

Review of Architect's Competence: Call for Evidence

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Summary

Introduction

In summer 2020, Architects Registration Board issued an unrestricted Call for Evidence to ascertain views on the competencies required by architects, the routes to registration and how to ensure architects maintain competence throughout their career. The Call for Evidence accompanies a broader programme of research designed to gather robust data on the views of architects, employers and stakeholders. Almost 200 responses were received, the vast majority from architects. This report presents the findings of all responses, but with a specific focus on architects themselves.

General

- A very broad range of views were expressed by architects throughout the Call for Evidence.
- There was a tendency for those involved in education to want to retain the current system.
- Protection of title has an impact on how questions answered – with different approaches to be expected if there was protection of function.
- Some were concerned about the time involved in agreeing and implementing changes and wanting clarity on ‘the problem’ the review is trying to solve.

Role of an architect and required competencies

- The role of an architect can be very wide-ranging.....
-but some reported it is becoming diluted, focussing on the design part of the building continuum.
- In some places, the role is also becoming increasingly complex, with a need for specialisation.
- The competencies required in the 21st Century are similarly very broad, with inter-personal, technological and technical (practical building) competencies frequently cited alongside knowledge of the environmental and social impacts of architecture.

Routes to Registration

- Few architects proposed any significant changes to the whole or the parts of the registration and renewal processes.
- However, there was a general theme that there is not enough emphasis on technical knowledge and abilities throughout education.
- There were also some concerns about the quality of work experience as some tasks traditionally done by students are becoming automated (with no comment on what might happen to quality if a greater amount of work experience was required, which was also generally suggested).
- An employer noted that competing against non-architects for business undermined their ability to invest in mentoring.
- There was no consensus amongst those who commented on the sequencing of Parts – removing Part 1 or Part 2 were occasionally mentioned, depending on the perspective of the respondent.
- Some respondents, with deeper knowledge, had more detailed proposals for changing processes to better meet today’s requirements, e.g. integrating Part 3 sooner and recognising specialisation and gradation after registration.
- Generally, the length of time to register was about right, and allowed for essential ‘maturity’, but there were some views that the length could be shortened with less time in education and this might be particularly useful to widen access.
- 5 or 6 years were often cited as appropriate by those who thought 7 years (minimum) too long, along with alignment to HNC/HND routes and more blended education/employment learning (but

note point above about the challenges in securing quality placements).

- Apprenticeships were commonly cited as a means to widen access, alongside a host of other activities unrelated to the registration processes.

Continuing Professional Development

- There was acknowledgment of the potential to introduce CPD requirements, but warnings against a 'tick-box' approach (particularly for a 'number of hours' approach) or introducing requirements without a commensurate increase in responsibility.
- Architects generally see themselves as professionals, working in an industry where other occupations are not regulated.
- Duplication with what RIBA currently do was generally not favoured.
- A number raised concerns about who might revalidate and whether this was aligned to specialisms or generic.

The Criteria

- Comment on the criteria tended to focus on specific drafting points rather than suggesting a wholesale change, with the 11 General Criteria (GC) largely seen to work well – they are articulated in a way which does not need frequent change.
- However, there was general feedback that there should be more emphasis on technical elements.
- There were some suggestions that GC2, 3 and 6 might be less important; or that knowledge of regulations was part of a different set of regulations under which Architects worked and there should be no need for this in the criteria.
- It was noted that some of the criteria are subjective (e.g. 'aesthetic') which makes for problematic assessment and there should be an emphasis on objective criteria.
- Some respondents thought weighting might be applied to areas which posed danger to life.
- There was a difference in opinion as to how far the ARB should specify in more detail what is taught.

1. Introduction

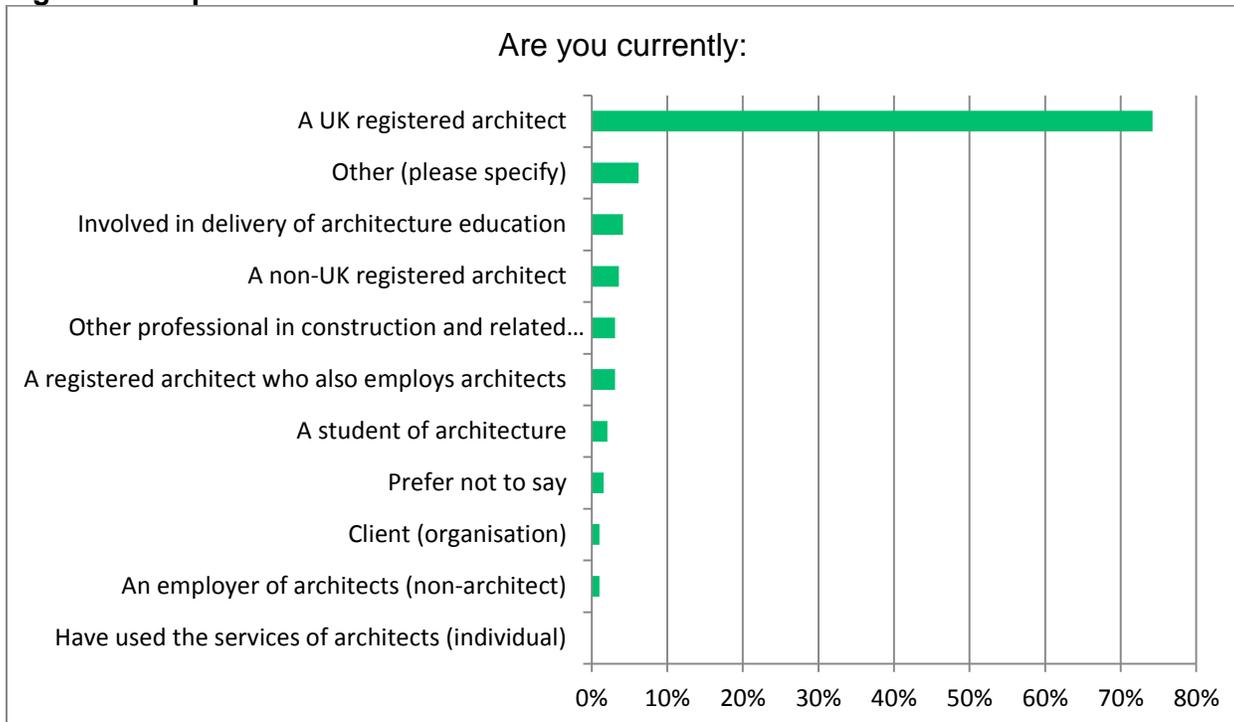
In summer 2020, Architects Registration Board (ARB) issued an unrestricted Call for Evidence to inform their Review of Architects Competence. The Call for Evidence accompanies a broader programme of research designed to gather robust data on the views of architects, employers and stakeholders. The intention of the Call for Evidence was to allow anyone to provide an input to the Review of Architects Competence, to ensure all those groups or individuals not engaged in other parts of the research would have the opportunity to make their views known. The Call for Evidence included a number of questions on the role and competences required of architects; on routes to entry and on staying on the Register and detailed questions on the General and Professional Criteria (see Annex 1). The Call was launched in August 2020 and closed on 23rd October 2020. Almost 200 responses were received, the vast majority from architects. This report presents the findings of all responses, but with a specific focus on architects themselves.

