Prescribed Examination Policy Scheme

1. Introduction

1.1 The Academic Competency Outcomes Prescribed Examination (the exam) provides a route to registration for individuals who do not hold ARB-prescribed qualifications but believe they have developed an equivalent standard of knowledge, understanding and competence through other qualifications, professional experience or a combination of both.

1.2 The examination is established under section 4 of the Architects Act 1997. The Act provides that a person may be entitled to registration where they have a standard of competence which, in the opinion of ARB, is equivalent to that demonstrated by a person who has completed the prescribed qualifications and practical experience requirements. The Act also permits ARB to require applicants to pass a prescribed examination in architecture for this purpose. The examination is designed to assess whether an applicant can demonstrate the Academic Competency Outcomes published by ARB. These Outcomes set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of an individual who has successfully completed the academic stages of architectural education required for registration.

1.3 Eligibility requirements to access the exam are published here [LINK].

2. Academic Competency Outcomes

2.1 The Competency Outcomes for Architects outlines the threshold competencies required for registration as an architect irrespective of the route taken to registration.



2.2 A link to Competency Outcomes for Architects can be found in Annex A: Useful Links at the end of this document.

3. Assessment Principles

3.1 The examination assesses whether applicants can demonstrate a standard of competence equivalent to that expected of a person who has successfully completed the academic stages of architectural education required for registration as an architect in the United Kingdom.

3.2 Applicants are responsible for providing sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have met the Academic Competency Outcomes. Evidence may be drawn from a range of sources, including qualifications, professional practice, research, independent study, publications, technical reports, design projects, built work, professional activities and other relevant experience. Applicants are not expected to rely solely on architectural project work where other evidence is capable of demonstrating the Academic Competency Outcomes.

3.3 Examiners will assess the evidence provided as a whole. Applicants are not expected to demonstrate every Outcome through a single project, qualification or piece of work. Different Outcomes may be evidenced through different experiences and activities.

3.4 The examination is designed to assess applicants holistically. The Review and Interview stages are considered together, enabling examiners to evaluate both the evidence provided and the applicant's understanding, judgment and professional insight.

3.5 Applicants should focus on demonstrating the quality, relevance and breadth of their evidence rather than the volume of material submitted. Examiners will consider

whether the evidence demonstrates that the applicant has achieved the required standard of competence, rather than the quantity of evidence provided.

3.6 The burden of demonstrating competence rests with the applicant. Where insufficient evidence is provided, examiners may be unable to conclude that an Academic Competency Outcome has been demonstrated.

3.7 Examiners will exercise professional judgment when assessing applications. Decisions are based on the evidence provided and the extent to which that evidence demonstrates achievement of the Academic Competency Outcomes.

4. Examination Overview

4.1 There are three stages to the examination.



4.2 The purpose of the **Application** stage is to determine whether an applicant meets the eligibility requirements to undertake the examination.

4.3 The purpose of the **Review** stage is to assess the evidence provided by the applicant against the Academic Competency Outcomes. Applicants are required to submit:

(a) a self-assessment explaining how they have met the Academic Competency Outcomes; and

(b) a portfolio containing evidence supporting that self-assessment.

(c) Supporting evidence bundle supporting the self-assessment.

4.4 The purpose of the **Interview** stage is to enable examiners to explore the evidence provided during the Review stage, assess the applicant's understanding and professional judgment, and evaluate any areas where further clarification or evidence may be required.

4.5 The outcome of the examination will be as a result of the evidence provided at both the Review and Interview stages. Evidence submitted during the Review stage forms the foundation of the assessment, while the Interview enables applicants to explain, contextualise and expand upon that evidence.

4.6 Applicants who successfully complete the Application stage will be invited to proceed to the Review stage.

4.7 Applicants who provide sufficient evidence at the Review stage will be invited to proceed to the Interview stage.

4.8 Following completion of the Interview stage, the examiners will determine whether the applicant has demonstrated the Academic Competency Outcomes and therefore the required standard of competence.

5. Stage 1 - Application

5.1 The purpose of the Application stage is to determine whether an applicant has a realistic prospect of successfully demonstrating the Academic Competency Outcomes through the Review and Interview stages of the examination. It is not intended to determine whether an applicant has already demonstrated those Outcomes or whether they should be admitted to the Register. Those matters are assessed through the Review and Interview stages of the examination.

