

Open session

Board meeting: 19 October 2022

Agenda item: 8

Subject: Development of International Routes to Registration - Proposed Procedures for the UK Adaptation Assessment

Action: For Decision

Purpose

To consider the consultation report on the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures and approve the Procedures.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- i. Notes the outcomes of the consultation and the responses of the Executive, and agrees that the outcome document (Annexe A) should be published on the ARB website; and
- ii. Agrees the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures (Annexe B), which will form part of the new international routes for registration.

Annexes

Annexe A – Consultation outcomes and the Executive’s responses to these

Annexe B – The UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures

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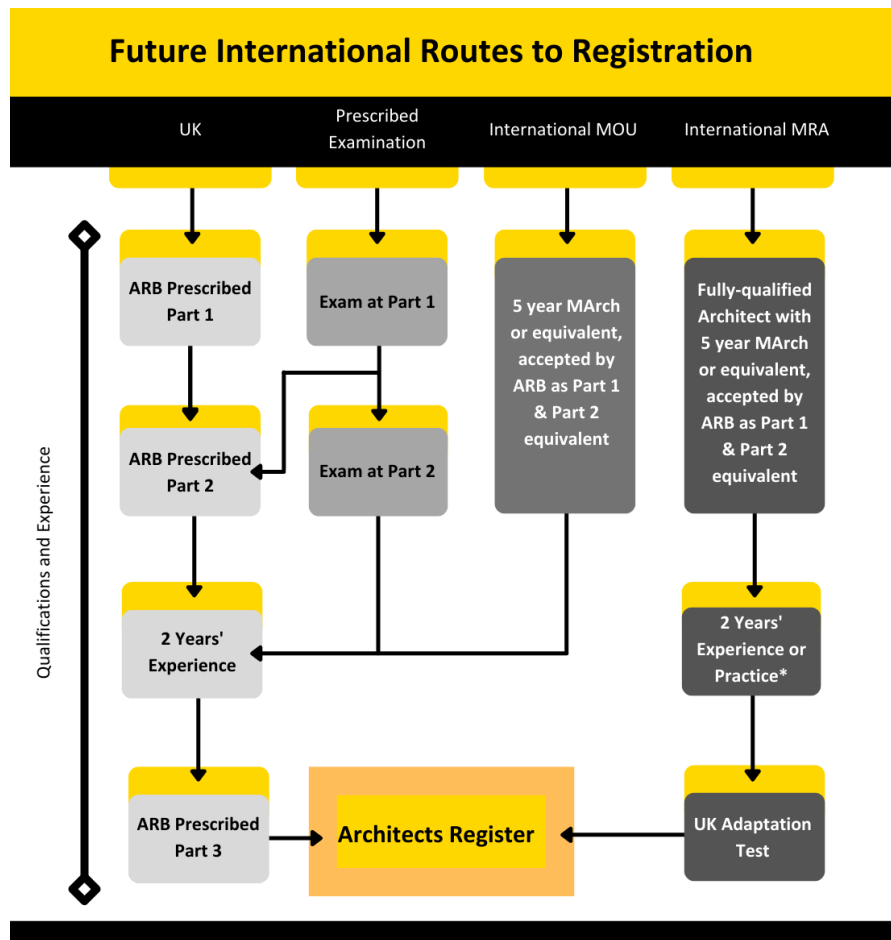
1. Open Session


This item will be taken in open session.


2. Background and Key points

2.1. In October 2021, the Board issued a consultation about the new approach it wished to take in relation to the registration of internationally qualified architects. The consultation outlined the proposed new international route which included the proposal that ARB should recognise international qualifications through setting up Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with international counterpart organisations. Following the consultation and taking the consultation feedback into account, the Board agreed the framework for the new routes at its meeting in March 2022.

2.2. The new international route together with existing routes for context will be as follows



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- 2.3. A process for reviewing a counterpart organisation's registration and accreditation requirements and determining whether they are equivalent to ARB's has been established and continues to evolve. MRAs/MOUs will primarily operate at two levels initially. One involving the recognition of equivalent qualifications so that individuals who are seeking to register as architects then complete the final stages of their training and registration in the partner country; the other involving the recognition of qualifications required for registration, so that individuals who are registered in a partner country can then register in the other. The new route also includes a requirement for all internationally trained architects to undertake a UK Adaptation Assessment before they enter the UK Register.
 - 2.4. The UK Adaptation Assessment has been developed based on our learning from international counterparts and with assistance and input from independent expert advisers. We have also used our experience of running the Prescribed Examination process. Whilst our intention has been that the process will provide assurance that internationally trained individuals are competent to join the UK Register, we are also seeking to develop a process that is proportionate, supportive and focusses only on UK-specific requirements that an architect practicing in the UK will need to be aware of and understand. All other competencies will be determined through the due diligence processes that we undertake to establish the MRA/MOU.
 - 2.5. At its meeting on 20 July 2022, the Board agreed to issue the draft UK Adaptation for a six week consultation period to allow any interested parties the opportunity of providing any representations they wished to make in relation to the document.
 - 2.6. The consultation was issued on 29 July 2022 and closed on 9 September 2022. A total of 23 responses were received through our Citizen Space website. A table summarising the consultation responses and our response to these can be found at **Annexe A**.
 - 2.7. A range of feedback was received in response to the consultation. We noted several points that we will carefully monitor as part of the pilot of the process that we will be undertaking later this year, such as: the assessment criteria; language requirement; and the robustness of the interview process and associated application documents. We may need to make adjustments to these areas, as well as others, following the pilot. We will also ensure that we monitor these areas closely during the first six months of operation and look carefully at these components of the Adaptation Assessment when we review the process.
 - 2.8. One respondent raised a question about the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria and queried whether they were sufficiently broad in scope to cover the requirements for practice within the UK. The Executive will be pilot testing the UK Adaptation Assessment before it is put into operation and we will also be reviewing the operation of the new route six months after it has been operating. This will provide us with further opportunities to seek feedback from our advisers as well as other




stakeholders on any adjustments that we may need to make to the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria.