2. Respondents

A total of 198 online responses were received during the consultation period. No respondent completed all the questions. The number of responses to each question is stated in this report.

The majority (74%) of respondents were UK registered architects as shown in Figure 1. Although the Call for Evidence (C4E) presented an opportunity for users of architects to present their views, we received no such responses. Due to the small numbers of responses received from across the groups, we do not present analysis by different groups. Whilst responses were received from organisations such as SCHOSA, RIBA and Architects Climate Action Network, and these responses are being considered in the Review, this report focuses on the input provided by architects. A very wide range of views were presented and quotes from respondents seek to provide a flavour of the range of views held.

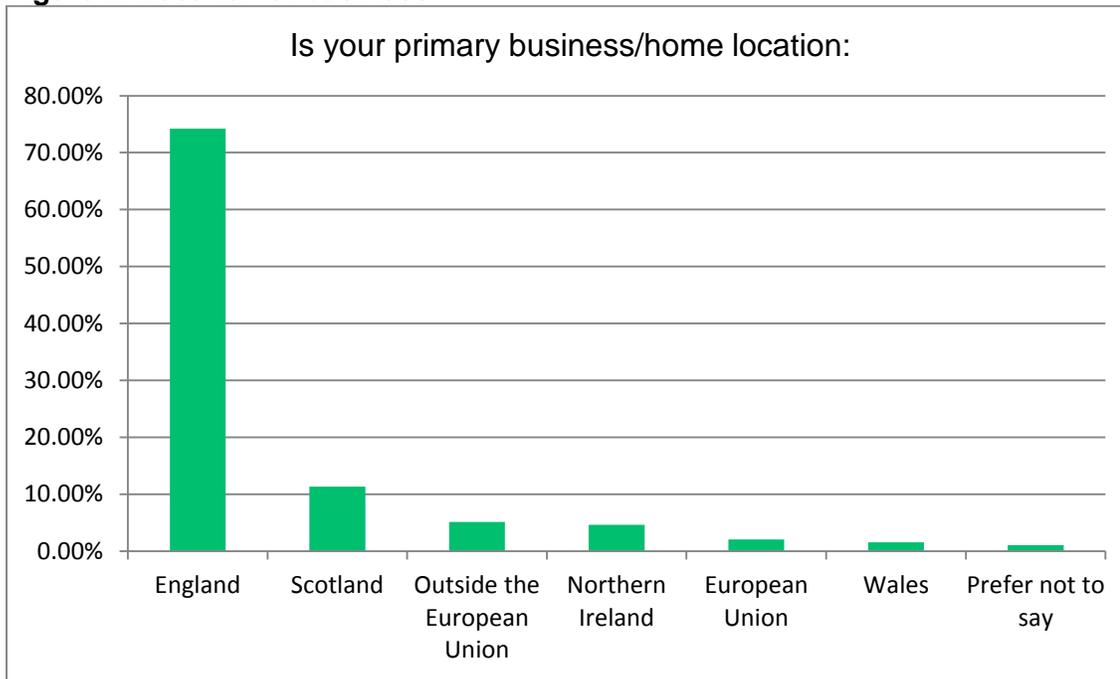
Figure 1: Respondents



Base: 194

Seven percent of respondents were based outside the UK, as shown in Figure 2. Almost three-quarters (74%) of all respondents were based in England. When looking at the distribution of respondents just within the UK, there are fewer in England and Wales than might be expected given population distribution and more responses in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Figure 2: Location of business



Base: 194

3. The Architect's role

The Call for Evidence began by asking respondents what the role of an architect is.

Some respondents referred to the RIBA Plan of Work in answer to the question.

Broadly, the responses received to this question can be categorised as being **task** or **purpose** based.

The **purpose** of the architect is what marks architects out as professionals and often framed as conducting tasks from a perspective perhaps unique to architects. For example, designing construction projects which benefit owners, occupiers, community and the natural environment; to design with reference to 'prevailing cultural and social issues'; behaving ethically and ensuring quality.

In terms of **tasks**, the responses provide a very expansive picture of the role of architects right throughout the building process, ranging from initial client discussion to 12 month defect liability inspection. Common themes amongst the responses:

- Design – whether buildings, places and spaces, or the built environment, the fundamental architect role is to design. In itself, this process was described as:
 - writing the brief of the client need,
 - translating to concept design,
 - refining with the client and the design team,
 - auditing for planning law, building regs, health and safety and budget
 - and preparing construction drawings;
- Serving the client, meeting their needs within regulatory requirements, budget and ethical considerations.
- To provide clear information to enable the construction of the design.

There is clearly a great variety in the tasks undertaken, as illustrated by these two quotes from UK Architects:

The role of an architect is varied. What an architect does depends on the context in which they practice, their geographic location, the type of clients for whom they work and consequently project type, sector and procurement route. An architect could be involved in all RIBA Work Stages, from briefing a client at the start of a project through to administering a project contract during construction through to post-completion activities such as post-occupancy evaluation. In addition, architects who manage practices need to be able to manage people and finances in order to maintain a viable business. Architects need to be able to demonstrate resilience and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, for example, redundancy and a move to a new practice with new type work, shifts in terms of peoples' needs, technology and the economy. Architects owe a duty not only to their clients, but to wider society as well.

Architects are involved in designing the built environment whilst respecting and conserving our natural environment, providing safe, comfortable, practical, appropriate, inspiring, affordable and sustainable spaces both internal and external for people to live, work, play and interact. They do this by learning from what has gone before, understanding what is possible now and what may happen in the future, by listening, collaborating and when appropriate leading. An Architect may be involved in a small aspect of a project but have the skills to manage the project from inception to completion from establishing the brief, designing, considering health and safety, obtaining approvals, providing construction information, inspecting works and administering contracts. If an Architect cannot do all this how can they be expected to undertake the initial design as they will not understand the impact this may have on the resultant building.

This last quote illustrates another point, that architects may need to know about more processes than they are involved in.

Some recognised this as a **weakening/variation of the role** of architects on completion of design. Sometimes the role ends at this point; others move to construction detailing; planning applications; (support) procurement; administer building contracts; project management; site visits; inspection; post-occupancy evaluation and even to 12 month defects liability inspection. But there appears to be little consistency in this and the role is determined by the client or through legislative and guidance changes. One respondent referred to the role as a collaborator in design, but that guiding, monitoring and policing construction had 'dropped off the radar'; another that they have become 'construction artists' leaving technical appraisal and design development to others.

Another attributed this trend to fees:

Architects ought to be leading the project in the truest way, liaising with clients, consultants, statutory bodies and the public, assembling wider consultant team, monitoring budgets, adherence to regulations and standards and ensuring a high quality outcome. However often, and largely due to fees, these roles are divided or are compromised by all the responsibility but minimal power to enforce high standards.

UK Registered Architect

This weakening or dilution of the role is a recurring theme throughout the C4E, with concerns expressed that architects are not seen to have the technical or legal skills or knowledge to play a greater role, whilst simultaneously, a number of other professions design buildings, more cheaply.

