

Corporate Strategy

2026 - 30

Foreword

Over the past five years, the Architects Registration Board (ARB) has introduced bold and ambitious improvements to our regulatory model. We delivered much needed changes to the content and structure of the initial education and training of architects.

We introduced a statutory continuing professional development (CPD) scheme for the first time in the profession and are implementing the recommendations of an independent commission we appointed to improve how trainees can access the good quality professional practical experience they need to become an architect.

We made significant and important operational improvements within ARB, underpinned by a four-year transformation programme which is due to complete in 2026 and we have signed international mutual recognition agreements with our counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, Hong Kong, the United States and Canada.

Our vision is for regulation to be purposeful, always operating in the public interest and upholding confidence in the profession. At the same time our commitment is to demonstrate willingness to make important changes where necessary.

Despite the very significant progress that has been made, we have an opportunity to make further positive change, recognising wider sectoral and public policy challenges:

- We must recognise that despite introducing important reforms, the key system-wide problems set out in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report have not yet been addressed. The key messages are that for the public interest to be served, there must be improvements in competence, in culture and in accountability. ARB must play its part in driving forward necessary changes.
- We must be sensitive to the economic challenges faced by both the profession itself as well as learning providers whose qualifications we regulate. By upholding standards and enhancing confidence in the profession, we can support the desire for economic growth which effective regulation contributes to. We act in the public's interests, and we must ensure that our regulatory work is proportionate to risks.
- We must recognise that as the demands on the profession change, we need to ensure that future professionals are equipped with the skills required to meet the demands of the built environment. Alongside this, there is an opportunity to further build new routes into the profession, improving access and ensuring high quality education and training.

Our Strategy for 2026-30 recognises these challenges and focuses on where we think we can and must make a difference.



Alan Kershaw
Chair



Hugh Simpson
Chief Executive and Registrar

Introduction

ARB exists to promote public trust and integrity of the architects' profession. Over the next five years our regulatory efforts will prioritise improvements in safety, competence and culture.

These three elements – safety, competency and culture – were key gaps highlighted in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Our own research has also demonstrated why they are the right areas to focus on. The public sees safety as non-negotiable and fundamental to the work of registered architects. We have observed the development of emerging roles for the profession and a desire to take on greater responsibilities across the United Kingdom as governments look to strengthen competence. But perhaps the biggest influence on safety and quality is the culture that exists within teams, within companies, and across the profession. Our work and that of others in the built environment including RIBA has shown how this must change.

Given the context we have outlined above, we see the key requirements for ARB over the next five years as being focused on the following three key pillars which will enable us to embed the reforms we have already introduced, and strengthen regulation in the interests of the public and in a way which supports and upholds confidence in the profession:

- Strengthening education and training of future professionals
- Upholding confidence and trust in the profession
- Delivering modern, effective and efficient regulation



**Strengthening the
education and training
of future professionals**



**Upholding confidence
and trust in the
profession**



**Delivering modern,
effective and efficient
regulation**

Strengthening the education and training of future professionals



By the end of 2030 we will have established a framework of education and training that is understood and implemented by learning providers, is accessible and supportive to students and trainees, and equips architects of the future with the right competencies to be successful.