- 2.9. A number of respondents made comments regarding the fee that would be charged for the UK Adaptation Assessment. This point is covered below in the resource implications section of this paper.
- 2.10. The Board is asked to consider Annexes A and B and approve them for publication on ARB's website. The new UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures will become effective once the revised legislation becomes effective and once the new international routes are opened. Whilst the legislative timetable is beyond our control, we currently anticipate that the new international routes will open in the second quarter of 2023.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1. The costs of developing the new international route to date have mainly been covered by the grant received from the MHCLG/DLUHC for work undertaken pursuant to the UK's exit from the EU. Although this grant expired on 31 March 2022, we have secured the carryover of the unclaimed funding (£60K) to the 2022/2023 financial year so that we can continue to utilise it. We have made some provision within our 2022 budget for the additional work that needs to be carried out to establish the new international routes.
- 3.2. The UK Adaptation Assessment will operate on a cost recovery basis once it has been established, which is the basis upon which we operate all other routes to registration. This means that all costs associated with the route, including the development and maintenance of MRAs/MOUs will be recovered from applicants making use of it. The Board is due to consider the fee for the UK Adaptation Assessment at its meeting of 19 October 2022. Additional registration fees will then apply after the assessment has taken place and where an applicant has been notified of a successful outcome. Similarly, outgoing UK applicants who will seek to make use of international agreements will require certification to be issued by ARB to confirm that their qualifications are in scope, if applicable. Again, the Board will be considering the fee for the certificates it issues at its meeting of 19 October 2022. Given that this is a new initiative and noting that the demand for the new international routes is difficult to anticipate, we will need to keep the fees for both the UK Adaptation Assessment and the associated certificates under review, particularly during the first six to twelve months of operation.
- 3.3. When commencing the operation of the new international routes, we will need to make use of existing administrative resources and technology, which will mean that there is a certain amount of manual logging, recording and tracking of applications required initially. Our objective is that the new route will be integrated into the new



systems being put in place as part of the ongoing transformation process. Whilst efficiencies will be made by automating processes after the transformation project is completed, there are likely to be costs associated with integrating the new route into our transformation project. Transformation costs are being considered separately as part of that planned expenditure.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1. It is imperative that the Board's rules and procedures align with the relevant legislation. Any lack of alignment could cause issues in terms of ARB's ability to deliver its statutory functions and lead to poor governance arrangements. Developing clear and transparent procedures and processes will ensure that the organisation and the Board can continue to operate under the Act
 - 4.2. The design and implementation of the new routes to registration are not without risks and whilst the Executive has significant experience of operating the mutual recognition agreement that previously existed between the UK and the EU, as well as other processes for deeming qualifications equivalent, negotiating and establishing new agreements with international counterparts and the running of the new UK Adaptation Assessment has required the team to develop new skills. To mitigate the risk in this area, the Executive has been working with independent expert advisers to ensure all relevant issues are identified and covered before the new international routes become operational. The Executive will also be piloting the UK Adaptation Assessment this Autumn to ensure that any operational issues can be resolved before the new route is introduced. Furthermore, a review of the UK Adaptation Assessment process will commence after the first six months of operation to ensure that it is operating appropriately.
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5. Communication

- 5.1. The Board is asked to note that when it is establishing or updating its rules, the Architects Act 1997 requires that the relevant documents are published to provide the opportunity for representations to be made. The Act does not specify the method of publication nor the length of time any proposed updated should remain available when published. The Board may determine this. At its meeting of 20 July 2022, the Board agreed to make the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures (which have the status of rules of the Board) available on its website for a period of six weeks. We alerted people to the consultation through direct contact with stakeholders, e.g., the RIBA, Schools of Architecture, our social media channels and ARB Insight.
- 5.2. We are already working closely with ARB's Policy and Communications Department and our international counterparts in order to prepare for the launch of the new international routes and the signing of the initial MRAs/MOUs, to ensure that all

those who may benefit from them are aware that they are in place, and have access to information about the application process.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1. As our principals and approach to the development of the new international route have been evolved, we have taken equality, diversity and inclusion issues into account. We hope through our ongoing and constructive engagement with partners in different countries we are taking proportionate and appropriate steps to uphold standards and quality.
 - 6.2. We will need to monitor the impact of the introduction of the new UK Adaptation Assessment and ensure that our work in this area supports our ambitious goals around equality and diversity. With this in mind, and as noted above, we plan to commence a review of the UK Adaptation Assessment process after the first six months of its operation to ensure that this is the case.
 - 6.3. We will also take into account our planned review of the Prescribed Examination and consider any learning from that process, particularly in relation to the impact on equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - 6.4. We note that a number of respondents stated they felt that the UK Adaptation Assessment fee would act as a barrier to users of the route if set at a high level. We will monitor this after the fee is set and as individual MRAs and MOUs are signed and operationalised, so as to provide the Board with sufficient information to weigh up its position on fees against any equality groups who may be impacted.
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7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- i. Notes the outcomes of the consultation and the responses of the Executive, and agrees that the outcome document (Annexe A) should be published on the ARB website; and
 - ii. Agrees the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures (Annexe B), which will form part of the new international routes for registration.
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Development of ARB's UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures

