



Business Plan 2024

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1. Introduction

ARB is an independent professional regulator, established by Parliament as a statutory body, through the Architects Act, in 1997. We are accountable to government.

The law gives us a number of core functions:

- To ensure only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects. We do this by approving the qualifications required to join the UK Register of Architects.
- We maintain a publicly available Register of Architects so anyone using the services of an architect can be confident that they are suitably qualified and are fit to practise.
- We set the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and take action when any architect falls below the required standards of conduct or competence.
- We protect the legally restricted title 'architect'.

Our five-year [Corporate Strategy](#) states that we want a world in which the built environment inspires those who live and work in it, reflects the needs of society so that people are safe and can live well, and helps to tackle the fundamental challenges our planet faces. The contribution that regulation can make to this overarching purpose may be small, but we recognise that architects and other professionals in the built environment can achieve their own goals, potential and outcomes only if we are delivering effective regulation.

Our vision

We have an ambitious vision for ARB. Our goal is to deliver improvements and tangible outcomes in each of our core statutory functions and deliver meaningful and positive change in our strategic priorities.

Our 2023 Business Plan set out our commitments, all contributing to delivering our strategy and the five key strategic priorities. The majority of those commitments have been delivered, with a small number rolling over to 2024.

In 2023 we delivered on the vast majority of our Business Plan commitments including:

- Delivering phase 1 of our new registration applications system and commencing planning for phase 2 with the development of a new case management system and integration of wider IT systems including finance and HR.

- Signing Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with the USA, Australia and New Zealand and introducing a new UK Adaptation Assessment for those taking advantage of MRAs.
- Publishing the analysis of the makeup of the architect's profession as of 2022 and announcing the actions we'll take to improve the extent to which it reflects the makeup of society.
- Consulting on and approving a new education model; competence outcomes; standards for learning providers; the establishment and operation of a new Accreditation Committee; and arrangements for transitioning to the new model.
- Establishing a project group and commencing the work of overhauling the range of international routes to registration, including ARB's Prescribed Examination.
- Publishing the consultation report, developing policy guidance and running a pilot exercise to allow for a successful launch of the new CPD scheme.
- Embedding our new staff performance management system which included training programmes for managers.
- Carrying out a full review of ARB's future property requirements and commencing lease negotiations for 2024 onwards.
- Carried out a fundamental review of our pension scheme to establish a new provider.
- Launched a six-month trial of a new flexible bank holiday policy, demonstrating changes to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Improved culture and our ways of working supported by new technology with enhanced remote working and collaboration tools.

In the Corporate Strategy 2022-2026, we set out a range of commitments which would help us to deliver our vision, and which have shaped our Business Plan in 2024:

- Demonstrate leadership for the sector in responding to key challenges including fire and life safety and climate change.
- Foster a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in our own organisation and take action to ensure change occurs in architecture.
- Work with the profession (including employers, educators, students and others) to modernise initial education and training.
- Build on the professionalism of architects by implementing a new model of continuing professional development which supports good practice and lifelong learning.
- Embed a culture of continuous improvement within ARB so that our regulatory services are accessible, effective and designed around the needs of our stakeholders.

In this annual business plan, we refer to our strategic vision for 2026 as outlined in the Corporate Strategy and set out the activities we will carry out in 2024 towards this vision. We also show a summary of expected areas of activity in 2025-26, while recognising that plans will develop over time as we receive feedback from stakeholders on proposals.

2. Continuous improvement in our regulatory services

Our vision for 2026

If architects and the public are to benefit from regulation, we must continue to modernise and transform the way in which ARB operates. We will deliver improvements which we want to be tangible and measurable across each of our statutory functions.

In 2024 we will:

Registration:

- Carry out a review of the implementation of the self-service database for architects.
- Manage the implementation of the process for a new statutory CPD scheme, in time for the first audit of selected architects in 2025.
- Continue working to overhaul and improve international routes to registration and manage the transition phase for the replacement of the current Prescribed Examination and UK Adaptation Assessment (UKAA).

Accreditation:

- Deliver a smooth transition to the new Accreditation Committee.
- Carry out technical visits of institutions, led by a Visits Manager, as part of the new standards for learning providers.
- Visit institutions to explain the role of ARB and help students understand their responsibilities once they join the Register.
- Establish a Transition Reference Group for the new Accreditation Model.
- Develop key performance indicators using new CRM technology.

In 2025-26 we will continue to develop improvements in efficiency and customer service, and work to operationalise key elements in the corporate strategy as they are approved. These include any amendments and improvements to the new CPD framework and monitoring process, as well as implementing the ongoing transition to the new accreditation methodology. We will also consider insights from the Professional Practical Experience (PPE) Commission on professional practical experience and further improvements to our accreditation framework.

Governance and International:

- Continue to develop new MRAs/MOUs (memoranda of understanding) and implement these in line with ARB's international strategy, along with embedding our MRA monitoring and visiting system.
- Communicate the opportunities created by the MRAs to architects, the sector and related stakeholders.
- Complete the review and manage the introduction of the new Annual Review Process for Board, Committee and Associate members, along with developing a feedback mechanism.
- Overhaul the General Rules with a view to developing separate sets of Rules for each relevant area of business.
- Manage the delivery of the recommendations which result from the Board Effectiveness Review.

In 2025-2026 we will complete a review of the UK Adaptation Assessment and the ARB Prescribed Examination as part of the established project to overhaul the routes to registration. This will include evidence gathering and stakeholder involvement, taking into account the equality, diversity and inclusion impact. We will continue to visit international counterparts as part of our MRA monitoring processes and to check ongoing compliance with our standards. We will publish the programme for this annually. We will begin to implement any new sets of General Rules as and when they are developed for each area of the organisation.

