



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 Adaption 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 adaption 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 25 April 2023 and apply to all applications for registration under Section 4(1)(b) of the Architects Act 1997 received after 25 April 2023.

2. The Procedures for the UK Adaption 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 that the applicant has met the assessment requirements they shall notify the applicant in writing with the reasons as to why they are not satisfied. In making this decision, they should consider any reports or advice from the independent assessor which could indicate if the assessment was either defective or irregular in any way.
- 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

The UK adaptation assessment will operate in line with the public sector equality duty.

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.

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

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

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

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 the applicant has failed the assessment, but the Registrar has received a report or advice from the independent assessor which indicates that the recommendation of the assessors was defective or irregular in any way, the outcome will not normally count towards the maximum number of permissible attempts. This decision shall be at the discretion of the Registrar. The Registrar will determine whether a re-assessment fee will be payable on a case by case basis taking into consideration the reasons for the decision and the applicant will be notified of this in writing.

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.

More information

For more information please contact the Architects Registration Board

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