Key points which arose from our consultation

Background

In October 2021, we issued a [consultation document](#) setting out our approach, including our aims and objectives, our principles and our proposed decision making process that we intend to use when developing International Routes to Registration. In order to take forward our work in this area, we have subsequently been working on a set of Procedures, which are Rules of the Board, which set out in detail how we expect to implement and deliver the new International Routes to Registration. This consultation was launched in late July 2022 and ran until early September 2022. We notified key stakeholders about the consultation document, which was available on our website, and also promoted it through our social media channels. We received 23 responses through our online consultation website, and one response by email in the form of an attached narrative. Of the 23 responses we received, one was on behalf of an organisation and 22 were from individuals. Eight individuals gave permission for their responses to be published in full; ten individuals gave permission to publish their responses anonymously and five individuals did not provide their permission for their responses to be published at all.

Those responding

Of those responding, eight indicated that they were Registered Architects, either in the UK or overseas, the remainder of the responses from those in other categories were all three or fewer.

Of the 23 responses, 14 indicated that they were considering joining the Register through them, two indicated that they might employ others who could join the Register through them and seven had another interest. Of those with another interest, three were overseas architects with an interest in the new route, two were UK architects aspiring to make use of the route to register overseas and one noted an interest in the diversification of routes. Any responses to this consultation which were not received through our Citizen Space website have been considered and referred to in the key points, but have not been factored into any statistics included throughout the text below.

We have set out a summary of the key points which arose from our consultation.

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

We received 22 responses to this question, 16 either strongly agreed or agreed, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed and three either disagreed, strongly disagreed or did not answer the question.

One respondent felt that the procedures only went somewhat towards delivering our objectives, noting that 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. We note that where agreements have been made accepting qualifications as Part 1 and/or Part 2 equivalent within and MRA or MOU, we will have tested when setting up agreements that they cover the ground necessary within the UK. We note that we will be pilot testing the UK Adaptation Assessment before it

is put into operation and we will also be reviewing the route after an initial period of six months of operating, which will provide us with further opportunities to seek feedback from our advisers and other stakeholders on any adjustments that we may need to make to the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria.

We were also asked to provide additional clarification on who will be eligible to make use of recognition under either MRAs or MOUs and at what level. We will publish full details of this as soon as agreements are signed and operational, as the content of each MRA or MOU is likely to be different.

We were asked whether our proposed international route could be aligned more closely with the requirements of another international regulator. We have sought independent expert advice and have benchmarked the UK Adaptation Assessment with the requirements of a number of our counterpart organisations when developing the route. We will be monitoring the operation of the new route and reviewing it after the first 6 months of operation.

We were asked whether there would be sufficient safeguards in place to prevent cheating and assistance during the process of application and interview. All applications will be supported by information provided directly from our international counterpart organisations, confirming that applicants are registered professionals, of whom behavioural and ethical standards are required. We view the process of application and interview as supportive, and whilst we will require confirmation that applicants are not being assisted clandestinely, we believe that the scenario based questions will be sufficiently robust to ensure the individual competence of applicants.

Feedback: I accept and respect the assessment process that ARB proposed, however i am an overseas Architect and I can't even apply to get my equivalence from Turkey without getting a job in UK and I can't find any job until i get my ARB equivalence. How can i solve this problem?. Do you have any suggestions?

ARB Response: Under both the existing Prescribed Examination route and the proposed new International Routes there is no requirement to be in employment in order to access the route, provided the eligibility requirements relating to qualifications and other requirements in each route have been met.

Feedback: "Hello,
I initially thank you all for your accepting our thoughts regarding the proposed UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures.

Briefly, I am an Architecture graduate having a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Yildiz Technical University in Turkiye (180 ECTS) and Master's degree in Civil Construction and Real Estate Management from Riga Technical University in Latvia (90 ECTS), and I am registered to the Chamber

of Architects of Turkiye as an Architect. However, I cannot practice the profession of architect in the UK since May 2021, the time I arrived at the country.

I will naturally share my opinion from the frame I look from:

I was getting prepared to the registration procedures after Brexit for a year. As very well known, Turkiye is a European but not a European Union member country provides academic education integrated to the European education system. In the last year, before the UK Adaptation Assessment came to the agenda, graduates of the EU-member state universities were able to be recognised as Architects, and I was not able to be registered. And now, at least those privileges of the EU-graduates do not apply anymore, but I still have to overcome all these bureaucratic obstacles to be able to practice my profession.

Another interesting point was that, while my education is directly recognised in the EU countries, and EU degrees are recognised in the UK, Turkish degrees are not directly recognised in the UK. To be honest, it was very upsetting and embarrassing action. Also it can be said, it is an unintended discrimination as a result. I believe that Turkiye will place amongst Mutually Recognised Countries or there will place Mutual Recognition Agreement between the UK and Turkiye.

In conclusion, the proposal should be reviewed, the fees must not be thresholds to the registration, Mutual Recognition Agreements must be done with European but not EU countries such as Turkiye, Ukraine etc."

ARB Response: We have developed a set of principles which we will use when working with international partner organisations to decide whether to take forward negotiations concerning possible Mutual Recognition Agreements or Memoranda of Understanding. These will inform the international partners we seek to work with on developing agreements. The UK Adaptation Assessment will operate on a cost neutral basis once it has been established, which is the basis upon which we operate all other routes to registration.