Some reported **increasing complexity in the role** 'with increasing specialist areas', although few respondents detailed these beyond conservation, historic buildings, high rise, for example.

No respondents to the C4E seemed to occupy roles which were not in mainstream practice.

4. Competences required to be a 21st Century Architect

We then asked what competencies were required to fulfil this role and a very wide range of competences

were recorded. One commented that the competencies were the same as in the 17th Century, but the tools alone have changed.

Some respondents said this depended on the role, with those respondents advocating a greater role and looking to ARB and RIBA to secure that.

Some commented that there were too many competencies required for one person to be able to fill, another that the list was huge. One commented that an architect needs to have an awareness of all the criteria, but have specialisms. Another considered this in the context of the Criteria, education, and changing demand:

The current criteria define the competencies in relation to the built environment, and the code of conduct defines the professional obligations required of architects. These continue to be relevant but should be further revised to reflect the needs and wider concerns of society. The knowledge base continues to grow with advances in Technology, and climate response, and with complexity comes further requirements for building safety issues. All should be constantly and consistently included in architectural education, and form part of CPD. The criteria however are of necessity a generalist approach to a knowledge base and it would be difficult to define more precise content without a 'listing' approach with the inevitable likelihood of omissions and obsolescence.

UK Registered Architect

A few respondents considered whether all such skills were required at 'day one', with some suggesting some would be better expected through greater experience and a gradation of registration. (e.g. one specific comment referred to the need for CSG WG7 for higher risk buildings, whilst also referring to the RIBA Plan of Work).

It would appear no list could do justice to the competencies required, but some frequently mentioned competences are presented below:

Technical competencies:

- Design
- Spatial design
- Drawing skills
- Building materials and techniques
- Knowledge of the building trades to aid collaboration
- Knowledge of legislation, planning regulations, Building Standards, Fire Regs, GDPR (some listed a number of documents here, but it was not clear if any of them were new for the 21st Century)
- Designing sustainably
- Responsibility Matrix exposure
- Creativity
- Contract management
- Synthesize complex and conflicting demands
- Documentation skills
- Client management and comms
- Maths
- ability to respond to 'forthcoming mutations'

IT competences:

- 3D VR and AR visualisation
- Digital tools
- BIM
- CAD

Generic competencies:

- Visual and oral communications with stakeholders/stakeholder management

- Co-ordination and collaboration
- Curiosity
- Leadership/Team Leadership
- Problem solver
- Listener
- Adaptability
- Resilience, patience, tenacity
- Business skills
- Quiet respectful understanding
- Marketing
- Budgetary understanding
- Integrity (e.g. to know personal limitations and not to take on roles)
- Ethics/conflict of interest
- Placing the client first.
- Emotional intelligence
- 'Real world skills'

5. Do the routes to registration provide these competencies?

In exploring the routes to registration, we first asked whether the current routes to registration were providing the competencies required.

Opinions were split roughly equally as to whether current routes provided these competencies, but some who responded 'yes' followed with a caveat. For example, there was a consistent concern that there was too much emphasis on design and the role of lead designer and not enough on:

- construction knowledge
- the knowledge needed to convert a design to a building
- the fundamentals which enable you to win business (while another reported that aspects of Part 3 were not necessary unless you were intended on running your own practice) and
- legislation and regulation.

Many of those responded 'yes' expressed concern that the intention was to dilute and reduce the training required and there was a concern not to do that – to safeguard the quality levels needed to enter the profession and to ensure the requisite levels of maturity (many of those involved in education expressed these views).

One commented that many tasks traditionally done in work experience at end of Part 1 had been automated, which if the case might point to difficulties in being able to attain work experience prior to qualification. Another:

I believe a high(er) proportion of part 2 graduates are 'cad-monkeys' during much of their experience months. I think the 24 months should be much more prescriptive and demanding, on employers first and foremost.

UK registered architect

However, an employer alluded to some of the difficulties in providing quality training:

The current system is totally undermined by non-registered architectural service providers competing for the same work, these has undermined the ability of practices to invest time in mentoring staff.

A registered architect who also employs architects

6. Length of time to qualify

The Call for Evidence then asked about the **length of time it took to qualify** as an architect and whether this was too long or too short. The majority who expressed an opinion said it was about right, but many qualified this by saying that there should be a more even split of work experience and time in education (as for previous question).

One respondent noted that it was about right, but that a Part 4 is needed for specialisation (with another reporting that specialisation should happen sooner), another that the time was appropriate if architects had a lead role/protection of function. One reported that the amount of time allowed a maturity of thought and approach to grow.

Fewer responded it was too long, but amongst these there seemed to be a common theme that 6 years should be sufficient, with any reduction in time taken from education, e.g.:

- 3 years of education and 3 of practical experience,
- Part 2 was too long with not enough experience;
- a 4 year course with a third of each year spent in placement should suffice.

One Non-UK Registered Architect commented:

It seems as though the courses offered in the UK vary immensely and therefore students are not necessarily exposed to a full scope of design, history and construction knowledge. The shortfall therefore needs to be made up with knowledge gained working in the industry. The education course is therefore perhaps longer than necessary

Only one respondent commented that the time allowed was too short.

These two questions elicited a wide range of views, but the overall impression is of insufficient time on real practical experience to equip architects with the competencies they need.

7. Should other routes to registration be explored?

Respondents were asked whether there were **different routes to registration** which should be explored.

Around one in ten said the routes were appropriate. Around a third of respondents mentioned Apprenticeships or work based or blended learning.

One advocated removing the need for recognition at Part 1, others reported this was essential.

Other options mentioned included:

- ARB take greater control of content
- Provide adequate training in HE and allow registration immediately (as in Denmark) or register after 2 years proactive when experience of all project stages can be demonstrated (Germany)
- Create a driving test where you pass or fail.

One, involved in the delivery of education suggested:

The routes to registration are too limited; there should be more opportunities for a wider population to enter the profession; university routes are long and expensive and often diverge too far from the skills required for professional practice; routes via HNC / HND / distance learning and blended learning should be expanded, as well as accreditation of prior experiential learning for candidates from cognate professions e.g. CIAT, CIOB etc.

Involved in the delivery of education

Another respondent was concerned about broadening the routes:

At this moment in time, I think a proliferation of routes to registration would be disastrous for the UK profession. If getting our house in order (in the eyes of others) is key, then focussing on 'clarity' is key.

Proliferation will create more headaches than problems it solves. Linking 'architect' status with some legal requirement for project sign-offs. might be more fruitful - perhaps architects specialise as 'quality control' (similar to Building Control) for building types for which they have acquired/ certified expertise. I don't think competency certification should be a requirement of all architects. I don't think competency certification should be introduced unilaterally, only with a reciprocal positive change in the way building designs are 'approved' in the UK (I'm not talking about aesthetics here)

UK Registered Architect

8. Encouraging greater diversity in the profession

A specific question was asked regarding how the routes might change to **encourage greater diversity** into the profession. Any change would need to be assessed from the perspective of Equality and Diversity and whether it enhances or diminishes access to the profession.