Why it matters

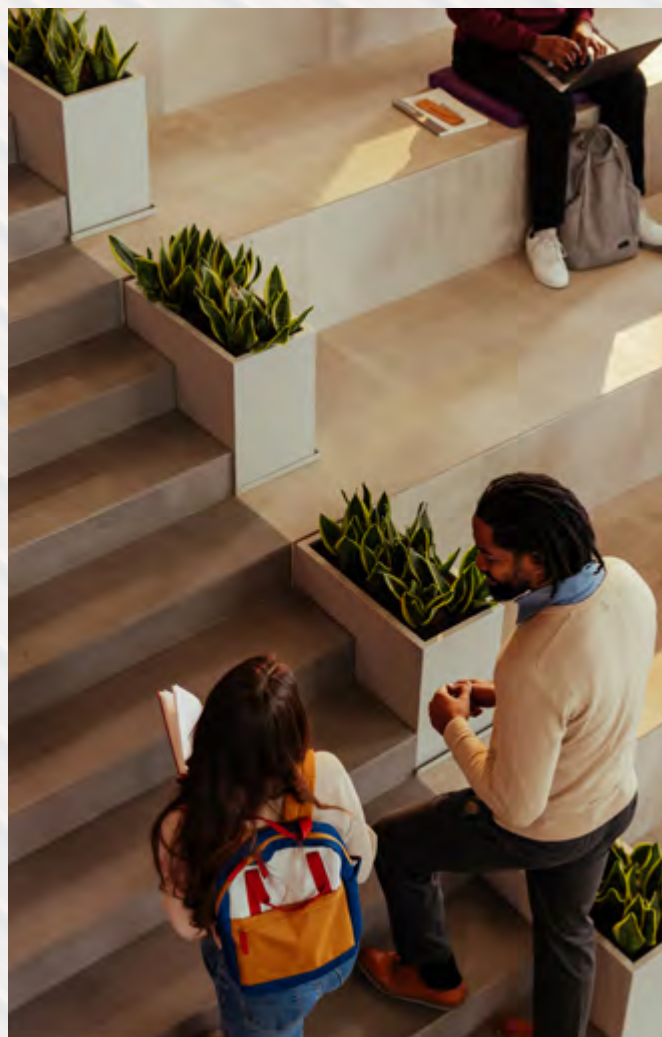
The architects' profession is constantly evolving. As some architects leave the Architects Register because of retirement or career changes, newly qualified architects enter the profession, bringing new skills and fresh perspectives. The education and training these future architects receive will shape the type of professional they become: the way they approach design decisions and the complex ethical questions they will often have to address; the way they engage with their peers and the public; and the professional culture to which they contribute. Over the last five years ARB has sought to modernise initial education and training by successfully reviewing the competency outcomes, setting new standards for learning providers and introducing a new accreditation model. Over the next five years, supported by the evaluation research we have commissioned, we want to assess the impact of these changes, embed the progress we have made and look to make further improvements where they are

needed. The education and training future architects receive must equip them with the competencies to build a productive and economically successful profession and meet the challenges society faces, including building safety, climate change, emerging technologies and the shifting demographics of society.

Our focus

Our education role is set in legislation and we have a statutory responsibility, in the public interest, to ensure that the accredited qualifications of learning providers are of good quality and prepare future professionals for registration. We are delivering fundamental modernisation of architectural education. We are rolling out the new competencies architects need to demonstrate in contemporary practice and supporting through modern accreditation processes, and in the development of new style qualifications. Our education reforms were a key pillar in our previous Corporate Strategy, and we will continue to implement them throughout the transition period, adapting where necessary.

We are acutely aware that we are delivering these reforms at a time when higher education learning providers are experiencing changes in funding policies and structures, and have new challenges to which they must respond, such as the use of AI in study and assessments. There are also challenges in the profession, particularly around the culture in which trainees are gaining their work experience. The architecture sector covers all of the UK's nations and regions, and is increasingly global. As professionals move between countries and deliver projects around the world, we need to ensure our regulation takes proper account of that wider global context.