Feedback: "I think the proposed route is a more accurate representation of what is required in establishing someone's competency to practice as an architect in the UK and provides solutions in breaking down barriers into the profession.

Many have left the profession, for instance starting careers in design management, due to constraints currently placed within the registration process."

ARB Response: We believe the new International Routes will provide a more cost-effective and streamlined means for suitable internationally-qualified architects to access the UK Register of Architects.

Feedback: "Re point 6.7. This requirement is not strong enough. There should be binding commitments from the partner organisations to ensure reciprocity, with clearly laid out rules and ways of their enforcement.

Re point 7.4.i) : more detail is needed of who would provide the professional career evaluation. My suggestion is to stipulate that such a person should be an UK registered Architect not related to the applicant's current position, ie. not their employing practice."

ARB Response: Reciprocity is one of the key 'Principles and Criteria' which will guide us in determining who we will work with. Any Mutual Recognition Agreements developed further to this initial assessment against our principles will include details as to what qualifications and other requirements are in scope and the means by which the agreements will be enforced. The procedures for assessment require that the applicants making use of the UK Adaptation Assessment provide their own career evaluation: we will publish guidance and templates to support this.

Feedback: Each pathway seems logical

ARB Response: We note the response, thank you.

Feedback: Yes, I support the proposed procedures. I have employed architects who have qualified elsewhere in the EU and obtained automatic conversion, and their lack of comprehension and awareness of UK-specific issues (primarily around contract law and building regulations) has been problematic. Their knowledge, especially when they are new graduates from the 5/6 year course, is not comparable to those who have undertaken Part 3 in the UK.

ARB Response: We aim for the UK Adaptation Assessment to be a supportive means of preparing international architects for practice in the UK through its focus on UK-specific requirements for practice. All applicants applying for the UK adaptation assessment will have completed a minimum period of education and training before an application will be considered. Each agreement will set out more information about who will be eligible and what will be required.

Feedback: "Please consider applicants who graduated from internationally accredited universities more than two decades ago. And have international experience working with huge companies (more than 4000 employees) on mega projects overseas. Its a shame that this candidate is not able to register as an architect due to cost and very complicated procedure. (Courses and modules) taken in university are not available any more due to their physical nature. Only available are transcripts. Its a shame that such talent and expertise not to be benefited from in the UK, although the market is in high need for talent and skills."

ARB Response: Our proposed new International Routes will benefit both newly-qualified as well as established architects, provide they meet the requirements set out in a relevant Mutual Recognition Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. Our international partner organisations will be

responsible for the provision of information to confirm that individuals fall within the scope of an agreement.

Feedback: The exam is not fair as it's subjective plus it does take a lot of time and this is not convenient with people that are already many years experienced and have many more qualifications than the bachelor degree.

ARB Response: Although this consultation is concerned with the proposed new UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures, we are planning to conduct a review of the Prescribed Examination route once the outcomes of our review of the Initial Education and Training requirements for architects are clear.

Are there any sections of the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures which may be unfair or discriminate against people with particular protected characteristics?

We received 23 responses to this question, 6 answered yes and 17 answered no.

Although a number of respondents have provided permission to publish responses concerning costs of the UK Adaptation Assessment, others did not, the UK Adaptation Assessment will operate on a cost neutral basis once it has been established, which is the basis upon which we operate all other routes to registration.

Feedback: As long as the registration fees apply at the beginning, the concept of money is considered a kind of threshold and it creates an inequality between professionals newly beginning to work.

ARB Response: The UK Adaptation Assessment will operate on a cost neutral basis once it has been established, which is the basis upon which we operate all other routes to registration. Our expectation is that the fee and application process will provide for internationally qualified applicants to join the UK Register of Architects more cheaply and quickly than the existing Prescribed Examination and Part 3 route.

Feedback: I don't think so, assuming suitable mitigation/alternative provision can be put in place at interview etc for people with disabilities (as it should be anyway).

ARB Response: ARB will always offer reasonable adjustments for those who may require them during any process of application. The proposed UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures refer to this at section 2.1.8.

Feedback: "The fact that someone who studied in the EU does not have to sit for the part 1 & part 2 exams while others from different countries have to! this is clearly unfair!

For me personally (and more likely the thousands in my situation), i have more than a decade of experience in London, and i have thought, oversaw and mentored students and architects from EU countries over the years. the fact that they had studied in a EU country gave them an automatic access to the Architects register! where non EU architects had to prepare 2 portfolios, sit 2 exams, get 2 years of experience and go back to university and study for one more year in order to be able to register as an architect in the UK!!!! I don't think this fair neither the right way to go forward and quite frankly this a clear discrimination which affects many architect who are professionally and socially contributing to make the uk better and better."

ARB Response: Interim arrangements for the recognition of European qualifications referred to in Annex V.7.1 to Professional Qualifications Directive will cease following an awaited Statutory Instrument to provide powers set out in the Professional Qualifications Act 2022. It will then be for the Board to determine which international qualifications it will recognise through international Mutual Recognition Agreements of Memoranda of Understanding.

We asked respondents to provide any other comments on our proposals that they had

One respondent felt that the consultation period was short and timed so as to limit the opportunity for UK practices to respond. We note that the consultation was shorter than we would ordinarily prefer, but it is important that we are able to test and operationalise the procedures in as timely a manner as possible.

Feedback: "* MRC and MRA should be detailed.

* Language requirement should be lowered. IELTS Academic 7.0 band score is very high to achieve for internationally qualified architects."