Interestingly, a significant minority were opposed to this, fearing dilution of quality and that it was not needed nor should it be a concern. For example:

Greater access to the profession? No, less access. Architects are only really necessary for larger more complex jobs, others can do the 'domestic' work without being full blown architects.

UK and international registered architect

But others had noted elsewhere in the Call for Evidence that length and cost limited diversity within the sector. One UK architect reported:

The current system is a mess. Expensive, excessively long and ineffective but highly effective in deterring and marginalizing the less privileged, women and minorities.

A roughly similar proportion mentioned use of Apprenticeship models or otherwise described part work/part study options. Other recommendations included:

- Improve image of the construction sector;
- Broader 'architecture and the built environment' approach, encompassing community relations;
- Entry exam open to all
- Cheaper fees
- Protected function with commensurate reward
- Schools and career guidance
- Regulations
- Create qualifications at Higher, 'O' and A level
- Greater access to part-time education courses (such as that offered by RIBA Studio), sandwich courses at part 1
- Lobby government to abolish tuition fees/reduce cost
- Earlier engagement at schools
- Highlighting and celebrating the work of architects from all backgrounds, tackle stereotype of 'white architects'
- Targeted campaign to low participation wards

9. Monitoring the competence of Architects

There is a provision within the Building Safety Bill to enable ARB to monitor the competence of architects throughout their career. To help inform the response to this, the Call for Evidence explored how architects should be regulated and what might the CPD expectations be. Around a half of respondents provided any response to this question (95 responses).

Figure 3 shows the full responses. The most popular, cited by 47% of the 95 respondents to the question was to 'specify a minimum number of hours of formal and informal CPD per year'. This was followed by 43% agreeing that ARB should 'specify when new skills are required of the whole profession' and 41% when 'new skills are required by particular specialisms'.

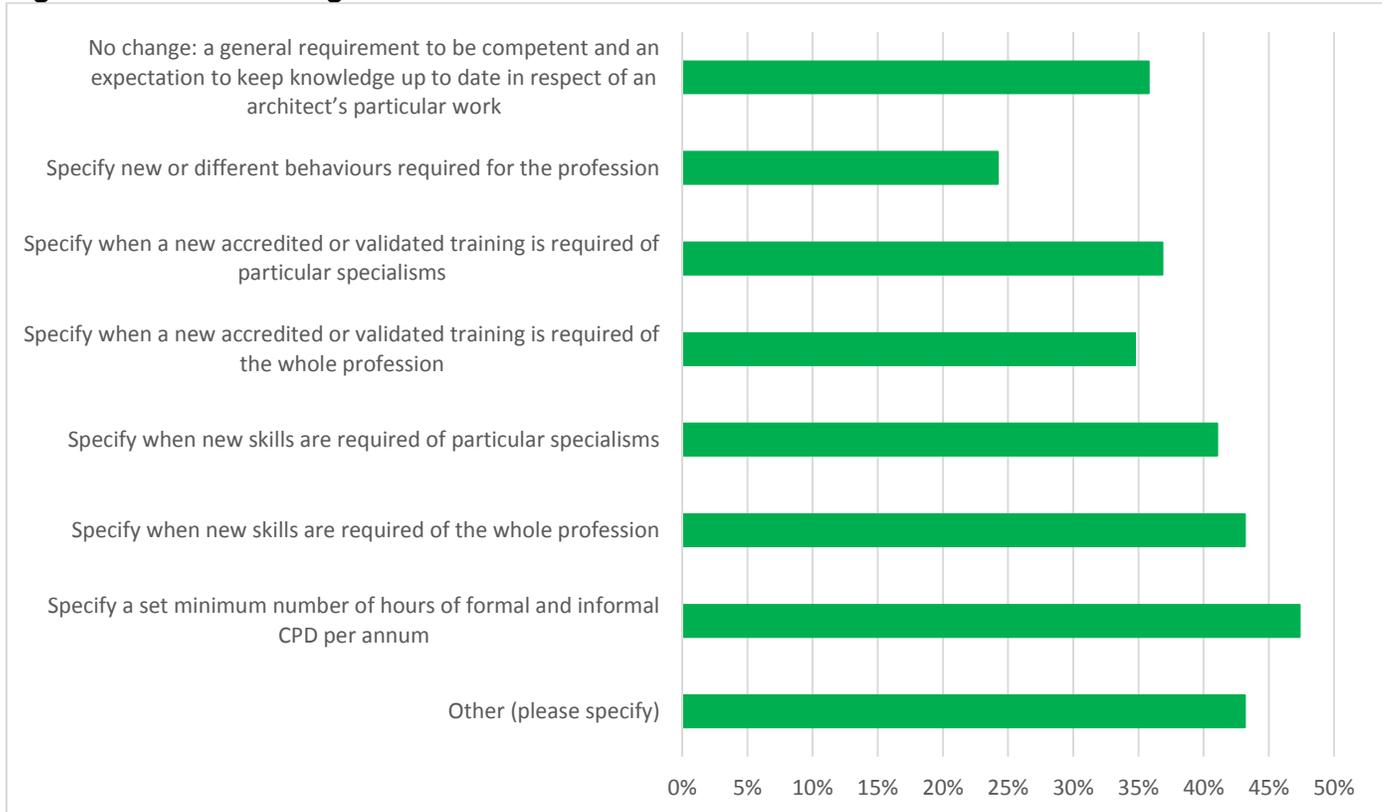
Slightly lower proportions selected options for the specification of new accredited or validated training requirements and a quarter selected 'specification of new or different behaviours'.

Just over a third (35%) selected 'No change' and to keep current regulation as is. However, of the 34 respondents who selected 'no change', 24 also selected other options, mainly specify a minimum number of hours of formal and informal CPD per year, specify when new skills are required of the whole profession and specify when new skills are required by particular specialisms. **Thus, just 9 of the 95 respondents to this question solely advocated 'no change'.**

Finally, 47% responded 'other', and revealed a range of responses, from:

- concerns about architects being more closely supervised when their role does not have authority ('as illogical as it is insulting')
- checks should be required of everyone involved in building design
- certain areas (Fire, Environments) should be accredited by exam
- a full suite of core competences should be jointly monitored by RIBA to suggestions
- to focus on technical skills and legal and statutory requirements.

Figure 3: CPD: what might be covered



Base: 95

In commentary, a few warned against the danger of this becoming a 'checkbox' exercise and the difficulty in designing a meaningful monitoring system which did not impose burden on architects or on the ARB.

