

Scheme for

Continuing Professional Development

Version 2.0



Architects
Registration
Board

CPD Guidance

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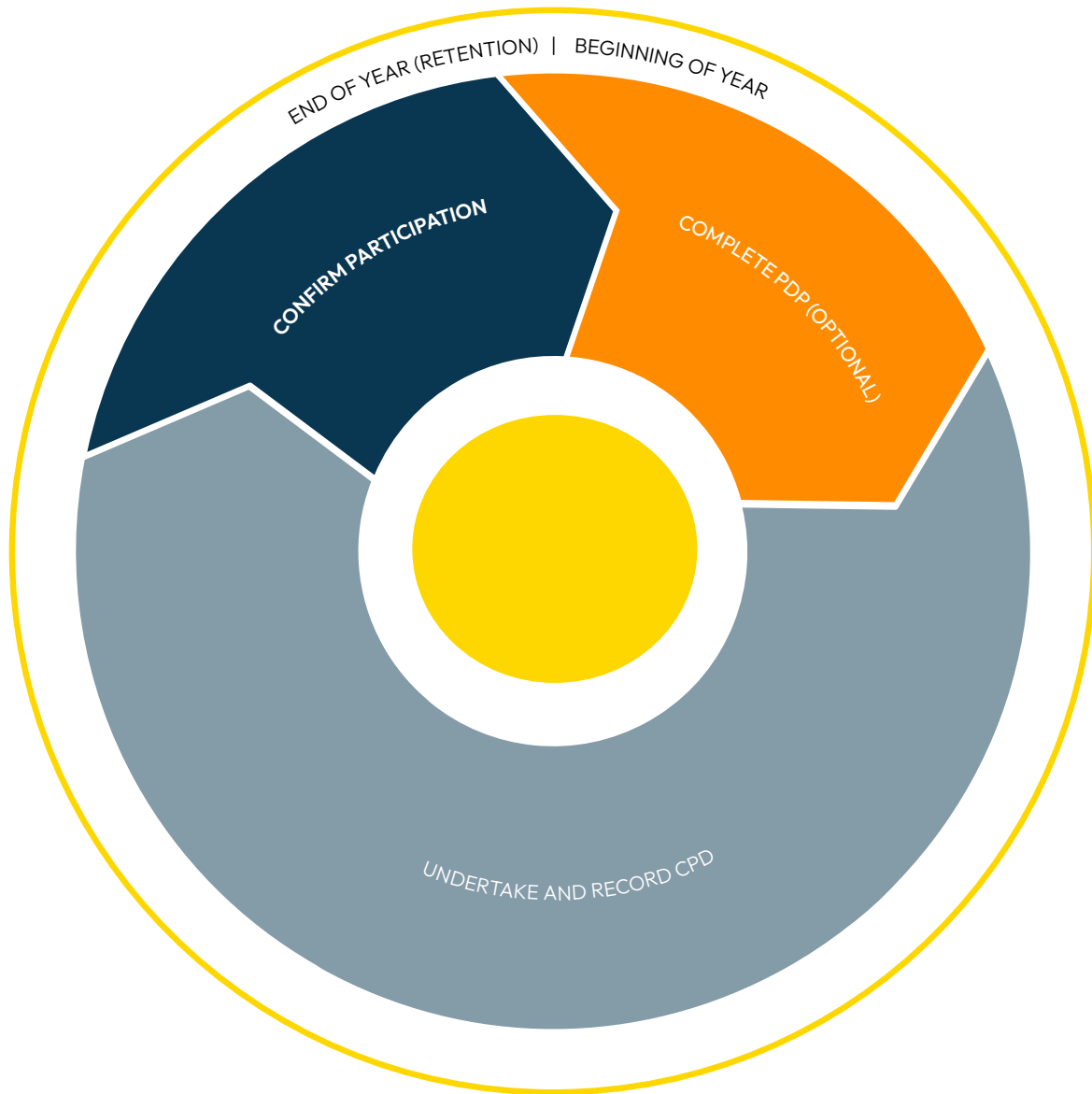
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Executive Summary

- 1.1 The CPD scheme is focused on the outcomes of CPD carried out, rather than the fact that training has been undertaken. All architects on the UK Register are required to carry out and record CPD activities, and to reflect on the impact that this development has had on their competence and practice.

While ARB recommends aiming for at least 8 CPD activities per year, architects are expected to complete a sufficient number of activities, appropriate to their role and level of responsibility, to ensure meaningful professional development, including adequate coverage of any mandatory CPD topics.