ARB Response: We will publish detail of Mutual Recognition Countries and relevant Agreements separately to the UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures as and when each agreement has been signed. These will be clearly signposted in the Registration section of our website for transparency. We will review the IELTS requirement when we review the first 6 months of operation of the UK Adaptation Assessment.

Feedback: I would suggest more emphasis on the subject of project running for all applicants. 2 years or 5 years experience need to be on all stages of the works. Too often Architects, even those already qualified in UK for more than 15 years, have matured their experience mainly at design stages (the equivalent of RIBA stage 2/3) without much technical and more holistic type of experience.

ARB Response: All applicants within the new International Routes to Registration will have completed a period of education and training comparable to that expected when qualifying within

the UK. This evaluation will form part of our initial decision on whether to progress to a more formal discussion when considering a request from a partner organisation to begin dialogue about developing a Mutual Recognition Agreement.

Feedback: I would assume the adaptation assessment procedures/ examination align with the level of knowledge, skill/ ability, understanding expected at the Part 3 examination level.

ARB Response: The UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria are derived from but are not identical to those that apply to Part 3 qualifications. We believe a lighter-touch approach to assessing applicants who have already qualified under a Mutual Recognition Agreement is more appropriate. As part of the development of MRAs and MOUs, we will have completed due diligence to ensure the substantial equivalence of qualifications. The assessment will focus in particular on the UK context for practice.

Feedback: It will be great if there is a short course to support before the assessment. As an architect who graduated from outside the UK, it was a challenge for us to live in the UK even if we are qualified or had long experience, we didn't have any chance to live properly in the UK. It would be great to give chances for non-UK architects living with their families in the UK to have a chance to practice within the firm they studied with passion and hope to continue to spend their lives working on it.

ARB Response: We do not propose to offer a course to applicants, as that would incur additional ongoing costs. We will provide online resources and links to suitable material to enable applicants to prepare for the assessment. We have no objection to schools of architecture and other providers developing resources in the form of courses or seminars to assist applicants.

Feedback: I am interested in understanding if the ARB are looking to recognise degrees from Australia. Due to recent free trade discussions and the ARB looking for mutual recognition with the AACA (Australian Regulators) I see little reason why Australian's would continue to be made to undertake Prescribed Exams.

ARB Response: Our periodic updates on the developments in our international work have included information about a Mutual Recognition Agreement we have been developing with AACA in Australia and NZRAB in New Zealand.

Feedback: Highly welcomed; please get it sorted!

ARB Response: We await new powers to enter into Mutual Recognition Agreements, which we expect to receive in the early part of 2023: these will enable us to enter into any agreements which the Board has approved after that time.

Feedback: "Would the MRA require the applicants to further submit anything to demonstrate their recognition of Part 1&2 qualifications in like of the prescribed portfolios and other substantiation and such? (if they attended a university with proper architectural degree recognized by RIBA)

Noting that the documents and outlines propose for the new international routes to be operational by early 2023, is there a more precise month and will this be fairly certain. And will the application for such recognition be available as soon as the legislations pass"

ARB Response: The underlying degree and/or masters-level qualifications underpinning any Mutual Recognition Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding will already have been evaluated as equivalent to Part 1 and/or Part 2 level, according to the level at which an agreement operates, and no further reconsideration of these will be necessary. Our partner organisations will issue confirmations that relevant accredited qualifications have been secured and that other requirements relevant within an agreement have been completed.

Feedback: I would urge the ARB to reconsider the proposed procedures, and make one route for EU and Non EU professionals.

ARB Response: Interim arrangements for the recognition of European qualifications referred to in Annex V.7.1 to Professional Qualifications Directive will cease following an awaited Statutory Instrument to provide powers set out in the Professional Qualifications Act 2022. It will then be for the Board to determine which international qualifications it will recognise through international Mutual Recognition Agreements of Memoranda of Understanding.

Applicants whose qualifications are not covered by a relevant agreement or memorandum will still be required to apply through the Prescribed Examination route and complete a UK Part 3 qualification in order to be eligible to join the UK Register of Architects.

Feedback: Evaluating certificates will be easier than taking the whole process of the exam and when the person is equivalent to part 3 you cannot ask them to start from part 1. This is totally unfair.

ARB Response: The UK Adaptation Assessment does not seek to reconsider the underlying degree and masters level qualifications secured by applicants qualifying under a relevant Mutual Recognition Agreement. Applicants will however need to demonstrate that they have met the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria through the submission of an application and a subsequent Professional Interview. We do not believe that the process of evaluating certificates will provide the regulatory assurance that international applicants have met the requisite standards to qualify them to join the UK Register of Architects.

General comments

A number of general comments were made covering ground set out in the main questions above. The responses above cover these points.

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- email info@arb.org.uk
- call 020 7580 5861
- write to us at ARB, 8 Weymouth Street. London W1W 5BU

We'll consider your request and get back to you within 14 days.



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UK Adaptation Assessment Process

Assessment Procedures

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1. Introduction

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 an applicant, with qualifications and experience from a country which has mutual recognition arrangements with the UK (“mutual recognition countries” or “MRCs”), must do in order to demonstrate to the Board that they have a standard of competence equivalent to that demonstrated by those holding UK prescribed qualifications and practical experience, enabling them to gain entry to the UK Register of Architects pursuant to section 4(1)(b) of the Act.

The Architects Act 1997 (as amended) 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) states that 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.

Where the Board has entered Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with regulators of architects in other countries, applicants for registration in the UK may benefit from the opinion that some qualifications from those countries are equivalent to education and training outcomes achieved through prescribed qualifications in the UK. It will, however, usually be the case that some elements of the UK’s requirements involve additional training and/or experience to adapt for UK practice.