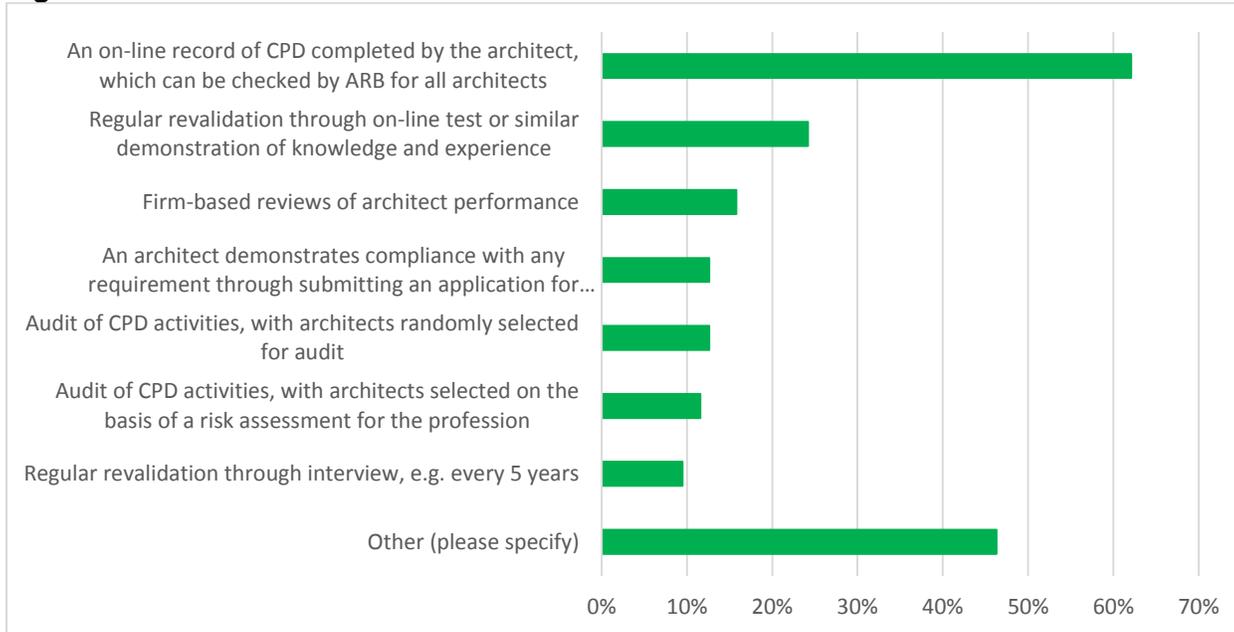
Some suggested if this was introduced there should also be a need for protection of function alongside any further requirements, as suggested in this quote.

Imposing more control on architect's competence will only make the profession more difficult and unnecessarily complex without bringing any benefit to the built environment. Architectural quality of the future depends on more control applied to project decision makers, who aren't the architects, but the client and/or the contractor.

UK Registered Architect

Figure 4 shows responses to how this should be monitored. There was more agreement on this with 62% of respondents preferring an online record. Around a quarter (24%) favoured regular revalidation (as with Doctors). Almost half responded 'other'. The main comment was a plea not to replicate the role of RIBA.

Figure 4 CPD: how monitored



Base 95

Respondents could provide an explanation for their responses to this section and there were some common themes:

- Diversity of role presenting problems - competencies should be assessed according to role and responsibility;
- Differences of sole practitioners;
- Consider outputs/learning aims/professionalisation above 'CPD' – the profession will develop to deliver expected outputs;
- Concern that this would be little more than a 'tick box' exercise;
- It would not address the problem which is wider – social, economic and associated with role and responsibilities of architects and other professionals.

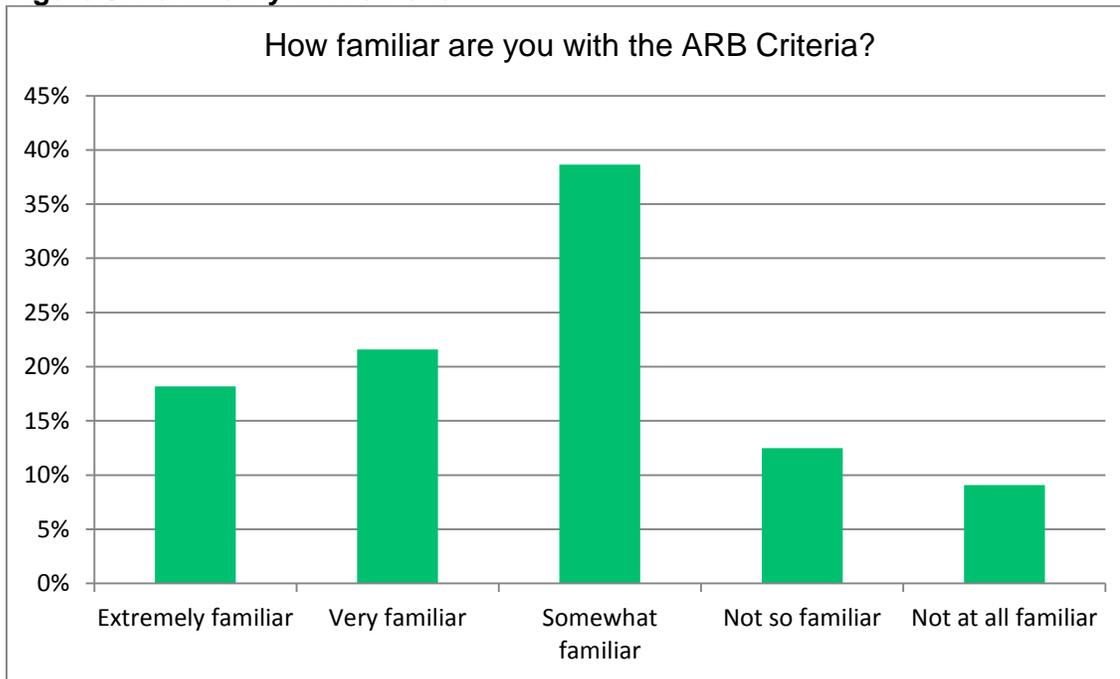
One respondent, a registered architect who is involved in delivery of education noted:

It is difficult to see how ARB can evaluate competency of practitioners, who sits in judgement? Those on the Register should submit evidence of how they have fulfilled their professional obligation, but the responsibility must remain with the individual. ARB can however, provide pertinent advice of where upskilling is required, and what the minimum expectation would be. The potential to log such learning via an on-line test might be welcomed as a way of acknowledging further learning, though whether this should be a requisite I'm unsure.

10. General Criteria

The Call for Evidence then went on to ask about the General Criteria (GC), first checking familiarity with the criteria. The number of responses to this question reduced to 88. Most of these respondents (39%) reported they were 'somewhat familiar' with the criteria.

Figure 5: Familiarity with criteria



Base: 88

For each of the General Criteria 1-11, respondents were asked to make any comments or suggestions regarding the detailed content, with particular consideration on ensuring architects have the competencies (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours) required for the 21st century. Interestingly, those advocating more significant changes to the registration processes suggested only modifications to the existing GC rather than any fundamental review.

Whilst a few referred to the opportunity to move away from EU defined competencies, overall, they did not explain what or how.

Some queried the purpose of the criteria in education (one suggesting a common syllabus).

The most consistent theme was the need for a greater emphasis on technical competencies and construction processes. To balance this, some suggested less emphasis on GC2, GC3 or GC6.

Overall, the criteria were supported, with some qualifications, as detailed in the table below.