- 1.2 CPD activities can be formal such as a course or workshop or informal such as a peer discussion or reading an article. Architects should choose the activity types that best suits their learning style.
- 1.3 If mandatory CPD topics are set, architects can address these topics in a way that is relevant to their practice. ARB will not prescribe the form of CPD that should be carried out in relation to any mandatory topics, nor provide training.
- 1.4 To demonstrate their development, architects should reflect on each CPD activity completed, identifying what they learned and either how they applied the learning to their practice and/or how the learning improved their competence.
- 1.5 Architects must record their CPD for the scheme on an approved platform. There are two approved platforms: MyARB and the RIBA CPD platform.
- 1.6 The recording deadline for the CPD scheme is 31 December each year.
- 1.7 Architects should record the date of the activity, the topic and activity type as well as the learning reflection.
- 1.8 When renewing their registration, architects should declare that they are compliant with the CPD scheme and on which system they recorded their CPD.
- 1.9 If it has not been possible to carry out CPD for six months or longer, architects may request a deferment for that year. If approved this will exempt them from recording their CPD.
- 1.10 CPD records are reviewed annually for quality assurance and compliance purposes. Architects who are found to have not met the required standards will be provided with opportunities to take steps for remediation before they are removed from the Register of Architects (the Register).
- 1.11 When applying to re-join the Register, applicants should demonstrate that they have maintained their competence through CPD or that they have identified areas for development with a professional development plan.



Introduction

The role of the Architects Registration Board

- 2.1 The Architects Registration Board (ARB) is an independent professional regulator, established by Parliament as a statutory body, through the Architects Act, in 1997. ARB is accountable to government.
- 2.2 The law gives ARB a number of core functions:
 - To ensure only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects. ARB does this by approving the architecture qualifications required to join the Register of Architects (the Register).
 - ARB maintains 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.

- ARB sets the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and takes action when any architect falls below the required standards of conduct or competence.
- ARB sets requirements for and monitor the continuing professional development (CPD) that architects must undertake, to provide assurance to the public about the continuing competence of the profession.
- ARB protects the legally restricted title 'architect'.

- 2.3 ARB wants 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 ARB recognises that architects can only achieve their own goals, potential and outcomes if supported by effective regulation.

What is continuing professional development?

- 3.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the process by which professionals maintain, develop, and enhance the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to practise competently throughout their careers. CPD may be achieved through a wide range of formal and informal learning activities.
- 3.2 CPD supports professionals in reflecting on their current practice, identifying learning needs, and planning future development to ensure ongoing competence and effectiveness in their role.
- 3.3 CPD also enables individuals to take ownership of their professional growth, supporting career development and progression by allowing skills and knowledge to be developed in areas aligned with personal interests and professional goals.
- 3.4 CPD should be approached holistically, recognising that professional competence is developed over time and across a broad range of skills, knowledge, and experience.
- 3.5 When planning CPD activities, architects should consider the full scope of their professional responsibilities, including technical practice, line management, mentoring, business management, the development of transferable skills and any other professional responsibility they hold.

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 maintain and develop their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours in whichever field they practise. When architects engage in CPD, they provide assurance to the public and to clients that they are keeping their skills, knowledge and experience up to date.
- 4.2 In the United Kingdom most regulated and/or chartered professions are required to carry out

CPD and keep a record of their professional development to retain or renew their licence to practise.

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Undertaking CPD can also help architects to respond to industry changes quickly and effectively by ensuring they are up to date.

The Scheme

- 5.1 Our scheme is outcomes focused. This means that rather than focusing on inputs (such as hours spent or credit points collected), our primary interest is in what an architect has gained from an activity with regard to their competence and professional development. An architect's development is identified through the learning reflection they record.
- 5.2 Everyone on the UK Register is required to comply with this scheme. This includes:
 - **Architects who are newly registered** - when you join the Register for the first time you should carry out CPD appropriate to your needs, but you are not required to record your CPD activities until the new calendar year. For example, if you joined the Register for the first time at any point in one calendar year, you would not be required to record CPD until the January of the following calendar year.
 - **Architects returning to the Register** - All those who return to the Register should carry out CPD. Those who re-join between October and December in a given calendar year are not required to record CPD until the following calendar year. However, they must record CPD for the next calendar year.
 - **Architects who live and/or work outside of the UK** - all those on the UK Register but live and/or work outside of the UK should carry out CPD relevant to where they work. If they carry out CPD for another scheme, they should record CPD for the other scheme as well as for ARB. If the other scheme does not include CPD related to ARB's mandatory topics, architects must carry out CPD related to any mandatory topics set to remain compliant with the scheme.
 - **Architects who are retired or not currently working** - anyone who does not work but is on the UK register should carry out CPD to remain eligible to stay on the Register. They should carry out CPD that helps them develop their knowledge, understanding or skill. They should complete CPD related to any mandatory topics set. For their learning reflection, they can identify how the learning has improved their competence rather than how they have applied their learning to their practice.
 - **Architects who do not work as architects** - all those who work in a different role should carry out CPD relevant to their role. They should carry out CPD for any mandatory topics but where possible the CPD should be relevant to their role as well. If this is not possible, such architects should carry out CPD to expand their knowledge of any mandatory topic set.
- 5.3 Architects meet the scheme requirements by completing CPD relevant to their professional

