re-examined if it is found that they have submitted an Comparative Matrix and/or supporting material any part of which is not their own work.
7. No candidate will be re-examined if it is found that any part of their documentation is not genuine.

Please see separate fee schedule.

**Annex A of original paper****Appendix 2 – Appeals****1. Eligibility and Grounds for Appeal**

- 1.1 A candidate who has notification under section 2.8.2 of failure to pass the examination may appeal to the Board to review the Registrar's decision.
- 1.2 Candidates may lodge an appeal on any of the following grounds:
  - 1.2.1 Defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examination and/or examination process that had a materially adverse effect on the candidate's performance.
  - 1.2.2 Special circumstances (by way of example illness, family bereavement etc.) which were not known to the examiners at the time of examination and the candidate can show good reason why such circumstances could not have been known to the examiners at the time of the examination.
  - 1.2.3 Academic decisions made by examiners on different occasions will reflect a judgment made about a number of factors, including candidate performance, supporting documents etc. and are therefore not subject to appeal.
  - 1.2.4 Disagreement with the decision or feedback provided does not constitute grounds for appeal.

**2. Lodging an Appeal**

- 2.1 An appeal must be lodged within 30 days of notification of the failure being sent to the candidate. It should be addressed to the Chair of the Prescription Committee. The appeal must be in writing, and should include the following:
  - full details of the circumstances relevant to the ground(s) of the appeal; and
  - the reasons as to why the candidate considers that those circumstances justify the decision of the Registrar being annulled. The candidate should also enclose copies of any relevant documentation that they wish to be taken into account.
- 2.2 Supporting Material is not reconsidered at appeal and must not form part of a submission.

**3. The Chair of the Prescription Committee**

- 3.1 On receipt of the appeal, the Chair of the Prescription Committee may request such other documentary evidence/comments from the examiners, the independent examiner(s) and the Registrar as may be relevant.
- 3.2 If the Chair of the Prescription Committee is satisfied that the information provided by the candidate does not raise any of the grounds of appeal set out above, or raises any ground of appeal which is bound to fail, he/she may rule that the appeal (or any specified ground of appeal) is rejected. The reasons for the decision will be conveyed in writing to the candidate.
- 3.3 Unless the Chair of the Prescription Committee decides that the appeal is rejected, the appeal will be referred to the Board's Examination Appeals Panel. The candidate will be notified in writing that the matter is to be referred to the Appeals Panel, and will be invited to make any additional written representations for the Appeals Panel to consider. These must be received within 14 days of the notification being sent to the candidate.

## Annex A of original paper

### 4. The Board's Examination Appeals Panel

- 4.1 The Board's Appeals Panel will consist of three members of the Board, nominated by the Prescription Committee. At least one member of the Appeals Panel will be an elected member of the Board, and at least one member will be an appointed member of the Board.

### 5. The Decision of the Appeals Panel

- 5.1 If the Appeals Panel decides that the appeal should be upheld, it will recommend to the Registrar (with written reasons) that the candidate be re-examined.
- 5.2 The Registrar will consider the Appeals Panel recommendation, and may either accept it or refer the case to the next full meeting of the Board for consideration and decision.
- 5.3 If the application is one for registration and, following appeal, the Registrar remains not satisfied that a candidate is entitled to be registered, the Registrar shall, unless the candidate agrees otherwise, refer the application for registration to the Board at its next meeting.

Annex A of original paper

**6. Third Party Review**

- 6.1 Where the Board's Appeal Panel has rejected the appeal, the candidate may apply for an independent third party review of the procedure followed during the appeal on the grounds that the process set down by the Board has not been followed or that the procedure was inappropriate or inefficient.
- 6.2 An application for an independent third party review of the procedure must be made within thirty days of the written notification of the appeal not being successful. In the event of a dispute, the application for a review will be considered as properly lodged if the candidate can demonstrate that it was posted within 30 days of the notification of the decision.
- 6.3 Upon receipt of such an application, the Registrar will appoint an independent third party ("the Reviewer") who will conduct a review of the procedure in accordance with the Terms of Reference laid down by the Board, available on request from the Secretariat.
- 6.4 The Reviewer will submit a report to the Registrar who will send it to the Panel and to the candidate within the timescale specified. The Panel may consider its content and decide whether to:
  - (a) review its decision in the light of any deficiency in its procedure (where it has the power to do so).
  - (b) take no further action, giving reasons to the Registrar and the candidate.