



Architects  
Registration  
Board

# **Draft Scheme for Continuing Professional Development**

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# Executive Summary



**1.1** The Building Safety Act 2022 has broadened the Architects Registration Board's authority to monitor and assess the competence of architects throughout their careers by allowing the creation of a new continuing professional development (CPD) scheme for registered architects.

**1.2** ARB has developed four principles upon which a CPD scheme will be based. They are that the scheme should:

- i. Improve overall competence of the profession
- ii. Be tailored by architects to their own practice and needs
- iii. Be proportionate and deliverable
- iv. Avoid duplication where possible

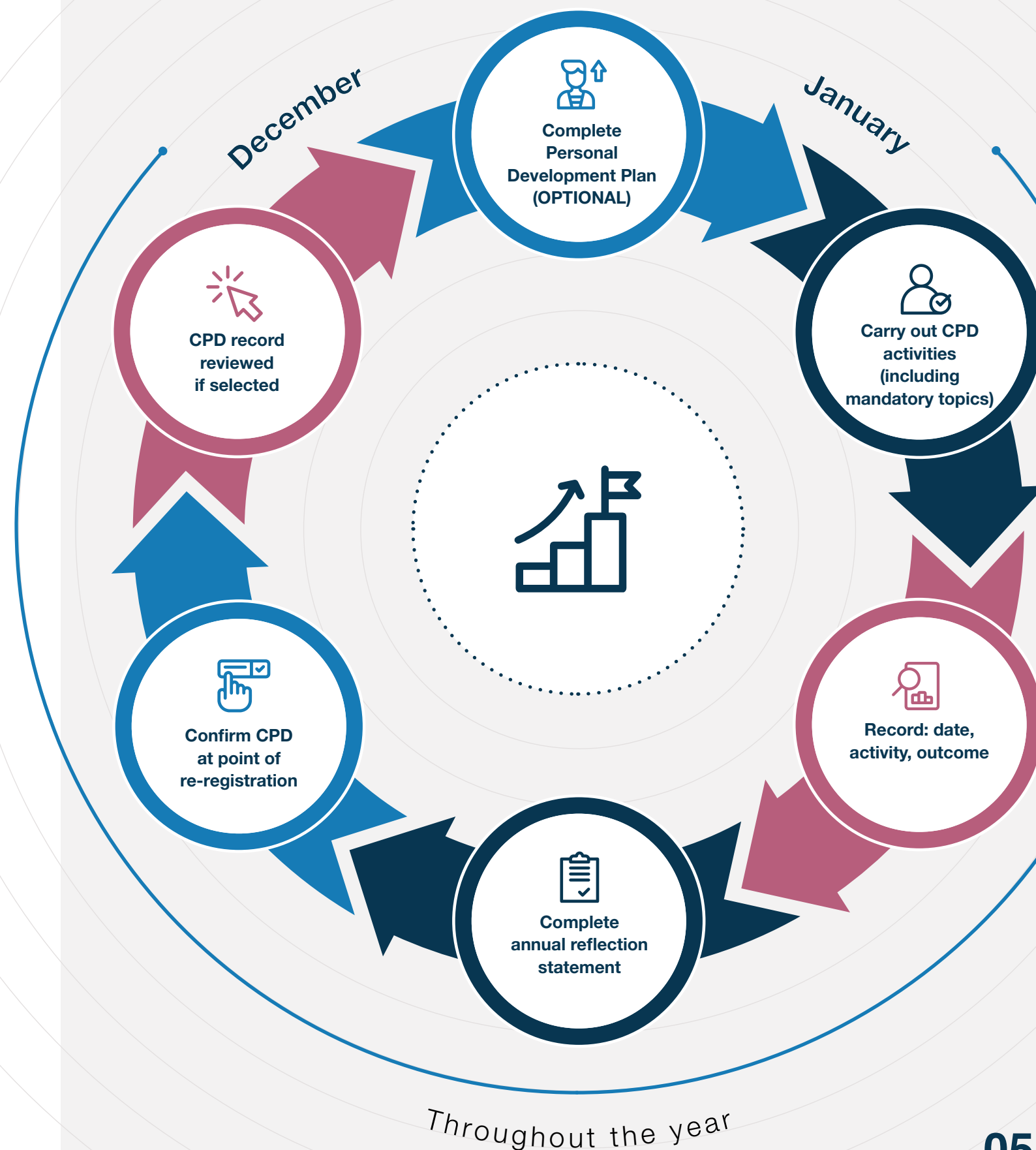
**1.3** The CPD scheme will be focused on the outcomes of CPD carried out, rather than the fact that training has been undertaken. Architects will be required to carry out and record their CPD activities, and to reflect on the impact that their development has had on their competence and practice.

