Architects
Registration
Board

Tomorrow's Architects: a Consultation

ARB's Proposed Standards for Learning Providers

Introduction

Purpose of these Standards

The Architects Act 1997 gives an individual the right to register as an architect if they hold the qualifications, and have gained the practical experience, that we have accredited ('prescribed'). For UK qualifications, we do this in two ways.

First, we have published Outcomes that describe the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours that an individual is required to demonstrate by the end of their initial education and training.[1]

Second, we set standards for providers ("Standards"). Learning Providers ("Providers") must meet these if their architectural qualifications are to be accredited by us. This includes how they are expected to deliver the Outcomes.

Taken together, these help to ensure that someone who has completed accredited qualifications has the practical experience required to join the Register of Architects.

The Standards will also be supplemented by an Accreditation Handbook, which will set out in more detail the types of information Providers should provide so that we can accredit their qualification.[2] The process by which accreditation of qualifications will be awarded is set out in the Accreditation Rules.

We are committed to ensuring that anyone joining the Register of Architects is equipped to design a built environment that reflects the needs of society so that people can be safe and live well, and helps to tackle the fundamental challenges our planet faces.

Our overriding objective is to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the Register of Architects. This will be done by ensuring that only individuals that are competent to act as architects are admitted to and remain on the Register.

We are also committed to supporting the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. We want to support the goal that anyone who is capable of meeting the required competencies has a fair opportunity of becoming an architect, and in particular, that our requirements do not create additional barriers.

These Standards therefore offer flexibility to Providers in delivering education and training, while giving clarity and reassurance to ARB, other educators, students and the public as to the quality of accredited architectural qualifications.

[1] For the purpose of this document, Outcomes also includes those qualifications that are based on the General Criteria and Graduate Attributes at Pts 1 and 2, and the Professional Criteria at Pt 3.
[2] In advance of the Accreditation Handbook being prepared, alongside each Standard is an explanatory note which details the types of information it is likely that Providers should provide to demonstrate compliance with that Standard.

Delivering
Outcomes

Standard 1:
Educational content

Qualifications are designed, developed, delivered and reviewed to ensure that those who are awarded the qualification have met the Outcomes at the relevant level.

Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this Standard by:

1.1 Showing how the qualification delivers the relevant Outcomes

1.2 Regularly reviewing the qualification content, to ensure continued delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with this Standard

Standard 1:
What might this look like in practice?

Compliance with the Standard and associated measures will need to be demonstrated. This will be done by showing how the qualification will ensure the Outcomes are met in a mapping document and in the module descriptors, in which the 'mapped' Outcomes will be clearly identifiable in the content of the module learning outcomes.

Additional material to meet this Standard should include the programme specification and a qualification structure diagram.

Providers should show their mechanisms for internal and external review of the content and delivery of the qualification.

Standard 2:
Assessments

Assessments are designed, developed, delivered and reviewed to ensure that those who are awarded the qualification have met the Outcomes.

Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this Standard by:

2.1 Showing how assessments fairly test whether the student has met the Outcomes at the relevant level

2.2 Showing how External Examiners provide assurance about the rigour of assessment arrangements and that those who are awarded the qualification have met the Outcomes

2.3 Regularly reviewing the content and procedures of assessments to ensure continued delivery of the Outcomes, and compliance with relevant quality assurance processes, regulations and frameworks

Standard 2:
What might this look like in practice?

Programme module descriptors will be key in showing how the qualification will deliver the relevant Outcomes. Module assessments, as read in the descriptors, should readily and comprehensively explain the mapped outcomes.

External Examiners should provide rigorous scrutiny of the programme. Such rigour should be readily apparent via the institution's External Examiner policies, and the diversity of the recruitment process. That process must be designed to ensure recruitment of suitably qualified candidates. Examiner reports should be comprehensive and comment on matters relevant to these Standards, and include both standard confirmation of essential quality metrics and accompanying narrative summaries.

Providers should submit their quality assurance processes, including documentation on the assessment procedures. It should be readily apparent that quality assurance regarding assessments is of the required standard to ensure the adequacy of the assessment process and that all successful students, including those studying abroad or who have received advanced entry into the programme, have met the Outcomes.