Under Rule 16.1 of the Board’s General Rules it has prescribed an examination for the purpose of the UK Adaptation Assessment Process examinations.

Each application for registration is considered on its own merits. However, MOUs and MRAs typically specify non-UK qualifications in relation to which the Board has received sufficient information to form the opinion that they are equivalent to the prescribed UK qualifications at Part 1 and/or Part 2 level.

In addition to such Part 1 and/or Part 2 level qualifications the Board will generally require applicants to undertake a UK adaptation assessment to demonstrate that the requirements for practice in UK have been met. These particular requirements for practice are described at Appendix 2 to this document.

The Procedures came into effect on DD Month 2022 and apply to all applications for registration under Section 4(1)(b) of the Architects Act 1997 received after DD Month 2022.

2. The Procedures for the UK Adaptation Assessment

2.1 Principles

- 2.1.1 Applicants will be required to submit a Reflective Career Summary, integrating a curriculum vitae, and presented in a template which will be provided, to demonstrate a factual summary of the applicant's education and practical experience since commencing their formal architectural training.
- 2.1.2 The applicant will be assessed on the basis of a professional interview, which will be focused on the applicant's written responses to a series of scenario-based questions directly geared to evaluate whether the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria have been met. The applicant will be issued with a set of scenario-based questions following receipt and acceptance of a fully-completed application.
- 2.1.3 An applicant, any part of whose submission is determined by the Registrar to be misleading or untrue at any point in the assessment process will not be permitted to continue with their assessment, and their application will be refused. Re-application will be at the discretion of the Registrar.
- 2.1.4 Applications must be made on the Board's form or as prescribed.
- 2.1.5 No individual guidance or advice can be given by the Board in relation to the application before it is made. However, the Board publishes guidance as to the acceptable format in which applications may be made. Guidance will be published on the Board's website.
- 2.1.6 The Board will not give any advice or guidance to applicants beyond that set out in the published guidelines. Any feedback or other comment made by staff or by an assessor represents the individual view of the person giving it and, whilst given in good faith, does not commit the Board or any other individual thereafter.
- 2.1.7 The Board will specify in its guidance the maximum number of words and/or pages permitted in the application.
- 2.1.8 Any applicant who requires a reasonable adjustment during the application or assessment process should contact the Board for further information.

2.2 Eligibility

- 2.2.1 Applicants are eligible for the UK adaptation assessment if they:
 - 2.2.1.1 are eligible within the relevant MOU or MRA;

2.2.1.2 have gained qualifications in architecture within scope of an MOU or MRA;

2.2.1.3 have met requirements for practical experience published by the regulator in the relevant MRC; and

2.2.1.4 have secured access to the profession of architect in an MRC where required by the relevant agreement or memorandum.

2.2.2 General Requirements

- a) The fee for the assessment shall be as determined by the Board. No applicant will be eligible for assessment 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) In the event that an application for assessment is found not to meet the Board's eligibility requirements, a refund of the fee will be made.
- c) Applicants whose first language is not English are required to submit a valid International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate with no band score below 7.0 or above with their application for examination. Applicants who are obviously bilingual English speakers will not normally be required to provide an IELTS certificate if they declare that this is the case when applying.
- d) The Board will require the applicant to produce the evidence agreed in each MRA or MOU in support of their application details of which are published by the Board from time to time. It is the applicant's responsibility to pay any relevant fees to their national authority for the issue of required documents. Where the documents cannot be produced for good reason the Board may consider what other forms of evidence may be acceptable in support of the application.

The Board may where it has doubt about an applicant's eligibility under 2.2.2(d) contact the relevant authority for further information. The Board's decision on the responses to any enquiries will be at its discretion.

2.3 Submitting an application

2.3.1 Before a date for the UK adaptation assessment is set, applicants must submit:

- a completed application form and all requirements, including certification issued by a signatory to a relevant Mutual Recognition Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding, set out on the form to demonstrate that their application is in scope of an MRA or MOU;

- a Reflective Career Summary, presented on the Board’s template; and
 - the prescribed fee.
- 2.3.2 Applicants must not submit project-based material other than that necessary to form part of, or to illustrate the Reflective Career Summary. Project-based material submitted in addition to the Reflective Career Summary will not be accepted and may be deleted or destroyed.
- 2.3.3 On acceptance of an application, the applicant will be issued with a set of scenario-based questions, to which they will be required to provide written responses before a professional interview will be arranged. In addition to submitting a Reflective Career Summary and supporting material applicants should note that they will be required to attend a professional interview to discuss how they meet the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria. Assessors will be provided with the Reflective Career Summary and responses to the scenario-based questions at least two weeks in advance of the professional interview.
- 2.3.4 Applicants will identify on the application form their preferred dates for assessment in order of preference. Applicants should not normally identify dates earlier than six weeks after submission of the application, nor later than six months after the submission date. The Board will try to allocate to applicants their first choice dates for assessment, but this may not always be possible. Dates for assessment will be allocated by the Board on a “first come, first served” basis. Applicants will normally be notified of the dates of assessment within three weeks of the application being received and accepted by the Board. No assessment dates will be allocated until the application has been received and accepted.
- 2.3.5 Applicants must notify the Board in writing within seven days of receipt of the notification of assessment dates if they are unable to be assessed on the allocated dates. Further dates will then be allocated on a “first come, first served” basis.
- 2.3.6 Applicants 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 assessment date that they cannot attend, may forfeit the fee for assessment.