5.2 Eligibility requirements are set out separately in ARB's Eligibility Guidance.

5.3 ARB may request further information where reasonably necessary to determine eligibility.

5.4 Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the information and evidence submitted is accurate, complete and submitted by any applicable deadline.

Eligibility Decision

5.5 ARB will assess each application against the published eligibility requirements.

5.6 Applicants who satisfy the eligibility requirements will be invited to proceed to the Review stage.

5.7 Applicants who do not satisfy the eligibility requirements will not be permitted to proceed further with the examination.

5.8 Acceptance onto the examination does not imply that an applicant has demonstrated the Academic Competency Outcomes or that they will be successful in the examination.

6. Stage 2 - Review

6.1 The Review stage is the principal evidence gathering stage of the examination. It enables applicants to demonstrate how they have achieved the Academic Competency Outcomes through qualifications, professional experience, personal development, or a combination of these.

6.2 The purpose of the Review is to allow examiners to assess the breadth, depth and relevance of the applicant's evidence before proceeding to the Interview stage.

6.3 Applicants are required to submit:

(a) a self-assessment; and

(b) a portfolio of supporting evidence.

(c) supporting evidence bundle

Self Assessment

6.4 The self-assessment requires applicants to explain how they have demonstrated each of the Academic Competency Outcomes.

6.5 Applicants should use the self-assessment to identify the evidence that supports each Outcome and explain how that evidence demonstrates the required knowledge, understanding, skills or behaviours.

6.6 The self-assessment should focus on the applicant's own contribution to architectural projects, academic learning and professional development. It should help examiners understand how the evidence provided relates to the Academic Competency Outcomes.

Portfolio of evidence and Supporting evidence bundle

6.7 The portfolio of evidence should contain evidence that supports the self-assessment and demonstrates achievement of the Academic Competency Outcomes.

6.8 The supporting evidence bundle enables the applicants to provide evidence for competencies which cannot be evidenced by the design projects in the portfolio.

6.~~8~~ 9 Evidence for both the portfolio and bundle may be drawn from a range of sources, including:

(a) academic study;

(b) professional practice;

(c) independent learning;

(d) other relevant activities.

6.~~9~~10 Applicants are not required to provide separate evidence for every Academic Competency Outcome. A single piece of evidence may demonstrate multiple Outcomes, and applicants may draw upon a range of evidence sources to demonstrate a particular Outcome.

6.~~10~~11Applicants should select evidence that best demonstrates the quality, relevance and complexity of their work. Examiners will assess the overall strength of the evidence rather than the volume of material submitted.

Assessment for evidence

6.~~11~~12Examiners will review the self-assessment~~, and~~ portfolio of evidence and supporting evidence bundle together.

6.~~12~~13Examiners will consider:

(a) the extent to which the evidence demonstrates the Academic Competency Outcomes;

(b) the relevance and quality of the evidence provided;

(c) the applicant's explanation of how the evidence relates to the Outcomes; and

(d) whether the evidence demonstrates a standard of competence equivalent to that required by the Academic Competency Outcomes.

6.~~13~~14Examiners may identify areas where further clarification, explanation or evidence is required. These areas may be explored further during the Interview stage.

Outcome of the Review

6.~~14~~15Applicants who provide sufficient evidence to enable further assessment of the Academic Competency Outcomes at Interview will be invited to proceed to the Interview stage.

6.1~~5~~6 Applicants who do not provide sufficient evidence to enable further assessment of the Academic Competency Outcomes will not progress to the Interview stage.

7. Stage 3 - Interview

7.1 The Interview will take place online and provides an opportunity for applicants to explain and contextualise the evidence contained within their self-assessment, ~~and~~ portfolio and supporting bundle. It also enables examiners to explore areas where further clarification may be required.

7.2 The Interview is a substantive part of the examination. The Review and Interview stages are considered together when determining whether an applicant has demonstrated the required standard of competence. During the Interview, applicants may be asked to explain, clarify or further demonstrate Academic Competency Outcomes that were not fully evidenced during the Review stage.