Our five year vision

- Trainees will have a better experience as they undertake necessary professional practical work, through pathways with improved practical links between learning providers and employers, with increased clarity about what experience they need to gain, and in a professional landscape that actively supports their development
- There will be an increase in courses designed to integrate academic theory and practice-based learning with accelerated routes to registration
- An increased diversity of routes into the profession will be available to suit different individuals, all of which provide confidence in the competence of future architects
- The modernised competencies we've introduced will underpin the education and training of all future architects so that they are equipped to protect the public, deliver well designed built environments, and have a strong foundation of skills with which to face future changes
- Our quality assurance processes will be running effectively, using data and evidence to help ensure a good quality academic offering for any trainee or student on any accredited course

What we will do

- Conduct a post-implementation evaluation of our new accreditation model with input from learning providers and trainees
- Evaluate the impact of our education reforms looking at key indicators around access and attrition, and using systematic feedback from trainees and others
- Provide support to learning providers who wish to develop new integrated qualifications or new models of delivery
- Bring together education providers, practices and contractors to consider the future roles of architects and what role there may be for specialisms
- Improve the practical professional experience of trainees by introducing a coordinating role for learning providers, introducing a record to help trainees track and demonstrate their experience, and delivering further supportive changes including published guidance
- Carry out an evaluation of the demand for and feasibility of work-based routes to registration as an architect in the UK, using desk-based research, considering existing models internationally and feedback from employers

Upholding confidence and trust in the profession



By the end of 2030 we will raise competency levels of architects through a mature CPD scheme, by enhancing the professional guidance we offer, tackling poor workplace culture and by more efficiently dealing with those that fall below the standards of conduct and competence required of architects.

Why it matters

The architects' profession has a powerful impact on society. The environments architects design can last for centuries, shaping the experience of everyone who lives and works in buildings, from homes and housing estates, to parks, hospitals and transport hubs. The public expects architects to be highly skilled, utilising their expertise to keep people safe and improve their lives – and to go about their design process in an inclusive, respectful way, communicating clearly and listening to clients and communities. Architects are all representatives of their profession, and their integrity, and the public's trust, depend on shared competence and behaviours. Not everyone has the competence and meets the standards necessary to be an architect, and the Register must be the definitive list of those who are.

Our focus

Our research shows that the public and clients believe safety is a given. They expect architects to be trained to a high level of competence, and that they will approach design through the perspective of those who will use the environment and demonstrate excellent communication skills as they go about their work.

The UK's profession is internationally respected, with world-wide influence. Our regulatory approach should capitalise on this and promote growth by demonstrating continued competence and excellence to our international counterparts, and by improving regulation to remove barriers to support architects in exporting their skills and services. Similarly, we want to continue the work we've started to align international registration routes with ARB's new UK education and training framework, while simplifying the process and removing unnecessary barriers for those seeking to join the UK Register from abroad.

For architects to deliver the level of quality and professionalism the public expects and deserves, they need to work in an environment that enables excellence. We want to collaborate with the profession to tackle the concerns architects and trainees have expressed about culture and behaviours, including discrimination and sexual misconduct.



At the same time, there are lessons to be learned from past failures in the built environment sector – the Grenfell Tower tragedy amongst them – and future challenges such as the climate emergency and developing technologies that are changing how we work and live. The government is also alive to these challenges, with policy reviews currently underway to ensure that the public remains protected. We will continue to work closely with government and other key stakeholders across the built environment to help shape those reforms with a clear focus on the needs of the public.

Our five year vision

- The new CPD scheme will be fully embedded with an evaluation on the reported impact on registrants
- We will be using aggregated data on CPD conducted to share insights into what CPD the profession is doing and its impact on their practice
- There will be multiple and diverse routes into the profession which encourage greater access for competent professionals
- There will be measurable shifts in culture so that those working in the sector feel safer, more supported without fear of discrimination or sexual harassment
- Trust in the sector will be improved through collaborative work with other bodies and meaningful action on competence, particularly in light of the UK government's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

What we will do

- Publish supplementary guidance and advice that supports the Code of Conduct and Practice
- Promote the standards of conduct and competence required of architects so they are understood by the profession and their clients, and drive competence and measurable improvements in culture
- Establish new international routes to registration by simplifying the assessment process for candidates
- Review and update our existing Mutual Recognition Agreements, looking to expand their scope and consider new agreements where they meet our principles
- Lead the profession towards a more inclusive culture that supports good quality work by continuing our work towards the four ambitious goals in our EDI strategy. We will prioritise increased access to the Register for under-represented groups; more inclusive workplace cultures that remove barriers to progression; and ending discrimination and sexual harassment in the profession by improving our data and insights into the profession, providing resources to tackle discrimination, and collaborating with others including RIBA to support professionals in tackling discrimination and improving positive behaviours

