



Architects
Registration
Board

ARB Accreditation Fees

Fee setting 2024: why, who, and how

Why ARB is introducing accreditation fees

- ARB exists to protect the public and uphold confidence in the profession of architects. We do this by assuring the public that those on the Architects Register are suitably qualified and competent. Our legislation sets out in more detail how we fulfil this important role on behalf of the public. In particular, the law requires us to accredit (referred to in legislation as ‘prescribe’) those qualifications leading to registration.
- Between 2021 and 2023 we engaged and consulted with the profession, learning providers and other interested stakeholders on significant and overdue reforms to the initial education and training of architects. Those reforms included important changes to the competency outcomes required of aspiring architects, new standards for learning providers and a new risk-based accreditation methodology.
- The Government consulted on amendments to the Architects Act including the changes regarding fees between November 2020 and January 2021, followed through in the Building Safety Act 2022 and subsequent secondary legislation.
- In October 2023, the Board confirmed its policy principle that the costs of fulfilling its statutory role in accreditation should be met by the institutions and providers ARB accredits, not architects through their annual registration fees.
- The Board’s decision was to introduce the fees to cover our costs alongside the implementation of our new accreditation methodology.

Who will be required to pay the fees

- ARB's three new fees to cover the costs of accreditation are to be levied on learning providers (such as universities) that deliver ARB-accredited qualifications.
- This reflects the Board's policy position that the costs of accrediting qualifications should be borne by those providing accredited qualifications, e.g. those using the ARB accreditation service. A cost recovery basis is also the intention of the legislation when it was approved by Parliament. The alternative would be for accreditation costs to be borne by individual architects as part of their annual retention fee for remaining on the Register. The fees are:
 - **An annual fee for assessing each accredited learning provider.** The Board decided that a charge of £9,200 will be made to each of the 60 institutions that are currently accredited to deliver architecture courses.
 - **A fee for assessing each new qualification.** The Board decided that a charge of £3,000 will be payable for each new qualification applied for. This is a one-off fee payable upon receipt of a new application.
 - **A review fee per qualification.** The Board decided that a charge of £2,000 will be payable for the renewal of each existing qualification. This is a one-off fee payable when ARB conducts a periodic review of the qualification/s at a particular institution.
- The proposal was for the annual fee for all ARB-accredited institutions (£9,200) to be payable by 1 September 2024 to cover the year from 1 January to 31 December 2024. We do not expect any invoices to be paid before 1 August.
- The fees for new qualifications (£3,000), and for reviewing existing qualifications (£2,000), are payable at the point in time when the institution makes a new application or when ARB reviews an existing qualification for its renewal.

How ARB calculated the accreditation fees

- The law is clear that fees **must not exceed the reasonable costs of providing the service**. The service covers ARB accreditation activities including:
 - the process of assessing data returns and the quality assurance process as a whole;
 - the work of the new Accreditation Committee;
 - tailored visits to institutions as part of either the renewal or first-time consideration of accreditation.
- Further detail on accreditation activities is set out in the finalised [Accreditation Rules](#) (consulted on and subsequently introduced in 2023). ARB's Standards for Learning Providers apply to all accredited institutions to measure the quality of the service they provide. The size of the learning provider has minimal impact on ARB's quality assurance work, so it would not be appropriate to vary the fees according to the size of the learning provider.
- The Board sets the amount annually alongside the retention fee for registrants. The law explains that the costs recovered must relate to annual costs incurred, rather than future expenditure. The amount must not exceed the reasonable costs of providing the service, taking one year with another.
- The majority of accreditation costs are to cover the staff team of eight at ARB who are responsible for assessing accreditation applications and reviewing annual data returns from approximately 70 providers relating to over 200 accredited qualifications.
- Under the new accreditation methodology there will be additional costs for visitors who will use a mixture of virtual visits and, where necessary, in person visits. Finally, there are costs associated with our Accreditation Committee responsible for making decisions on accreditation of qualifications.
- The Board decided to introduce the fees on 18 October 2023 and ARB wrote to learning providers on 31 October 2023 announcing the fees and how they are to be paid. In the first year, the invoices will be issued to providers no earlier than July 2024, with payment due by 1 September 2024.
- In future years, accreditation fees for an annual period will be set by the Board and notified to accredited learning providers the previous October.

Feedback and ARB response

Feedback

- We have had lots of feedback from providers of accredited qualifications since the Board announced the proposed fee levels in October.
- The feedback has included concerns about the timing of the introduction of the fee, the fee levels, and structure and impact on institutions.

ARB response

- Our initial response was to acknowledge the poor communication with providers, particularly about the timing and lack of notice about the fee levels.
- We also wanted to reflect more broadly on concerns raised by institutions. We communicated, through SCOSA, our desire to set out in more detail the fee structure and to create an opportunity for providers of accredited qualifications to share more feedback about the impact on them.
- The Board's principle is clear that there should be a full cost recovery model but we want to reflect further on implementation and impact.

Your views

- The legislation is clear that the fee amount must not exceed the reasonable costs of providing the service, taking one year with another.
- However, we do want to reflect further our own cost estimates across the three fee areas (annual fee, new application fee and renewal fee) as well as the regulatory impact on providers of the introduction of fees.
- The fees are being set in the first year of ARB's new accreditation process and during a period of transition to a new regulatory framework for training and educating architects. The fees are set on the basis of the current and expected costs of ARB's work. We are reflecting further on the structure of the fees in light of feedback, and want to offer providers a further opportunity to explain impact.
- We welcome stakeholder views on the regulatory impact of the accreditation fees as set out in this document. Whilst we are not able to change anything that is set by legislation, we welcome feedback on the following:
 - Anything further that ARB should consider regarding how the fees are to be paid. For example, whether there is anything you would like us to know about the timing of learning provider budget setting and the timing at which we invoice for the fees.
 - Anything in the structure of the fees that could have a disproportionate impact on particular groups of students or other individuals, in light of our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
 - Any further regulatory impacts to which you would like to draw to our attention.
- Please use the survey [here](#) to share your feedback by **Friday 16 February 2024**.

Education Reforms Transition Timetable



2024-25

ARB continues to review existing qualifications using risk-based review process with the new Accreditation Committee making decisions relating to continued prescription and any conditions imposed.



January 2025

ARB's Accreditation Committee receives the first set of new qualifications based on the new outcomes for decision, to have students start in September 2025.



September 2027

No new students can commence the 'old' Part 2. All qualifications are now based on the outcomes. Part 1 is no longer prescribed. Prescribed Exam/MRA UK Adaptation Assessment model will be replaced with a new model for assessing equivalent levels of competence.



December 2028

Any old Part 3 courses cease accreditation. All graduating students after 2028 would have qualified through the new structure.

Any questions?



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