2.4 Issuing the scenario-based questions

- 2.4.1 The Registrar will maintain a bank of scenario-based questions on which to draw, covering practice-based situations that are designed to facilitate the assessors’ understanding of the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of the UK context for practice.
- 2.4.2 The Registrar, will issue to each applicant a set of scenario-based questions after a fully-completed application has been accepted.

2.4.3 Applicants will be required to respond in writing to the scenario-based questions before a date for assessment is allocated. An allocated date will be provided on receipt of the applicant's written responses. Assessors will be provided with the applicant's written responses at least two weeks prior to any professional interview taking place. Assessors will focus the professional interview on any areas of the Adaptation Assessment Criteria which they judge to be appropriate based on the applicant's written responses and Reflective Career Summary. Applicants should refer to the guidance material published by the Board when preparing for the professional interview.

2.5 The Professional Interview

2.5.1 The Registrar will appoint a pool of assessors who will be UK registered architects from practice and academia. Two assessors from the pool will be chosen by the Registrar to form the assessment team (henceforth the assessors) for each applicant. The assessors will be responsible for ensuring that all time limits are adhered to; that the appropriate administrative work is completed, and will liaise with the Board's staff as required. The assessors will be required to make a judgment as to whether or not they are confident that the applicant has demonstrated that they have met the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria and will report that judgment in writing to the Registrar.

2.5.2 Assessors are generally expected to review the applicant's submission within a period of 30 minutes and agree what questions the applicant will be asked in order to determine whether the applicant has met the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria. Assessors will decide amongst themselves how to allocate the questions and direct the discussion. Applicants are required to familiarise themselves with the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria and to be prepared to discuss and respond to questions which the assessors will ask in order to reach a decision on whether they meet the assessment criteria. Applicants should refer to the guidance material published by the Board when preparing for the professional interview.

2.5.3 Following the assessors preparatory meeting, the applicant will join the assessors for the professional interview, which will generally be for a period of up to 60 minutes.

2.5.4 The applicant's responses to the questions asked during the professional interview will form the basis of the assessors' decision as to whether the applicant has met the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria.

2.5.5 If the responses have in the opinion of the Assessors, demonstrated that the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria have been met, the assessors will notify the Registrar.

2.5.6 If the applicant's responses do not satisfy the Assessors that the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria have been met, the assessors will notify the Registrar of this and

recommend a period (of no less than 6 months) before the applicant should be eligible to re-apply for assessment (see further Appendix 1).

- 2.5.7 The assessors will identify in writing on the Board's form the reasons as to why, in their judgment, the applicant's responses to questions did not meet the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria.
- 2.5.8 The limits on feedback are described in Section 2.1.6.
- 2.5.9 In the event that the assessors cannot agree a decision, applicants will be required to re-attend a professional interview to discuss a new set of scenario based questions. In such instances applicants will not normally be required to pay an additional fee, but this will be at the discretion of the Registrar.

2.6 Appointment of independent assessors

- 2.6.1 The Board will appoint independent assessors who will be registered architects with experience of examining or quality assurance within United Kingdom Schools of Architecture. Independent assessors will report to the Registrar on the following matters:
- the consistency of assessors' decisions
 - the conduct of assessors and the fairness of the assessment process
 - the quality of the feedback offered to applicants
 - the performance of applicants
 - the accessibility of the assessment to its users
- 2.6.2 If the Registrar is satisfied with the assessments, they will normally agree that an application for Registration may be taken forward subject to any other application requirements being satisfied at the time of recommendation. If the Registrar is not satisfied they will report this to the Board, and the report may refer to any actions taken by the Registrar in response to the reports and/or recommend actions that the Board may wish to take.
- 2.6.3 An independent assessor will be present for each session of assessments. Independent assessors will review completed applications and will observe interviews. The independent assessor will be required to comment on whether the assessment procedures have been followed correctly.
- 2.6.4 If the Registrar is satisfied, taking into account the report of the assessors and any reports or advice from the independent assessors, that the applicant has met the assessment requirements he or she shall notify the applicant.

- 2.6.5 If the Registrar is not satisfied with the recommendations of the assessors, taking into account the report of the assessors and any reports or advice from the independent assessors, that the applicant has not met the assessment requirements, they shall notify the applicant.
- 2.6.6 If the Registrar is unable to decide on the basis of the material before them as to whether or not the applicant has demonstrated that they have met all the assessment requirements, the Registrar may require that the applicant be re-assessed. The Registrar may seek further information or advice as they see fit to aid this decision. Re-assessment will not normally incur payment of the prescribed fee, but this shall be at the Registrar's discretion.
- 2.6.7 Applicants will normally be notified in writing of the Registrar's decision within three weeks of the assessment.

2.7 Diversity

- 2.7.1 The UK adaptation assessment will operate in line with the public sector equality duty.
- 2.7.2 We implement this through our Equality & Diversity scheme which sets out how we approach our equality and diversity responsibilities, as a regulator and as an employer. It both values and recognises differences in our stakeholders, including our staff, our Board and architects as well as members of the public. We will continue to review our policies regularly, and test new policies we plan to introduce to make sure that they do not contain any elements of unlawful discrimination and are fair to all.
- 2.7.3 We actively promote equality of opportunity for everybody who has dealings with us, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, religion, belief system, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic background, with the primary aims of eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people of different groups.

2.8 Withdrawal

- 2.8.1 An applicant who wishes to withdraw their application at any time after it has been accepted, provided it has not progressed to the professional interview may do so by applying in writing. In such cases, 75% of the assessment fee will be refunded.