**1.4** Each year, ARB will review and assess whether there are any areas of architectural practice that must be covered by architects through their CPD. If mandatory CPD topics are set, architects may address these topics in a way that is relevant to their practice. ARB will not dictate the type of CPD that is carried out, nor provide the training.

**1.5** All architects will be expected to carry out and record their CPD activities – it will be a requirement of continued registration and form part of the retention fee process. There will not be a minimum number of activities that must be carried out, as the focus of the CPD scheme is on the quality of architects' development rather than carrying out an arbitrary number of activities. ARB will provide extensive guidance and tools to help architects comply with the scheme.

**1.6** Architects will be able to record their CPD records on our ARB platform or an alternative CPD recording platform that is compliant with the scheme's requirements.

**1.7** A percentage of architects' CPD records will be audited for quality assurance and compliance purposes. Temporary exemptions may be approved for those architects who are unable to carry out the required CPD. There will be opportunities for those architects who haven't met the required standards to take the necessary steps before they are removed from the Register of Architects.





# Introduction



## The role of the Architects Registration Board

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

**2.2** 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 architecture qualifications required to join the Register of Architects and with oversight of their CPD.
- 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'.

**2.3** 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.

**2.4** The contribution that regulation can make to this overarching purpose may be small, but we recognise that architects can only achieve their own goals, potential and outcomes if supported by effective regulation.

## What is CPD?

**3.1** Continuing professional development (CPD) is a combination of approaches, ideas and techniques that will help a professional maintain and improve the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to carry out their work. The skills, knowledge and experience can be gained through both formal and informal development opportunities.

**3.2** CPD activities are wide ranging and combine numerous approaches to learning. Different procedures such as training workshops, e-learning programmes, best practice, and idea sharing, conferences, events and seminars can help individuals to develop and progress professionally. Work based feedback and lessons learnt sessions or feedback sessions with clients can also be classified by CPD.

**3.3** In the United Kingdom most regulated professions are required to carry out CPD and keep a record of their professional development to retain or renew their licence to practise.

## Why is CPD important?

**4.1** Architects play a vital role in creating a built environment that is safe, sustainable and where everyone in society can live well. The public and users of architects' services have a right to expect that architects will not only be competent on their first day of registration, but that they will continue to maintain and develop their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours in whichever field of architecture they choose to practise.

**4.2** CPD helps to maintain and develop a person's professional competence. Professionals across all sectors carry out ongoing professional development so they can improve their own practice and contribute to the collective high standards of the profession.

## Why is an ARB CPD scheme needed?

**5.1** As the regulator of the architects' profession, ARB sets the education and training requirements for UK architects and sets and enforces the professional standards expected of them. The updated Architects Act 1997 gives ARB the power to monitor and assess the continuing professional development of architects throughout their careers. The changes in the law necessitate ARB to establish a new framework for monitoring the way architects manage their CPD.

**5.2** In 2020, ARB carried out a significant piece of research into the future competence of architects.<sup>1</sup> The research included an analysis of how architects might best maintain and develop their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours throughout their careers.

**5.3** The research found that statutory regulation of architects is out of step with other professions in that, at present, registration can be continued without any confirmation that an individual has taken steps to maintain their competence.

**5.4** All UK professions analysed have a minimum requirement for CPD (excluding solicitors who reflect on their work and determine how much learning and development is needed individually to ensure their competence).<sup>2</sup> All of those schemes are based on a blend of formal and informal training, which are tailored towards the individual needs and risks of their specific profession.

**5.5** Most architects already demonstrate a commitment to continued learning throughout their professional lives. Architects told us that they carry out both formal and informal CPD annually. Our research found that 70% of respondents carried out more than 15 hours of formal CPD annually, around half of whom said that they complete more than 35 hours. This included both self-directed learning and acquiring of new experience in the workplace, alongside formal training delivered by an external provider.