needs (including for any mandatory topics set), recording their CPD activities on an approved recording system, reflecting on what they have learned and declaring they are compliant with the CPD scheme when they renew their registration.

- 5.4 Architects should determine for themselves how much CPD to undertake each year, by reflecting on their own development and practice needs. While ARB recommends aiming to complete at least 8 CPD activities per year, we recognise that development needs will vary between individuals. Architects should not compare their CPD activity with that of colleagues but instead focus on meeting their own development objectives.
- 5.5 Architects evidence their CPD through their learning reflection. CPD attendance certificates should not be used as evidence of undertaking CPD.
- 5.6 The scheme enables architects to concentrate on the areas they want to develop. In addition, the scheme aims to:
 - raise competence levels across the profession
 - increase public confidence in the profession
 - improve architects' ability to practise safely
- 5.7 The scheme does this by giving architects the autonomy to determine for themselves the areas in which they need to develop, rather than having ARB prescribe a uniform approach. This means that architects should undertake CPD that is relevant for the work they carry out on a day-to-day basis, whatever their role should be. However, an architect must ensure that their CPD encompasses any mandatory topics that have been set for that year.
- 5.8 For those who are not working, CPD is important to ensure they stay up to date and an opportunity to enhance skills. Undergoing CPD while not working demonstrates professionalism to potential employers and provides an opportunity for networking with fellow professionals.

What is a CPD activity?

- 6.1 CPD activities are wide ranging and encompass a variety of learning approaches. If an architect has developed professionally from an activity and can apply what they have learnt to their practice or identify how the learning has developed their competency, then it can be considered continuing professional development.
- 6.2 Architects are free to choose their own CPD activities. To ensure the scheme is inclusive, ARB believes all architects should have the flexibility to select the learning approaches that best suit their needs, practice and resources.
- 6.3 The following examples illustrate the breadth of CPD activities and are not intended to be an exhaustive list.
 - **Formal training** – attending a course, workshop, talk, or session to gain knowledge or skills relevant to your practice.
 - **Peer discussion** – engaging with peers, colleagues, or clients which leads to understanding or insight.
 - **Practical experience** – learning through 'on-the-job' that develop your skills and

competency.

- **Research** – conducting project research to consolidate knowledge or acquire new insights applicable in practice.
- **Self-directed learning** – reading, listening, or watching content that builds knowledge you can apply in practice.
- **Educating** – preparing or delivering learning materials as a teacher, trainer or mentor, gaining new understanding or insight.
- **Tour/visit** – participating in site visits or tours that provide knowledge or understanding applicable in practice.

6.4 Errors, mistakes and failures can be valuable opportunities to develop professionally too. If an architect can identify the following aspects when a mistake occurs, then they can record the experience as a CPD activity:

- what the aim was
- what went wrong
- what was needed to mitigate the error
- how the lessons learnt can be applied for future work

Mandatory topics

- 7.1 ARB may mandate certain topics in which all architects must carry out professional development within a particular calendar year. The topics ARB mandates will be sufficiently broad that any architect on the Register would be expected to engage with them, whatever their area of specialism or type of practice. Architects should tailor their CPD on these topics in a way that is relevant to their practice. Examples of topics that may be mandated are environmental sustainability, fire and life safety design, and ethics.
- 7.2 Each year, ARB will review whether any new mandatory topics should be introduced for the following year, and whether the mandatory topics from the previous year should be retained. A decision will be made based on relevant policies, significant events, and emerging research. For example, following 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 'fire and life safety' was instituted as a mandatory topic for the scheme in response.
- 7.3 Any decision on which topics, if any, should be mandated will be made after consultation with key stakeholders, including relevant government departments and professional membership bodies across the United Kingdom. Any year-on-year changes to the mandated topics will be communicated to architects through a range of platforms.
- 7.4 ARB will provide competency guidelines for the mandatory topic on the ARB website. These guidelines will outline the key areas for a topic in which architects are expected to be skilled. The competence guidelines will be written in such a way that they will be relevant to any architect, at any stage of their career.

