



Architects
Registration
Board

2026

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Guidance for
employers of trainees

A note on this guidance

This guidance is intended to come into force in December 2028, in line with our transition to the new education framework and new requirements for professional practical experience. We have published it before this date to provide advice on the characteristics of good professional practical experience.

This guidance is for employers of trainees. It is complemented by guidance for trainees.

Introduction

Taking on a trainee brings real benefits to an employer: new ideas, extra capacity, and the chance to shape the next generation of professionals. It is also a serious responsibility.

An important part of a trainee's employment is to gain the practical experience necessary to meet ARB's Practice Outcomes, building on and complementing the rest of their education and training. Helping them gain the most from their experience requires commitment from senior leadership to create a workplace that supports their development, with proper supervision, and a structured environment in which the trainee can learn safely and effectively.

This guidance sets out the responsibilities of employers when providing professional practical experience to a trainee as part of their qualifications. It is advisory but reflects the professional expectations within the ARB Code of Conduct.



1. Workplace culture

- Employers should recognise the important role they have in setting a positive workplace culture and shaping the attitudes of future architects.
- Employers should ensure a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or inappropriate behaviour.
- Leaders should understand and manage the imbalance of power that exists between senior staff and trainees. Professional boundaries should be strictly maintained.
- Concerns raised by the trainee should be taken seriously, recorded properly, and acted on.

2. Employment status, contract and pay

- Any employees must have a written employment contract setting out duties, supervision arrangements, working hours, pay and terms.
- Any employees must be paid at least the National Living Wage (or the National Minimum Wage if they are under 21).

3. Structured work and purpose of employment

- An important part of a trainee's employment is for them to acquire the experience necessary to meet the Practice Outcomes. Work given to the trainee should therefore be structured, planned and appropriately sequenced in a way that balances the trainee's goals with the needs of the employer—not always simply whatever happens to be available.
- As far as possible, employers should ensure the trainee has opportunities to gain experience across different stages of work. Considering opportunities across your organisation may help them to do this.



- Employers should be mindful that trainees may have competing demands on their time from their work and education. It is therefore important to be clear about expected work hours and nature of a role when advertising it, so that trainees can decide whether it is appropriate for them. Where possible, employers should allow time away from work for essential academic activities. Coordination and communication with a trainee and their learning provider will help to anticipate and manage these situations.

4. Objectives, progression and the Trainee Record of Experience

- Trainees will join employers with different levels of experience and will be at different stages of their initial education and training. ARB's reforms to the education framework mean this may also be different to what employers have been familiar with.
- Trainees should receive a structured induction covering:
 - The employer's policies and procedures
 - Health and safety
 - Expected standards of behaviour
 - Confidentiality and data protection
 - How and when they will receive supervision
- Clear objectives should be agreed at the outset and revisited regularly to help the trainee reflect on their progress. Trainees should receive constructive, honest feedback throughout their period of employment. Employers should also be open to feedback from trainees on their experience, and act upon it where it might improve future training opportunities.
- The Trainee Record of Experience (the Record) should help to do this and ensure the discussion is focused on helping the trainee to acquire the experience they need.
- Trainees should be accurately and promptly maintaining their Record. Employers should help them do this by also promptly and accurately providing them with any information and support they need to complete their Record.
- Record entries should be promptly and accurately corroborated. The Record should be corroborated by a registered architect. This would give the trainee and others involved in supporting them more assurance about the experience they've gained. A trainee's learning provider may choose to use the Record as part of assessment towards their qualifications. As part of this, the provider

might set additional requirements on their trainees surrounding its use, such as who should corroborate the experience recorded.

- The aim of corroborating is to confirm the trainee's recording of the experience, helping them, you and their learning provider to understand their progress, not to necessarily assess the quality of their work.

5. Other support and supervision

- The Architects Act 1997 is clear that if a trainee is working at a company whose name includes 'architect', their architectural work must be carried on under the supervision of a registered architect. Alongside the situations in which this is required, during a trainee's employment, a range of professionals may be capable of giving oversight, training and support to carry out tasks safely and competently. Employers should ensure trainees receive this.
- Every trainee should be assigned a mentor who oversees, coordinates, and reviews the trainee's experience during their time in professional practice. A mentor can be any professional but should have appropriate experience and enough time and resource to carry out the role properly. ARB's mentoring guidance contains further information on what mentoring is and what architects should do to comply with the Code if they are acting as a mentor.
- Trainees should have reasonable access to senior staff for questions, technical guidance and reflection.
- As with any employee, trainees' personal circumstances may affect their time in work and their training. Employers should be open to supporting them where possible.



6. Coordination with learning providers

- For qualifications where it is a requirement to meet the Practice Outcomes, a trainee's learning provider will:
 - Have used a Trainee Record of Experience that meets ARB's requirements to individually advise the trainee about what practical experience they require to meet the Practice Outcomes, discussed how they can acquire it and will reflect with them on their progress.
 - Maintain contact with the trainee and their employer during any periods of employment during the qualification.
 - Assist the trainee if they have shared concerns about workplace behaviour or employment conditions, referring them to specialist organisations where this is more appropriate.
- It can be helpful to learning providers if an employer provides feedback to them on what support and advice could be provided to improve the experience for future trainees.