Criterion (No. of comments)	Comment themes
1: Create designs meeting aesthetic and technical requirements (44)	Importance of technical aspect emphasised here. Some commented 'aesthetic' was subjective, another that 'aesthetics' should be replaced with "clients/ users/ public" requirements. Another was concerned this did not reflect the role of architecture in the Creative Industries Industrial Strategy.
2: History and theory of architecture and related subjects (40)	Some saw this as important because of use with historical buildings, or important but not adequately applied, others that it was essential to underpin GC1, others that it is interesting but not essential.
3: Influence of fine arts on architectural design (42)	There was more disagreement on the importance of this. Some felt it vital, some interesting but not necessary. Some said it could be combined with GC 2 and one queried why this had a separate section, but technical competence did not. The perceived imbalance to technical education is illustrated through this example: <i>Fine for education but of no great value beyond that. When part 2(!) students come out of university knowing the significance of Borromini on</i>

	<i>renaissance Rome but not what part E of the building regs apply to, we have our priorities wrong.</i>
4: Urban design, planning and the planning process (43)	This was generally reported to be important/essential/vital, impacting on the role and standing of Architects. <i>if architects knew as much as planning consultants as part of their education, they would be sought after</i> There was a suggestion this could be a specialism in Part 2. Others felt this was a subject in itself, and had its own profession. In that sense, one commented that it was only useful for debating with planners.
5: Relationship between building and people and their environment (46)	Generally important, and encompassing a range of issues which needed better emphasis from basics of design (e.g. good lighting, wind effects) to community considerations to environmental factors ('the' environment).
6: Role of architects in society (41)	There was a mixed interpretation of this and most comments related to how architects are perceived rather than inclusion as a criteria. Some felt this role was not recognised and that there was not the status accorded to Architects. One provided a detailed comment: <i>'This one needs work. Some of the three points do not suitably elaborate on the headline, which seems to suggest an ethical approach and consideration beyond just client needs. 6.2 seems out of place here, but it needs to be considered somewhere in the criteria'</i>
7: Investigation and preparation of a design project brief (36)	Whilst acknowledged as the key skill, some suggested this was not important or something clients are not willing to pay for. One suggested this was essential but not well delivered in education and was a root cause of many problems. Another noted it should be a Part 2 topic, and, perhaps reflecting this need for maturity, another commented: <i>Rarely rationally applied. Takes great confidence to develop and drive through a rational proposal..</i>
8: Structural design, construction and engineering problems associated with building design (41)	There was support for this criteria, but concern it had been given over to engineers and others suggested that collaboration skills were important to enable and multidisciplinary approach. One suggested the word "problems" was inappropriate and this could be expanded to include sustainable structures and engineering
9: Function of buildings and technologies to provide comfort and protection (42)	Whilst supported, a few said this was not taught well enough or outsourced to other professionals, with architects losing control of it. A few said this needed to include sustainability and carbon impact of buildings (or provided an extensive list of regs). A couple mentioned the need for natural/passive design/solutions. Some said building regulations cover this and it was not needed
10: Design skills to meet building user requirements within cost and building regulations (48)	Comments tended to focus on inadequate coverage of costs and budgets in teaching with a couple suggesting it should be at Part 2, when a student has had some experience. A couple mentioned that fire safety needed to take greater prominence
11: Contextual knowledge (43)	This was generally supported, if some thought it too vague or the meaning inconsistently interpreted. <i>'What's to know?'</i> One detailed response suggested: <i>Not really sure what the phrase in the headline 'integrating plans into overall planning' means. This is the classic management, practice and law criterion and is essential to retain.</i>

11. Weighting the criteria

The Call for Evidence went on to ask about the weightings of the criteria and whether respondents felt some were more important than others. 59 responses were given to this question.

The majority who expressed an opinion thought there should not be any weighting, but within this, there were still a range of views regarding weighting, the purpose of the criteria and teaching.

Views differed even where respondents answered the question in the context of the criteria as a baseline. Some said that as such, there should be no weighting and/or that if Part 1 is a baseline, Part 2 could allow specialisation. One commented, that as a baseline, ARB should focus on only design quality and environmental stewardship as everything else is covered by Building Regs, not needed in ARB criteria

Where there was a view about whether some criteria were more important, a few noted design should continue to lead, but this was balanced by others who felt practical and objective elements should be given greater emphasis, e.g.:

Basic competency in planning law, building regulations, JCT contract management and CDM should be a core module. All subjective modules should be devalued to remove the inherent bias that creates towards the status quo.

UK registered architect

Other factors mentioned included technical, legislation, safety, creativity and collaboration or anything which would pose a risk to life should be prioritised.

We have seen that one respondent commented that the criteria should be aligned to a common syllabus, whilst another, who worked in education, reported:

we need to exercise caution here and remember that we are not merely teaching skills, but are providing an education. Part of an architectural education is developing an ability to think and to challenge, not necessarily comprehensive technical ability, for example, how to work the latest software package.

12. Other ways to describe competencies

Respondents were invited to consider other ways to describe required competencies. There were 50 responses of some description. Many of those who commented reported they thought the current system worked in this respect and could not offer an alternative

A Major overhaul is unnecessary.....they are flexible enough to adapt to current issues in the profession.

UK Registered Architect

A couple of comments suggested that it should be clear what the criteria were working towards and probably developed from there, e.g. one suggested insurers would know what was 'wrong'. These comments suggest a need to understand what is 'failing' about the current system before revising with perhaps more concrete evidence of what has failed and how the Criteria contributed to that.

Alternatives suggested, all only mentioned once, were

- 'Architects License Exam' (also necessary to teach architecture)
- Design Quality Indicator type method;
- investigate potential for 'typologies' of architects through specialisms
- 11 point should stay, sub-criteria scrapped;
- Duplication at Parts 1 and 2 illustrates the redundancy of Part 1
- Trust the professionals to assess rather than focus time and effort on articulation of criteria
- Develop a common architectural syllabus.
- *Instead of referring to 'outcomes' (implying a prescribed vision of what architecture consists of), describe 'objectives' (encouraging appropriately open-ended imagination in terms of how they*

are met).

A couple of respondents referred to core competencies for registration and additional competencies or specialisms thereafter.

13. Parts 1 and 2: Graduate Attributes

The Call for Evidence then turned to the Graduate Attributes (GAs). 52 provided some form of response to the question 'Do the Graduate Attributes reflect the required levels of competence (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviour) at Part 1 and Part 2? Are there additional attributes at Part 1 and/or Part 2 which are required and should be specified? Are they sufficiently stretching or too stretching? Why do you say this?'

A few responded that there was no need for GAs, some because it should be incorporated in GC and some because there was repetition between GAs and GCs.

Many comments reflected more on the content of education and repeated issues raised under the General Criteria above. Some felt the GAs were fine as they were, others that they were too vague and largely ignored, especially Part 2.

Most involved in education thought the GAs were clear and helpful and didn't need further criteria added, however, one commented

Graduate attributes are badly worded, and not structured well. They need a complete overhaul

Respondent involved in delivery of architecture education

There was a theme concerning how to measure and assess the GAs. Some referred to the difficulty in assessing the GAs because they are 'qualities' and need 'clearly defined learning outcomes' or to be guided by a common syllabus. Another that:

Part 2, in my experience, shows little improvement from Part 1 and would benefit from demonstrating or creating a minimal level of competency, such as a number of hours under RIBA stages 4 & 5

UK Registered Architect

The C4E went on to ask, 'Does achievement of Part 1 ensure all entrants to Part 2 have consistent skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour?'. The question was interpreted in a number of ways by the 51 respondents. Around a fifth thought there was consistency with the remaining mostly reporting that there was not. Many of these did not necessarily think this was a bad thing, e.g.:

The first degree will give graduates certain skills which they are naturally predisposed for. Writing , presenting , designing, researching drawing, detailing, model making. It also depends on the ethos of the course. Some are more creative , others less so. Some pride themselves in complex theoretical positions , others in structural and environmental design. Long may it continue . We do not want or need a single State prescribed course.