Assessment

7.3 During the Interview, examiners may:

(a) ask applicants to explain evidence submitted during the Review stage;

(b) test the veracity of the evidence submitted during the Review stage;

(c) explore how particular Academic Competency Outcomes have been demonstrated;

(d) seek clarification regarding the applicant's role, contribution or responsibilities in relation to projects or activities included within the portfolio and or the supporting bundle;

(e) discuss professional, ethical or practice-based scenarios relevant to the Academic Competency Outcomes; and

(f) explore areas where additional evidence, explanation or context may be required.

7.4 Examiners may focus particular attention on Academic Competency Outcomes where the evidence submitted during the Review stage was less comprehensive or where further clarification is required.

7.5 Applicants should be prepared to discuss the evidence they have submitted and demonstrate how that evidence relates to the Academic Competency Outcomes.

8. Examination outcomes

8.1 The Interview is not assessed in isolation. Examiners will consider the evidence submitted during the Review stage together with the applicant's responses during the Interview.

8.2 Following the Interview, the examiners will determine whether the applicant has demonstrated the Academic Competency Outcomes and the required standard of competence.

8.3 Applicants who successfully demonstrate the required standard of competence will be informed of their successful outcome.

8.4 Applicants who do not demonstrate the required standard of competence will receive feedback identifying the Academic Competency Outcomes that were not sufficiently demonstrated.

9. Re-sits

9.1 Applicants who are unsuccessful at either the Review or Interview stage will receive feedback identifying the competencies that were not sufficiently demonstrated.

9.2 The purpose of feedback is to help applicants understand which Outcomes require further development, clarification or evidence before undertaking a further attempt.

9.3 Applicants may undertake ~~a~~ one further attempt at an unsuccessful stage of the examination without making a new application, provided they remain within the period permitted for completion of the examination process.

9.4 Before undertaking a further attempt, applicants should carefully consider the feedback received and ensure that they are able to provide additional evidence, explanation, learning or experience relevant to the Academic Competency Outcomes identified.

9.5 A further attempt should not be regarded as an opportunity simply to repeat a previous submission or interview. Applicants are expected to address the matters identified in the feedback provided.

9.6 A fee is payable for each further attempt. Information about current fees is available on the ARB website.

9.7 Applicants must successfully complete all stages of the examination within ~~[PERIOD].~~24 months. Applicants who do not complete the examination within that period may be required to submit a new application before continuing.

10. Authenticity of evidence

10.1 Applicants must ensure that all information, statements and evidence submitted as part of the examination are accurate and truthful.

10.2 Applicants may submit evidence derived from collaborative projects, team activities or work undertaken on behalf of employers or clients. Where they do so, applicants must clearly identify their own role, responsibilities and contribution.

10.3 Applicants must not present the work, ideas or achievements of others as their own.

10.4 ARB may undertake such checks as it considers necessary to verify the authenticity of evidence submitted during the examination process.

10.5 Where ARB reasonably believes that evidence has been falsified, plagiarised, materially misrepresented or otherwise submitted dishonestly, ARB may:

(a) reject the application;

(b) determine that the applicant has not passed the examination; or

(c) take such other action as ARB considers appropriate.

11. Procedural Reviews

11.1 The Academic Competency Outcomes Prescribed Examination does not include a right of appeal against the academic or professional judgment of the examiners.

11.2 Applicants who are dissatisfied with an examination outcome may request a procedural review in accordance with the Registration Rules.

11.3 A procedural review is not a reconsideration of the evidence submitted or a re-assessment of the applicant's competence. Its purpose is to determine whether there has been a material defect in the examination process which may have affected the outcome.

11.4 A procedural review may only be requested on one or more of the following grounds:

(a) material procedural impropriety in the conduct of the examination;
(b) manifest unfairness; or
(c) the decision was so unreasonable that no reasonable panel of examiners could have reached it.

11.5 Disagreement with the academic or professional judgment of the examiners, including disagreement about whether an Academic Competency Outcome has been demonstrated, does not by itself constitute grounds for a procedural review.

11.6 Requests for procedural review must be submitted within the period specified in the Registration Rules.

11.7 Where a procedural review identifies a material defect in the examination process, the outcome may be referred for further examination by the same or different examiners.

11.8 Further information about procedural reviews, including how to submit a request, is available in ARB's Procedural Review Guidance.