Providers may submit quality assurance audits from any external and internal bodies.

Resource and Capacity

Standard 3:
Human resources

There will be qualified and experienced educators, assessors and support staff to deliver the Outcomes and to ensure compliance with these Standards.

Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this Standard by:

3.1 Showing how the quantity, quality and experience of staff will ensure delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards

3.2 Having in place procedures for selecting, inducting, supporting and appraising staff that will ensure the continued delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards

3.3 Having in place procedures for selecting, inducting, training and appraising External Examiners that will provide assurance as to the delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards

3.4 Evidencing their assurance that anyone involved in the delivery or assessment of the Outcomes understands and meets their obligations in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion

3.5 Showing how educators will maintain their knowledge and skills related to architecture and pedagogy through continuing professional development

3.6 Regularly reviewing staffing to ensure continued delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards

3.7 Recording and analysing the protected characteristics of educators, assessors and support staff, and having a strategy for addressing under-representation

Standard 3:
What might this look like in practice?

Providers should submit a range of evidence regarding their staffing resource. This will include staff CVs and a staff list overview. It will also include a rationale that underpins their decisions on the quantity, quality and experience of staff employed to deliver their qualification. Both national EDI and higher education sector standards should be referenced and complied with.

Providers will be able to evidence policies and procedures used for selection and training staff, along with systems to support both the practice of architecture and the delivery of relevant CPD to ensure their staffing resource remains competent to teach and assess students.

Providers should show the mechanisms to regularly review their systems and staffing levels in relation to student numbers, national requirements and good practice. This will be supported by information on contingency planning measures to respond to specific shifts in student numbers, long-term staff absences, disruption in teaching, and other impacts on resource allocation.

Information should be provided on the appointment, induction, reporting and feedback systems for External Examiner, PSA (Professional Student Advisor), and any third-party input or oversight of the provider's assessment and award processes and procedures, students' practical training, and any periodic course development. This information should include nomination forms, statements of roles and responsibilities, and descriptions of transparent mechanisms to ensure those appointed are knowledgeable from both an architectural education and practice background.

Standard 4:
Teaching and learning resources

There are sufficient and appropriate teaching and learning resources to deliver and assess the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards.

Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this Standard by:

4.1 Having appropriate studio, teaching, digital, workshop and site-based resources available in a timely manner to deliver the Outcomes, commensurate with student numbers

4.2 Ensuring equality of access to teaching and learning resources for all students

4.3 Regularly reviewing their teaching and learning resources and processes to ensure continued delivery of the Outcomes and compliance with these Standards assurance processes, regulations and frameworks

Standard 4:
What might this look like in practice?

Providers should provide a robust resource allocation model in the context of projected student numbers, demonstrating equality of access to all students and considering the impact of protected characteristics and potential mitigations needed as a result. They will be able to provide their policies for adjusting the model to deal with students with differing needs and for fluctuating student numbers. Providers should provide details of the physical resources available to students.

Providers will not be required to meet a minimum resource requirement but should take account of the Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement in considering resource provision. They should also show how they ensure equality of access for students.

Providers should demonstrate contingency plans in place in the event of disruption, and both internal and external review mechanisms which will provide feedback on resource provision. Providers should have mechanisms in place to take account of, and act in response to, these review mechanisms.

Learning Culture

Standard 5:
Governance and leadership

Providers will have effective governance and leadership to ensure the quality of education and training, and instil a culture of equality, continuous improvement, transparency and accountability.

Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this Standard by:

5.1 Having a governance system that treats staff and students fairly, and delivers education, assessment and training in a way that fulfils the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion

5.2 Having a governance system that measures the performance of the Provider against these Standards, is accountable to the Provider's senior leadership and reports promptly to ARB if any of the Standards are not being met

5.3 Having contingency measures that are designed to ensure continued compliance with these Standards in the event of disruption

5.4 Showing how the views of students, staff and relevant stakeholders contribute to the development of policies, systems or processes that relate to these Standards

5.5 Having appropriate systems for students, staff and third parties to raise concerns about the Provider's compliance with these Standards, for investigating those concerns, and documenting and reporting any action taken

5.6 Recording and analysing the protected characteristics of applicants and students, and taking documented action where that analysis shows that any policy, system or process may disadvantage any of those groups

5.7 Having systems in place to accurately recognise applicants' academic and/or professional experience and suitability at the point of admission

Standard 5:
What might this look like in practice?