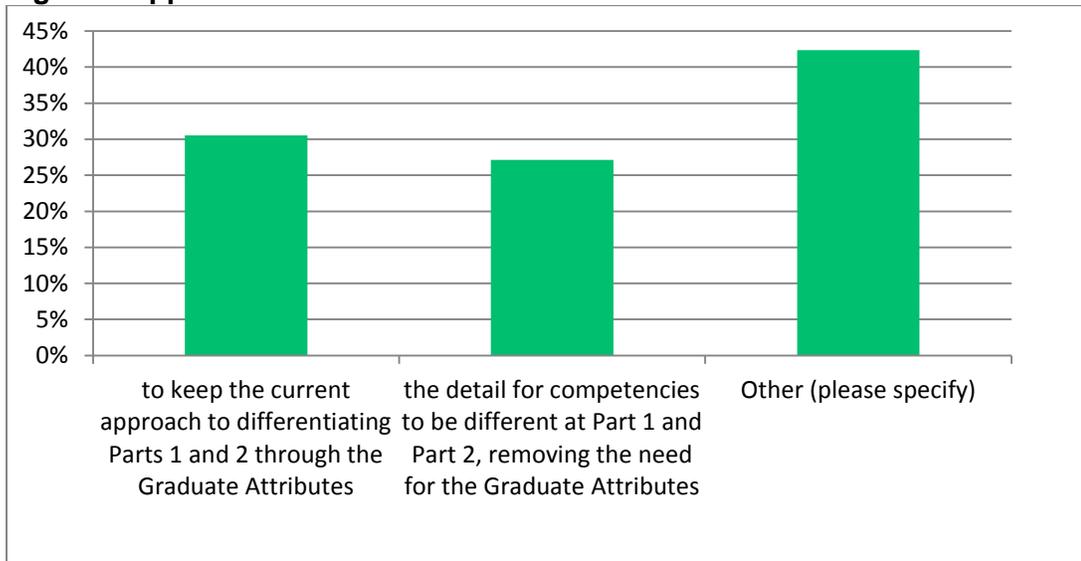
UK Registered Architect

The reasons for differences varied, but generally fell into the following categories:

- the reliability of grade awarded for first degree
- differences in the content of the courses
- differences in the quality of the teaching
- quality of the work experience year
- Part 2 entry criteria set by HEIs: *Part 1 is not a sausage factory. More significantly, HEIs will 'stretch' the gateway to Part 2 entry in order to secure fees and the future health of their part 2 courses* (UK Registered Architect)

The Call for Evidence then asked how the Criteria and Attributes should work together. Figure 6 shows that respondents were split on how to take forward the Graduate Attributes. Three in ten (31%) respondents wanted the approach to remain the same with the Criteria being the same for both and differentiation in the Attributes. Slightly fewer (27%) wanted to differentiate in the competencies and remove the need for the GAs.

Figure 6 Approach to Graduate Attributes



Base: 59

As seen in the graph, 42% reported 'other', but not all followed this up with a definition. Some of the suggestions followed the varied themes of earlier responses, for example:

- *The subsidiary points could be varied for P1 and P2, but the main 11 point criteria should remain the same, as the educational direction is the same.*
- *There should be very real differences between Parts 1 and 2. Part 1 should always be a non-specialised overview to architecture in all its rich variety. However, it does not follow that Part 2 should be in any way monolithic - we need to recognise and encourage that variety here, not just restrict outcomes to more of the same.*
- *Currently, the criteria are similar. Gradation is not clear, other than the word "complex". Access, with support to adapt, to higher level post-graduate education should be made available to mature learners and career changers.*
- *Combine part one and two and just have two sections to the qualification, Theory and Practical.*
- *An approach which undertakes a major revision of the Graduate Attributes providing for all levels (1/2/3 and beyond) differentiation on a matrix based on common criteria.*
- *Part 1 should be about equipping the trainee with the technical knowledge and competency to design robust and watertight buildings. Part 2 should be about leadership in design and managing a collaborative team to produce a coordinated design.*
- *Either Part 1 can stay as a general architectural/art education but there should be an entrance exam for part 2, ensuring basic competency in working-world skills OR that exam should be at the end of part 1. Currently, having a degree in architecture does not mean having any specific skills.*
- *Fully modular approach with no designated parts 1, 2 and 3, with mandatory modules and optional modules to cover each potential career route and working practice with ability to add during future professional development such as setting up practice.*

14. Part 3 Professional Criteria

As with the General Criteria, respondents were asked to comment on each of the Professional Criteria 1-5. Fewer than a quarter of respondents to the C4E commented in this section.

Some mentioned too little time was devoted to Part 3, others that it should be brought in earlier or integrated into Part 2 and Part 3 scrapped. Others thought that the criteria were too ambitious to be achieved by someone within the 24 month timeframe (one noting that expecting 'skills' at this stage rather than 'knowledge' was ambitious). Introducing specialisms at this stage was also mentioned by some respondents to some of the criteria.

Most who commented thought the criteria were fine, with some small modifications. Some examples or themes for the individual criterion and the responses are summarised in the following table:

Criterion (number of comments)	Comments
1: Professionalism (43)	'Ethics' was frequently cited here by respondents. Some said this was objective 'middle-class presentation'. One suggested 'use of the Nolan Principles of 1995 and any subsequent Standards in Public Life to be a basis for professionalism', which would bring in subjective assessment.
2: Clients, users and delivery of services (40)	Most commenting supported this and did not suggest change. One noted reference to 'skills' was ambitious. Softer, interpersonal skills were mentioned. some said it should be introduced earlier, some that it was too much to expect at this stage of the career.
3: Legal framework and processes (39)	Most reported this was important (<i>compliance underpins everything</i>) and did not suggest change. A couple commented that this would vary depending on the part one work experience. Others suggested the content of the law needed emphasising or other specific areas such as Regs, Land Law, Property Law, Title Deeds, Contracts . As an example of a comment on specialisation, one noted <i>different kinds of architects will have need of different aspects of the law.</i>
4: Practice and Management (42)	Seen as important. Some added elements such as team management, business acumen, employment responsibilities, Staff development, Practice structures, Admin, Quality Mgt Systems and ' <i>reality and solvency of architects practising today</i> '. One suggested it was not covered adequately in education, another that it would need to be flexible to reflect changing workplaces.
5: Building procurement (40)	All who commented on this reported it important and there were a number of comments for improvements. Generally, those making such comments felt that not enough coverage was given to different types of procurement. Some commented that there was a risk of this being focussed on traditional contracts or ought to be a requirement for clients too. Some reported that this did not feel particularly precise enough, e.g. <i>Procurement downplays the complexities of the integrated design process and The roles are defined by the HSE CDM Regulations: client; designer; contractor. Procurement routes are, largely, defined the choice of which assumes the design-liabilities: Traditional; Design-Build; Self-build. This model should be adopted, with an understanding of the personal H&S and Well-being requirements, too</i>