Reflective practice

- 8.1 Architects should engage in self-reflection to identify the learning outcomes they have gained from their CPD. This involves evaluating their CPD activities, and for each activity a learning reflection should be completed which includes identifying what was learned, how it is being applied in practice and/or how it has improved competence.
- 8.2 ARB encourages architects to also consider any next steps planned and what benefits the learning had on their practice.
- 8.3 Architects should focus on reflecting on their own learning. Where CPD has been undertaken as part of a team, including in a managerial role, reflections should address how the activity has benefited the individual architect, rather than its impact on the team.
- 8.4 For those recording on MyARB, ARB has included questions where architects record their learning reflection to assist in what to write, but these are prompts only. Architect can include what they want to in their reflections as long as they also identify what they have learned, either how they've applied their learning to their practice or how the learning has improved their competency.

Where do architects record their CPD?

- 9.1 Architects must record their CPD activities in a system recognised for the scheme. There are currently two platforms recognised: MyARB and the RIBA. No alternative CPD platforms are recognised, and CPD recorded outside of MyARB or RIBA will not be accepted.
- 9.2 You do not need to record on MyARB if you have recorded your CPD with RIBA. Any architect who records on RIBA's platform must provide a copy of their RIBA CPD record, if requested by ARB.
- 9.3 Those who record with RIBA should notify ARB when they renew their Registration. They should select the declaration on the registration renewal form that they have recorded their CPD with RIBA.
- 9.4 Architects must record on one system, either MyARB or with RIBA. They cannot record half with one system and then the other half on the other system in the same year. They can choose the other system for the next CPD year, but they need to ensure that they are compliant with all CPD schemes they engage with.

When to record?

- 10.1 Architects' registration runs on a calendar year as does the CPD year. ARB recommends that CPD be undertaken from the start of the year through to the point of re-registration in November or December.
- 10.2 Architects choose when they complete an activity and when they record their CPD.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 Only CPD completed in the recording year can be included. Any CPD completed in previous

years cannot be added. For example, any CPD carried out in 2025, should not be recorded in 2026.

10.5 The deadline to record CPD is 31 December each year.

What to record?

11.1 Architects must record the following:

- **date** of the activity – if the activity was longer than a day, architects can choose to put the start or the end date
- **topic** – choose the topic option most relevant to the activity
- **activity type** – choose the activity type closest to the activity
- **learning reflection** – what the individual has learned from the CPD activity (learning outcomes) and how the individual is applying this to their practice or how this has improved their competence

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

11.3 Architects that record CPD on an approved alternative recording system to MyARB should ensure they meet the other scheme's requirements in addition to ARB's CPD scheme requirements.

Retention

12.1 All architects must renew their registration annually to remain on the Register and are notified when it is time to renew their registration.

12.2 When architects renew their registration, they must make a declaration regarding their compliance with the CPD scheme.

12.3 Architects must declare if they:

- have complied with the scheme and recorded their CPD on MyARB
- have complied with the scheme and recorded with RIBA
- have joined the Register for the first time that year
- have re-joined the Register on or after 1 October

Or they may request a deferment. If the deferment request is not agreed, the architect must record CPD by the recording deadline to remain compliant with the Registration Rules.

12.4 All the annual declarations made when renewing registration are a formal statement to ARB confirming an individual's compliance with the Registration Rules. If an architect's declaration is found to be incorrect, they may face disciplinary action and/or removal for non-compliance with the Registration rules.

Deferment

- 13.1 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 CPD activities for six months or more. Possible reasons for applying for a deferment are statutory family leave (maternity, paternity and adoption) or long-term sickness.
- 13.2 Architects, in such situations, can apply to defer their CPD record for one year but remain on the Register. This means they do not need to record their CPD on MyARB and will not be asked to share a copy of their RIBA record.