2.9 Incomplete applications

2.9.1 Applicants who fail to provide relevant documents or fail to make arrangements to attend a professional interview will be ineligible to proceed. In such cases, the fee (or in the Board's discretion part of the fee) will be refunded.

2.10 Fees

2.10.1 Please see separate fee schedule.

Appendix 1 – Re-assessment

A.1.1 Re-assessment

In the circumstances that an applicant receives notification under section 2.6.5 that they have failed the assessment, they may apply to be re-assessed no sooner than six months following receipt of the notification. No applicant shall be permitted to apply to be re-assessed more than twice, unless the Registrar is satisfied that there is substantial evidence that the applicant's level of competence has materially improved since the last assessment. Where an applicant applies to be re-assessed, the application will be considered under these rules or any others which the Board may approve for that purpose at the time of application.

No applicant will be entitled to be re-assessed if the Registrar determines that they have submitted an application any part of which is misleading or untrue.

Appendix 2 – UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria

The UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria are as follows:

Clients, Users and delivery of services

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of the range of services offered by architects and delivering those services in a manner prioritising the interests of the client and other stakeholders. The candidate will have the skills necessary to provide a competent service, both singly and as part of a team, including understanding of client needs, appropriate communication, programming, coordination and competent delivery. This will be supported by knowledge of the briefing process, forms and terms of appointment, the means of professional remuneration, relevant legislation, and the execution of appropriate programmed and coordinated project tasks.

Legal Framework and processes

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of the legal context within which an architect must operate, and the processes undertaken to ensure compliance with legal requirements or standards. The candidate will have the skills necessary to positively interact with statutory and private bodies or individuals, and competently deliver projects within diverse legislative frameworks. This will be supported by knowledge of the relevant law, legislation, guidance and controls relevant to architectural design and construction.

Building Procurement

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of UK construction and contract law, construction procurement processes and the roles of built environment professionals. The candidate will have the skills necessary to plan project-related tasks, coordinate and engage in design team interaction, execute effective contract communication and resolve construction-related challenges and disputes. This will be supported by an understanding of contractual relationships, the obligations upon an architect acting as contract administrator, job-related administrative systems and the management of projects in the context of the candidate's professional experience.

Appendix 3 – Administrative Reconsideration

A.3.1. Eligibility and Grounds for Administrative Reconsideration

A.3.1.1

An applicant who has notification under section 2.6.5 of failure to pass the assessment may apply to the Registrar to conduct an administrative reconsideration of the assessment outcome.

A.3.1.2

Applicants may lodge an application for administrative reconsideration on any of the following grounds:

A.3.1.2.1

Defects or irregularities in the conduct of the assessment and/or assessment process that had a materially adverse effect on the applicant's performance.

A.3.1.2.2

Special circumstances (by way of example illness, family bereavement etc.) which were not known to the assessors at the time of assessment and the applicant can show good reason why such circumstances could not have been made known to the assessors at the time of the assessment.

A.3.2. Matters Not Subject to Administrative Reconsideration

A.3.2.1

Academic decisions made by assessors on different occasions will reflect a judgment made about a number of factors, including applicant performance, supporting documents etc. and are therefore not subject to appeal.

A.3.2.2

Disagreement with the decision or feedback provided does not constitute grounds for administrative reconsideration. Any feedback or other comment represents the individual view of the person giving it and, whilst given in good faith, does not commit the Board or any other individual thereafter.

A.3.3. Lodging a Request for Administrative Reconsideration

A.3.3.1

A request for administrative reconsideration must be lodged within 30 days of notification of the failure to pass the assessment being sent to the applicant. It should be addressed to the Registrar and marked "Application for Administrative Reconsideration". The request must be in writing, and should include the following:

full details of the circumstances relevant to the ground(s) for Administrative Reconsideration; and

the reasons as to why the applicant considers that those circumstances justify the Assessment being set aside.

The applicant should also enclose copies of any relevant documentation that they wish to be taken into account.

A.3.3.2

Material geared to satisfying the UK Adaptation Assessment Criteria will not be reviewed as part of an Administrative Reconsideration and must not form part of an application.

A.3.3.3

The Registrar shall delegate the Administrative review to one or more of the Board's senior staff (the Reviewer/s).

A.3.4. The Reviewer/s

A.3.4.1

On receipt of the request, the Reviewer/s may seek advice or request such other documentary evidence/comments from the assessors, the independent assessor(s) and the Registrar as may be relevant.

A.3.4.2

If the Reviewer/s is/are satisfied that the information provided by the applicant does not meet the requirements for reconsideration set out above, they may reject the request for Administrative Reconsideration. The reasons for the decision will be conveyed in writing to the applicant.

A.3.4.3

Where the Reviewer decides that re-assessment is appropriate they will recommend to the Registrar that the applicant be re-assessed and the applicant will be notified of the decision. Unless the Registrar decides otherwise, the re-assessment cost will ordinarily be borne by the Board, If the Registrar decides otherwise they will provide written reasons as to why the fee or any part of the fee may be payable.

Appendix 4 – Appeals

An applicant who has failed to be admitted to the Register and has exceeded the maximum number of permissible applications as set out in Appendix 1 of this document may appeal to the Board’s Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee’s terms of reference will determine how the Appeal will be considered.

If you need information on this document in a different format such as an audio recording or braille, you can:

- email info@arb.org.uk
- call 020 7580 5861
- write to us at ARB, 8 Weymouth Street. London W1W 5BU

We'll consider your request and get back to you within 14 days.



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