Delivering modern, effective and efficient regulation



By the end of 2030 we will have completed the modernisation of our services to registrants, have worked in alignment with government and other regulators to improve culture, competency and safety, and be able to use data to inform regulatory policy.

Why it matters

As a statutory regulator, ARB must operate within the scope of its legislation. Within those boundaries, however, we are committed to innovating and moving beyond narrow debates about how regulation is characterised. Our focus is on ensuring that regulation serves the public interest while enabling and encouraging the profession to apply its considerable experience and skills for the wider public good.

When regulation works, it brings consumer and market confidence. Far from being a challenge to economic growth, proportionate and effective regulation is a pre-requisite for thriving professions and markets. We aspire to being a leader in regulatory innovation in the built environment and to work with governments across the UK to enable the profession to rise to the challenges presented by the climate change imperative and the need to improve quality and safety in the built environment.

Our focus

Government has rightly challenged regulators to demonstrate how their work does not impose unnecessary burdens. We intend to be more ambitious: we want regulation to positively support confidence in the sector and enable growth and recognition of the skills and competence of the profession.

Being a modern regulator means ensuring we focus on 'what works', by evaluating our impact and being willing to stop things which are demonstrably not working.



We have invested heavily in our IT infrastructure so that we can reduce the burden on architects registering with us and carrying out CPD. Through our IT transformation architects can manage their registration online, remotely, at any time of day. We are also opening up routes to registration so that we focus on how we can enable competent professionals to register, rather than taking an overly risk-averse model of regulation.

Over the next five years, our work across all statutory functions must be ambitious for both the public and the profession, proportionate to risk to the public, and focused on promoting high standards and confidence in the profession.

Our five year vision

- Research and data analytics will drive our regulatory work. This data will be published to share insights with the public and profession about the 'state of the sector'
- Efficiencies in our operational processes will be demonstrated year-on-year as we control our costs base and support our strategic goals for long term financial sustainability
- We will deliver measurable improvements to our operational engagement with architects through a 'customer-focused' approach
- ARB will report on environmental sustainability and demonstrate support for climate change initiatives
- Equality, diversity and inclusion will be embedded within our organisation
- Professionals will be held to account, and the public protected, through improved investigations and title investigations that are more efficient and utilise technology

What we will do

- We will establish and deliver a refreshed IT strategy, with necessary governance, to enable us to harness AI and other technology. Our focus will be driving more effective and efficient regulation, recognising risks in relation to new technology
- Implement a new organisational performance management framework, with measurable and transparent performance indicators, to support the delivery of our new Corporate Strategy and Business Plans. This will be published on a quarterly basis to ensure our Board, stakeholders and government can hold us to account on our progress to deliver our statutory functions
- Modernise our investigations model, one of our high risk and high cost processes, to identify opportunities for efficiency savings and quality improvements
- Review our regulatory framework in light of the government's post-Grenfell regulatory reform agenda. This will include assessing the effectiveness of title regulation and exploring alternative models that could better support our statutory purpose
- Improve our stakeholder relationships by growing our engagement with practices; reaching trainees more often and earlier; using more regular and constructive engagement with learning providers. We will also consider how best to assess public confidence in the regulation of architects
- Collaborate with government and other leadership bodies across industry to drive improvements in the quality of the built environment
- Equip our staff and associates with the right skills and support to deliver our Corporate Strategy effectively

Architects Registration Board
70 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8NH

www.arb.org.uk
+44 (0) 20 7580 5861
info@arb.org.uk