Reviewing of CPD records

- 14.1 All architects must declare that they have carried out CPD in accordance with the ARB scheme and state where it has been or will be recorded when they complete the retention process.
- 14.2 Once architects have renewed their Registration and declared where they have recorded their CPD, ARB reviews CPD records for quality assurance and to monitor compliance.
- 14.3 ARB can access and review CPD records on MyARB without any action needed from the architects. Those who have recorded with RIBA will be notified that they have been selected for review and will be required to upload an Excel Workbook copy of their RIBA CPD record to MyARB by the given date. This is the only version of the RIBA record that will be accepted.
- 14.4 When a record does not meet requirements, ARB will notify the architect and provide time for action to be taken to bring their record up to requirements. Those who do not take the necessary steps may be removed from the Register.
- 14.5 The reviews will not assess grammar, spelling, or punctuation.
- 14.6 Information provided as part of your CPD records will be treated as confidential and used only for the purpose of assessing compliance with the scheme. It will not be used in connection with any future disciplinary investigations unrelated to engagement with the CPD scheme.

Readmittance and reinstatement

- 15.1 To re-join the Register, applicants must demonstrate that they have maintained their competence in a way that is relevant to their practice and/or provide a development plan for how they will ensure their competence.
- 15.2 If re-joining 24 months or more after leaving the Register, [please see the guidance on our website on how to re-apply](#). Anyone returning to the Register after less than 24 months will have their application reviewed by the Registration team
- 15.3 For more information on re-joining the Register, [please see our website](#). The links are included in our Useful Links section of this document.

Annex A: Background to the ARB CPD Scheme

- 16.1 As the regulator of the architects profession, ARB sets the education and training requirements for UK architects and establishes and enforces the professional standards expected of them. The Building Safety Act 2022 gives ARB the power to monitor and assess the continuing professional development of architects throughout their careers. The changes in the law necessitated ARB to establish a new framework for overseeing the way architects manage their CPD.
- 16.2 In 2020, ARB carried out a significant piece of research¹ into the future competence of architects. The research included an analysis of how architects might best maintain and develop their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours throughout their careers.
- 16.3 The research found that statutory regulation of architects was out of step with other professions in that registration was continued without any confirmation that an individual had taken steps to maintain their competence.
- 16.4 With the exception of solicitors,² all UK professions analysed had a minimum requirement for CPD - The majority of other schemes analysed were based on a blend of formal and informal training and tailored towards the individual needs and risks of their associated professions. However, as the Solicitors Regulations have adopted, our scheme is outcomes focused and it is the individual architect who should reflect on their work and determine how much CPD they need to complete to ensure they carry out their work competently.
- 16.5 Most architects demonstrate a commitment to continued learning throughout their professional lives. Architects told ARB 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 the acquisition of new experience in the workplace, alongside formal training delivered by external providers.
- 16.6 There was a high degree of acknowledgement from research participants that a more formal system to record that work was an appropriate step in upholding public confidence in the profession and raising competence.
- 16.7 Using the powers conferred by the Building Safety Act 2022, ARB developed a scheme that reflects that commitment and helps to uphold public confidence in the competence of the profession. Registration rules have made engaging with the CPD scheme a requirement of Registration. The scheme requirements make it the individual architect's responsibility to maintain their own competence.

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

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

The Four Principles

17.1 The development of the scheme was underpinned by four principles:

- 1 **Improve overall competence of the profession** – The aim of the scheme is 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 our scheme is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ scheme. Instead, ARB developed a scheme that encourages 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 ARB designs 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.
- 4 **Avoid duplication where possible** – One of the key themes to emerge 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, ARB paid due regard to how best it can work alongside other existing schemes set by professional bodies for members – 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).

Glossary

Activity	An event or incident from which professional development was gained
ARB	Architects Registration Board
CPD	Continuing professional development
Cycle	A CPD cycle is twelve months, from 1 January to 31 December
Deferment	The process where an architect may ask to postpone submitting their CPD record for one year
Learning outcome	Lessons or development gained from CPD activities
Register	The Register of Architects is the definitive record of all UK architects.
PDP	Personal Development Plan

Useful Links

Organisation

ARB

Link

[Competency Standards Group \(CSG\) guidance](#)

ARB

[Sample CPD records](#)

ARB

[CPD scheme FAQs](#)

ARB

[CPD mandatory topics guidance](#)

ARB

[MyARB](#)

The Royal Incorporation of Architects In Scotland (RIAS)

[RIAS CPD](#)

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

[RIBA CPD](#)

The Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW)

[RSAW CPD](#)

The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)

[RSUA CPD](#)

Re-joining the Register guidance

Within 24 months

[Re-joining the Register](#)

After 24 months

[Competency Standards Group \(CSG\) guidance](#)

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