Providers should provide a range of policies to show awareness of the impact of protected characteristics and potential mitigations to manage the impact and help create fair and equal opportunities. They should be able to demonstrate how those policies have been impressed upon students and implemented throughout the period of accreditation through the reporting of data and feedback.

Any relevant information that the Provider already produces for the requirements of other regulators may be submitted to help demonstrate compliance with this Standard.

Standard 6:
Student support

Students are provided with a safe and supportive learning environment which enables them to achieve the Outcomes and prepares them to practise as an architect.

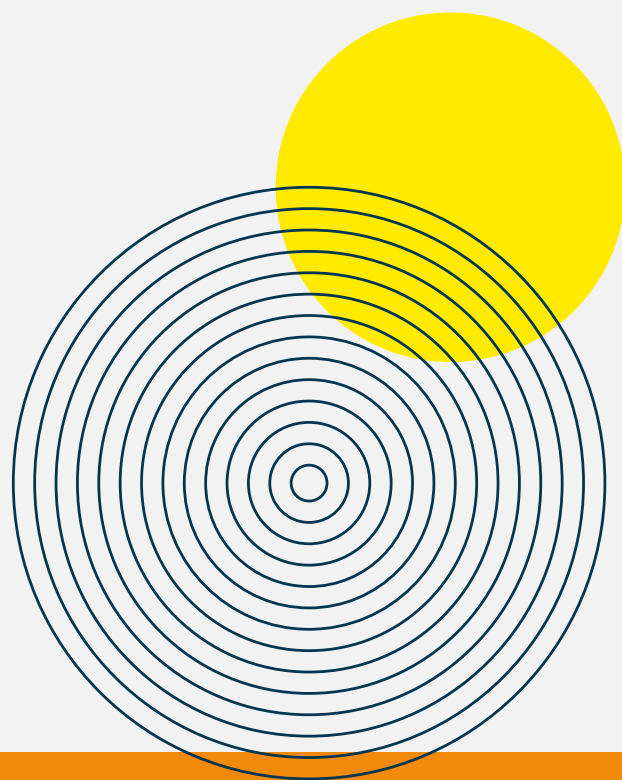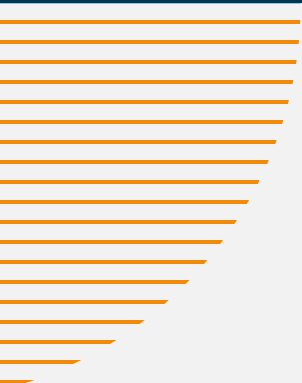Providers will be able to demonstrate meeting this standard by:

6.1 Having policies, procedures and resources that ensure timely access to student support in relation to:

    a. discrimination

    b. bullying & harassment

    c. pastoral care

    d. academic support

6.2 Committing sufficient resources to ensure all students experience a safe and supportive learning culture throughout their studies

6.3 Ensuring that students have guidance and support to access professional practical experience where it is a requirement of the qualification

6.4 Having systems in place to identify and support students whose performance or progress causes concern

6.5 Providing accurate information to applicants and students on how to become a registered architect in the UK

Standard 6:
What might this look like in practice?

Providers should demonstrate their commitment to supporting students throughout the qualification and in preparation for practising as an architect.

They will be able to provide documentary evidence of policies, procedures and resources relating to the areas set out in the Standard and associated measures, and of the review mechanisms in place to ensure these remain relevant and sufficient for the number and needs of their students.

Additional material required to show compliance with the Standard may include information and support offered in relation to professional practice (e.g. PSA responsibilities) and ARB registration; and how the provider will identify and support students at risk of under-performance.