**5.6** There was a high degree of acknowledgement from our research participants that a more formal system to record that work would be an appropriate step in upholding public confidence in the profession and raising competence.

**5.7** We have used the powers conferred by the Building Safety Act 2022 to propose a scheme that reflects that commitment and will help to uphold public confidence in the competence of the profession. The scheme will make an architect's responsibility to maintain their competence a requirement of their continued registration.

<sup>1</sup> The SQW survey is available here: [Review of architects' competence research project \(arb.org.uk\)](https://arb.org.uk/review-of-architects-competence-research-project)

<sup>2</sup> SRA continuing competence scheme: [SRA | FAQs about continuing competence | Solicitors Regulation Authority](https://sra.org.uk/faqs-about-continuing-competence)

## The four principles

**6.1** In considering what kind of scheme might be most appropriate for architects and under the requirements of the Architects Act, we proposed four principles to underpin the development of our scheme.



### 1 Improve overall competence of the profession

The scheme will need to create an overall positive shift in the collective competence of the profession by promoting a culture of continuing professional development, focused on outcomes instead of inputs.



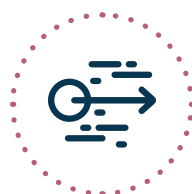
### 2 Tailored by architects to their own practice and needs

An effective CPD scheme must allow for individuals to maintain and develop their competence in a way that is relevant to their practice. This means that we are not proposing to introduce a 'one-size-fits-all' scheme. Instead, we will develop a scheme that will encourage architects to reflect, plan, act and evaluate on their learning activities in a way that is relevant to their own practice and development needs.



### 3 Proportionate and deliverable

The scheme we design should, where possible, avoid any additional costs for architects, and they should be able to view the time they spend on it as an investment in their development. This would likely rule out a model which requires a detailed analysis of every architect's ongoing competence on an annual basis.



### 4 Avoid duplication where possible

One of the key themes emerging from the Government's consultation on the proposed changes to the Architects Act was a commitment to avoid unnecessary duplication with the CPD requirements of architects' professional bodies. An ARB scheme should minimise unnecessary bureaucracy and allow architects maximum opportunity to use their time valuably. While ARB had to create a model that is suitable for all registered architects, we paid due regard to how best it can work alongside these existing schemes – both in terms of subject matter and logistical compatibility (such as being able to write up CPD once but log it in more than one system).

## The Scheme



**7.1** Our scheme is outcomes focused. This means that rather than focusing on how many hours or credit points have been counted, our objective is to support architects to develop professionally from their CPD activities.

**7.2** Our scheme will enable architects to concentrate on the areas they want to develop. In addition, the scheme will aim to:

- Raise competence levels across the profession
- Increase public confidence in the profession
- Improve architects' eligibility to practice in an increasingly regulated area of building safety

**7.3** Complying with the CPD scheme will be a requirement of registration. An architect must participate in CPD activities and be able to demonstrate what competencies they have developed and how these will improve their practice to retain registration. While there is no minimum requirement for the number of activities, we suggest that architects should aim to complete at least eight activities per year.

**7.4** Any architect who wishes to be readmitted to the Register following a voluntary withdrawal, or wants to be reinstated following a forced suspension or erasure, must demonstrate how they have maintained their competence and what they plan to do for the first CPD cycle when back on the Register.

**7.5** All architects on the UK Register are required to comply with this scheme, including any newly registered or those returning to the register after 1 January.





## Requirements

### 8.1 Prepare:



Architects should identify how they want to develop, or which topics they want to develop their knowledge in. They should create a personal development plan (PDP), a useful tool to help them organise and plan their CPD over the year. Creating a PDP is optional, but architects should take the time to review what they want to achieve and plan how to meet their development goals. An architect's development needs may change over time, so the PDP should be used as a live document to reflect changing priorities throughout the year.

### 8.2 Participate:



Architects take part in CPD activities and annually record all activities which improve their expertise and ability to practise. Examples can include discussing a scenario with a colleague, reading an article, attending a seminar - anything that helps an architect meet their development needs. While CPD can be done at any time, we strongly encourage architects to carry out CPD throughout the year.