Standards:

- Publish original research into what the public expects of the architects' profession.
- Engage architects and others in the sector to inform the development of a new Architects Code of Conduct and Practice and consult on it.
- Evaluate the impact of ARB education reforms and in particular access to the profession for traditionally underrepresented groups.
- Engage with others in the built environment to improve competence across the sector.
- Use new CRM technology to establish a new case management system to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop improved reporting of management information, performance data and insights into disciplinary cases.

Equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Develop an updated EDI strategy and establish new EDI workstreams to build on work completed in 2023.
- Continue to track trends and issues within the profession and analyse data emerging from our new process of accreditation of learning providers.
- Undertake further work to embed principles of EDI and ensure good practice within our internal systems, particularly around recruitment and people management.
- Demonstrate sector leadership, including partnering with organisations within the profession with a particular focus on inclusion.

In 2025-26 we will deliver improvements in our standards and guidance work. We will take feedback, learning and insight from our consultation activities to identify practical changes we can make, both within ARB and within key policy areas so that we make a difference to the professionalism of architects and equality, diversity and inclusion within the sector.

We will publish a new Code of Conduct and Practice and review the suite of guidance which sits alongside it to support architects to practise in adherence to the Code at all times.

3. Modernising initial education and training of architects

Our vision for 2026

Initial education and training of architects will better reflect the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours they need in areas such as climate change, safety, ethics and emerging technologies. The structure of education and training will encourage diversity and wider access to the profession, whilst providing assurance that only competent individuals will be admitted to the Register of Architects.

In 2024 we will:

- Develop a suite of guidance for learning providers to support the delivery of the competence outcomes and standards for providers.
- Work with learning providers to establish accredited qualifications in architecture under the new educational framework.
- Manage the Commission established to review ARB's practical professional experience requirements and develop new recommendations.
- Engage with stakeholders to embed the new framework and help ensure a smooth transition to the new model of initial education and training.
- Commission research to assess the impact of our new regulatory framework and, in particular, explore issues around access.

In 2025-26 we will transition to a new model of architectural education by accrediting qualifications using the new competence outcomes to assess learners, delivered by learning providers judged against a new set of standards. We will embed a proportionate and effective accreditation model taking into account feedback as well as data from learning providers. We will provide leadership on the challenges architectural education faces in respect of professional practical experience, responding to recommendations made by the Commission.

4. Delivering a new system of continuing professional development for architects

Our vision for 2026

Architects will be utilising a continuing professional development (CPD) model they see as a positive contribution to their practice and professional development. There will be evidence that the model has made an impact on the competence of architects with learning shared across the profession.

In 2024 we will:

- Launch the new CPD scheme and carry out an interim review of the new system, and make any necessary changes to improve the effectiveness of the model.
- Promote and explain the scheme to architects so they understand and meet the new requirements, along with communicating the benefits with the sector.
- Recruit, induct and train a new team of CPD reviewers and support staff.
- Develop and test a quality assurance system capable of consistently reviewing the CPD records of selected architects.
- Develop a CPD information hub, signposting architects to relevant CPD resources.

In 2025-26 we will continue to monitor the new system and implement any improvements to the scheme, following the commence of mandatory reviewing from 2025. We will, in particular, be looking at aggregated data from the sector and survey feedback to consider how we might better support the profession through guidance or work with others, including professional leadership bodies, to improve competence in specific areas.

5. Transforming our systems, processes and information technology

Our vision for 2026

ARB's systems and processes will enable architects to manage their own data and information, improving their experiences and delivering efficiencies. The public will have improved transparency about qualified and registered architects. The IT infrastructure will not only ensure secure data but will enable ARB to gather improved insight into the profession, including areas where regulatory attention is needed such as equality and diversity, new guidance or changes to education and training.

In 2024 we will:

- Report on efficiencies and improvements within registration delivered as part of phase 1 of our new CRM applications system.
- Deliver phase 2 of our CRM project to introduce a new case management system, as well as integrating our HR, Finance and Governance systems, and launching our CPD system.
- Complete the full transfer of 'on premise' storage to 'the cloud'.
- Improve cyber security, both through improved network integrity but also managed detection and response.
- Continue to develop ways of working and improve the use of technology and software, to support hybrid working and improved team and cross-functional collaboration.

In 2025-26 we will focus on embedding the system improvements for both staff and architects as we expand registrant services and 'self-serve' access. We will develop enhanced data analytics so that we are providing insight on key trends to the profession and the wider built environment, considering both the risk and opportunities from emerging artificial intelligence.

6. Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on shared values and behaviours

Our vision for 2026

ARB is an organisation where all our staff and our associates understand and are highly motivated to deliver our purpose and vision, where staff are well led and well managed, have the right skills and competencies, and are working to a shared set of values and behaviours. If we achieve this, we will deliver high quality regulation.

In 2024 we will:

- Complete a relocation of ARB's office or refurbishment of current premises on a new lease.
- Refresh our People Strategy to maintain our aspiration for ARB to be a great place to work and so that we have a highly motivated and high-performing workforce who are fairly rewarded and are supported through effective training and development.
- Align staff values and behaviours with a new co-created Board and Associate Values and Behaviours framework.
- Introduce a new updated Annual Review Process with more effective 360-degree feedback mechanisms.
- Carry out a benchmarking review of our pay and reward approach to establish if significant changes are needed for staff, Board or associates.
- Carry out a fundamental review of the staff handbook, ensuring all policies are up to date.
- Deliver an effective onboarding process of the new external auditors.

In 2025-26 we will continue our journey to be a high-performing organisation. We will use research and engagement methods to ensure we gather feedback from staff, associates and stakeholders about our operational performance. We will review the skills and competencies required of our workforce, and encourage staff development, as we continue to roll out a new IT system.

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

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



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