The final question explored whether respondents had another way to describe required competencies which might replace the Professional Criteria at Part 3. Of the 52 which commented on this, 28 made suggestions, 17 said there was not an alternative and 7 did not know. The range of suggestions were very diverse, including repetition of points made in the question above, e.g.:

- the need for Part 3 to be taught better (*they are currently something of an afterthought*);
- more on technical elements (construction/planning etc, as in earlier comments);
- more on ethics and sustainability
- there should be different criteria for different specialisms (incl running own practice)
- should demonstrate understanding of end to end building process and demonstrate learning from post occupancy evaluation
- Ensure candidates' 'fitness for purpose' rather than 'fitness to practise.'
- Competencies could be allocated by prominence within each RIBA stage allowing graduates to better identify which areas of the RIBA stages of work they need to prioritise based on gaps in experience.
- A core set of independent accreditations
- A driving license style test - anonymised and externally marked

15. Conclusion

In general, the Call for Evidence has revealed a very wide range of views on all of the issues raised. That there is little consensus is perhaps unsurprising given the nature of exercise - being open to anyone with a view. Many respondents have taken the time to provide thoughtful and detailed feedback, which provides a depth of response not otherwise obtainable through the research and which could prove valuable to ARB in taking forward these issues.

Annex 1: Call for Evidence

Architects Registration Board

Competence Review Call for Evidence: We want to hear from you

To help with our analysis, please tell us if you are:

	Please tick one
A UK registered architect	
A non-UK registered architect	
An employer of architects (non-architect)	
A registered architect who also employs architects	
A student of architecture	
Involved in delivery of architecture education	
Other professional in construction and related industries (please state occupation)	
Have used the services of architects (individual)	
Client (organisation)	
Other (please state)	

Is your primary business location:

The role of an architect and competencies required

- 1. What is the role of an Architect? What activities do they undertake? What activities would you expect Architects to undertake?**
- 2. What competencies (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours) does a 21st century architect require?**

Education, training and qualifying as a registered Architect

For an individual to register as an Architect, and have the right to use the title 'Architect', they must gain ARB-prescribed qualifications at Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3, with Part 3 including the requirement to gain 24 months of experience. These qualifications can be obtained through traditional prescribed degrees and post-graduate degrees at over 50 UK universities; Degree Apprenticeships and the RIBA studio (Parts 1 and 2 only). Individuals who have gained recognised qualifications in the EU may also register. Individuals with other overseas qualifications must have their qualifications tested for equivalence at Part 1 and/or Part 2 level and then complete the remainder of their qualifications via the UK route

- 3. Are the current routes to registration providing the competencies (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours) needed? Does the current sequencing of education/experience work? Why do you say this?**
- 4. Is the time taken qualify as an architect too long, too short or about right?**
- 5. If too long or too short, why do you say that?**
- 6. Are there different routes to registration which you think should be explored? If so, what are they?**

7. How could the current routes to registration be changed to encourage more diversity and greater access to the profession?

Maintaining skills and competencies throughout an architect's career

8. The [Building Safety Bill](#) contains provisions to provide new legal powers to enable ARB to monitor the competence of architects throughout their career. There are a number of models to monitor competence. Firstly, *what* might the CPD expectations be? (tick all which apply)

No change: a general requirement to be competent and an expectation keep knowledge up to date in respect of an architect's particular work

Specify a set minimum number of hours of formal and informal CPD per annum

Specify new when skills are required of the whole profession

Specify when new skills are required of particular specialisms

Specify when a new accredited or validated training is required of the whole profession

Specify when a new accredited or validated training is required of particular specialisms

Specify new or different behaviours required for the profession

Other (please state)

9. And, secondly, *how* should they be implemented – what kind of model to monitor competence would be most effective for architects? (tick all which apply)?

An on-line record of CPD completed by the architect, which can be checked by ARB for all architects

Audit of CPD activities, with architects randomly selected for audit

Audit of CPD activities, with architects selected on the basis of a risk assessment for the profession

An architect demonstrates compliance with any requirement through submitting an application for renewal of registration, but with no checks.

Regular revalidation through interview, e.g. every 5 years

Regular revalidation through on-line test or similar demonstration of knowledge and experience

Firm -based reviews of architect performance

Other (please state)

10. Why do you say this?

Criteria Review – detailed

The following questions relate to the [Prescription of Qualifications: ARB Criteria at Parts 1, 2 and 3](#), 2010 edition.

11. How familiar are you with the ARB Criteria?

Very familiar

Slightly familiar

Not very familiar

Not used or seen criteria before

Parts 1 and 2: General Criteria

12. For each of the General Criteria 1-11, please make any comments or suggestions that you have relating to the detailed content, with particular consideration on ensuring architects have the competencies (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours) required for the 21st century:

Criterion	Comments
1: Create designs meeting aesthetic and technical requirements	
2: History and theory of architecture and related subjects	
3: Influence of fine arts on architectural design	
4: Urban design, planning and the planning process	
5: Relationship between building and people and their environment	
6: Role of architects in society	
7: Investigation and preparation of a design project brief	
8: Structural design, construction and engineering problems associated with building design	
9: Function of buildings and technologies to provide comfort and protection	
10: Design skills to meet building user requirements within cost and building regulations	
11: Contextual knowledge.	

13. In Parts 1 and 2, each general criterion is currently underpinned by a set of three additional bullet points and no weightings are applied to criteria (aside from a requirement that 50% of assessed work must be in design). Are some criteria more important than others? How should this be indicated? ?

14. Is there another way to describe required competencies which might replace the criteria? What is it and what would the advantages be?

Parts 1 and 2: Graduate Attributes

15. Do the Graduate Attributes reflect the required levels of competence (skills, knowledge, experience, behaviour) at Part 1 and Part 2? Are there additional attributes at Part 1 and/or Part 2 which are required and should be specified? Are they sufficiently stretching or too stretching? Why do you say this?

16. Does achievement of Part 1 ensure all entrants to Part 2 have consistent skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour? Why do you say this?

17. The General Criteria for Parts 1 and 2 are currently the same, with the differences between the two levels indicated by the Graduate Attributes. Would you prefer:

- to keep the current approach to differentiating Parts 1 and 2 through the Graduate Attributes
- the detail for competencies to be different at Part 1 and Part 2, removing the need for the Graduate Attributes
- another approach (please describe and explain what the advantages would be)

Part 3 Professional Criteria

18. For each of the Professional Criteria 1-5, please make any comments or suggestions that you have relating to the detailed content, with particular focus on how attainment of Part 3 ensures architects have the competencies required for the 21st century:

Criterion	Comments
1: Professionalism	
2: Clients, users and delivery of services	
3: Legal framework and processes	
4: Practice and Management	
5: Building procurement	

19. Is there another way to describe required competencies which might replace the Professional Criteria at Part 3? What is it and what would the advantages be?