### 8.3 Record and reflect:



Architects must record their CPD activities on a platform that ARB provides, or on another platform that ARB has agreed is compatible with the scheme. Architects will reflect after each activity on what lesson they gained from it and how this can be applied to their practice. At the end of their CPD year, architects will then complete a reflective statement that summarises their development achievement over the last 12 months.

### 8.4 Retention:



In order to renew registration, an architect must confirm that they have carried out their CPD.

## What is a CPD activity?

**9.1** Architects are free to identify their own CPD activities. Our research and engagement have found that there is a wide range of different activities valued by different architects. We want our scheme to be inclusive, so we believe that all architects should have the flexibility to identify the best learning style for their needs and their practice.

**9.2** If an architect has developed professionally and can apply what they have learnt to their practice, then it can be considered continuing professional development.

**9.3** Activities could be formal, for instance, training delivered by an external training provider or demonstrations. Alternatively, activities could be informal such as self-directed reading, on-the-job learning, or feedback from colleagues or clients involving reflection.

**9.4** Errors, mistakes and failures can be an opportunity to develop professionally too. If an architect is able to identify the following aspects when a mistake occurs, then they can record the event as a CPD activity. Aspects to identify:

- What the aim was
- What went wrong with the plan
- What was needed to mitigate the error
- How the architect can apply what they have learnt to their future work

## Mandatory topics

**10.1** Our research has indicated that, at least at this early stage, architects want and need direction on certain areas of practice that they may need to carry out CPD in relation to. These topics may change over time, according to policies, events, or emerging research. For example, in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, Dame Judith Hackitt's Review 'Building a Safer Future' recommended that ARB should address fire safety in design as part of the competence levels required of architects, and we published guidance on that in 2021.

**10.2** ARB may, on occasion, mandate certain topics on which all architects must carry out professional development within in a particular calendar year. The topics we mandate would be sufficiently broad that any architect on the Register would be expected to understand and apply them, whatever their area of specialism or type of practice. Architects will tailor their CPD on these topics in a way that is relevant to their practice. Examples of topics that may be mandated are sustainability, fire and life safety design, or ethics.

**10.3** ARB will review annually whether mandatory topics should be set for the next year. If we do set one or more topics, we will give good notice and publish guidance on the competencies expected of architects in these areas<sup>3</sup>. Although it is not our plan to set mandatory topics every year, we will be ready to do so when our research indicates this will be helpful.

**10.4** Determining which, if any, topics should be mandated will be made following engagement with key stakeholders, including government departments and professional membership bodies across the United Kingdom.

## Reflective practice

**11.1** Architects must self-reflect to identify what they have gained from their CPD. This is evaluating how valuable their CPD activities have been for their practice. Architects will identify after each activity what they learned and how this can be applied to their practice. Annually, at the end of a CPD cycle, each architect will review the lessons learned and write a self-reflection which reviews their development over the year and, again, how it can be applied to their future practice.

**11.2** ARB will provide an optional template of prompt questions to assist architects with their reflection on the CPD they have carried out, and to help them plan for future development.

## Where do architects record their CPD?

**12.1** Architects can record their CPD activities on an ARB CPD platform that will be developed or on another CPD platform approved by ARB.

**12.2** Any architect who chooses to use an approved alternative to ARB's platform must provide a copy of their CPD record, if requested by ARB.

## When to record?

**13.1** Architects' registration runs on a calendar year. CPD should therefore be recorded from the start of the year through to the point of re-registration in November or December.

**13.2** Architects choose when they complete an activity and when they record their CPD.

**13.3** However, architects should aim to spread their activities over the twelve months, to avoid the risk of non-compliance and an administrative burden at the end of the year.

**13.4** Architects can identify the same development outcome from multiple activities. Similarly, multiple outcomes can be identified from one activity.

## What to record?

**14.1** Architects must record the following:

- What activity they completed
- When they completed the activity
- The outcome - what they learned or gained from the activity

**14.2** At the end of their CPD year, architects will record a reflective statement on the CPD they have carried out, the impact it has had on their practice, and any future training requirements.

**14.3** In order to pay their retention fee to remain on the Register, an architect will have to confirm that they have carried out the CPD as required.

## Auditing of CPD records

**15.1** For quality assurance and compliance purposes, ARB will audit a sample of CPD records each year.

**15.2** Records will be chosen randomly based on a risk-based system:

- Those that have not previously been selected for audit
- Those that have deferred, for any reason, the previous year
- Those that have previously been involved in disciplinary proceedings
- Those that have previously failed to carry out their CPD
- Those that have been off the Register for a significant period

**15.3** When a record has been audited, the architect will be informed of one of the following outcomes:

- The CPD record demonstrates compliance with the scheme
- The CPD record is insufficient, and steps that must be taken to be compliant with the scheme, and by when

**15.4** Any architect denied continued registration or removed from the Register because of non-compliance with the CPD scheme, will be informed of their rights of appeal.

**15.5** We also aim to review recorded CPD at an aggregated level and consider how best to provide insights from learning and feedback to the profession.

## Non-compliance

**16.1** Our CPD scheme is designed to encourage architects to engage in meaningful professional development. Wherever possible, we will support architects to complete their CPD and provide feedback to help architects improve engagement.

**16.2** However, where an architect has been informed that they are not compliant with ARB's CPD requirements and have not taken the necessary remedial steps within the required period, they will be removed from the Register.

**16.3** If an architect confirms during retention that they have completed their CPD records, and it is subsequently shown that they had not done so, then it would be considered a matter of dishonesty, and they would be subject to an investigation of unacceptable professional conduct.

Deferment

- 17.1 While there is an expectation that every architect on the Register will carry out CPD in support of their ongoing competence, there are entirely legitimate circumstances in which it will not be possible for some to carry out activities. Examples of this might include long-term illness, or parental leave. ARB will publish more detailed guidance on deferment alongside the CPD framework.
- 17.2 Architects, in such situations, can apply to defer their CPD submission for one year but remain on the Register.
- 17.3 If a deferment is approved the architect must submit a Personal Development Plan (PDP) which sets out how they will catch up with their CPD requirements.
- 17.4 Those deferring will automatically be selected for audit the following year.
- 17.5 Multiple deferments will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.

Readmittance and reinstatement

- 18.1 To rejoin the Register architects must demonstrate that they have maintained their competence in a way that is relevant to their practice.
- 18.2 An application to rejoin the Register will be reviewed by the Competency Standards Group (CSG) who will recommend to the Registrar if the applicant should be allowed to rejoin the Register. <sup>4</sup>
- 18.3 An application must include:
- A statement by the applicant detailing their current circumstances and reasons for wanting to rejoin the Register, of no more than 500 words
  - An up-to-date CV
  - Two references in support of the application
  - CPD record and plan. A record of what CPD the applicant has carried out while off the Register, and a personal development plan addressing how the applicant will ensure they are maintaining their competence
- 18.4 All architects returning to the Register following a voluntary withdrawal or a strike-off for non-compliance with the CPD scheme will be audited at the end of the CPD cycle they join.
- 18.5 For more information on the CSG process, please see our website CSG Guidance. The link is included in our Useful Links section of this document.

Glossary

	Meaning
Activity	An event or incident from which professional development was gained
ARB	Architects Registration Board
CPD	Continuing professional development
Deferment	The process where an architect may ask to postpone submitting their CPD record for one year
Register	The Register of Architects is the definitive record of all UK architects.
PDP	Personal Development Plan

Useful Links

	Link
FAQs	<a href="#">FAQs (arb.org.uk)</a>
Guidance for rejoining the register	
- Within 24 months	<a href="#">Rejoining the Register - Architects Registration Boards (arb.org.uk)</a>
- After 24 months	<a href="#">CSG Guidance - Architects Registration Board (arb.org.uk)</a>
RIAS CPD	<a href="#">RIAS Services for Architects (www.rias.org.uk)</a>
RIBA CPD	<a href="#">CPD and RIBA Academy (www.architecture.com)</a>
RSAAW CPD	<a href="#">RSAAW CPD and events programme (www.architecture.com)</a>
RSUA CPD	<a href="#">CPD requirements (www.rsua.org.uk)</a>

<sup>4</sup> Information is available on ARB's website at <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/guidance-notes/csg-guidance/>





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