



Architects
Registration
Board



2026

PROFESSIONAL **P**RACTICAL **E**XPERIENCE

Guidance for
trainees

A note on this guidance

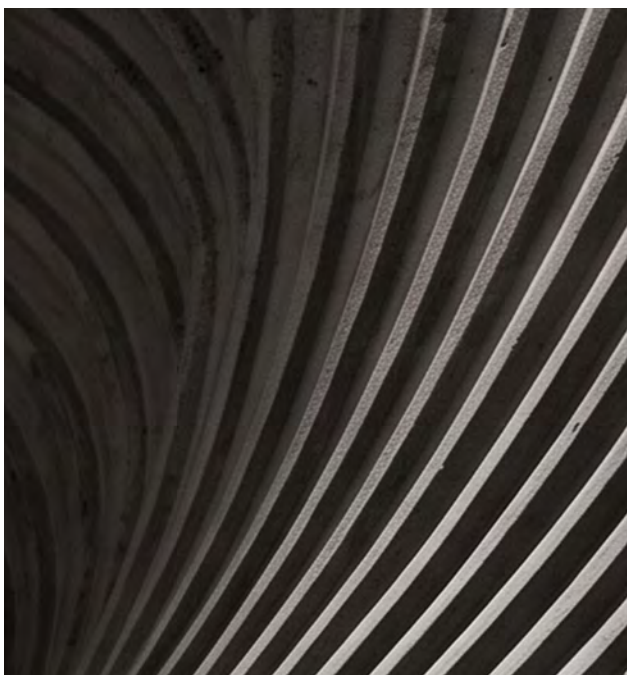
This guidance is intended to come into force in December 2028, in line with our transition to the new education framework and new requirements for professional practical experience. We have published it before this date to provide advice on the characteristics of good professional practical experience.

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

Introduction

A period of practical experience is a vital part of becoming an architect. It allows you to apply and build on what you've learned, develop professional judgement, and undertake the activities you need to meet ARB's Practice Outcomes.

This guidance sets out what is expected of you and how to make the most of your time during your time in professional practice.



It complements the guidance issued to employers so that everyone understands their role in making the experience productive, fair and professionally meaningful.

Gaining practical experience is a vital part of your progress towards registration. In recognition of this, if your qualification requires you to acquire the Practice Outcomes, ARB requires your learning provider to support you. This should include maintaining contact with you and your employer during periods of employment during your qualification. It should also include adapting their monitoring, oversight and support role towards helping you acquire the Practice Outcomes. How this is done will vary between providers, depending on their circumstances.

From December 2028, trainees will not need to have completed a minimum time in practical experience to register with ARB. However, it will be essential to meet the Competency Outcomes and to gain qualifications that demonstrate this. The time required to do this will vary and it may take more than two years of time in practice.

1. Finding experience opportunities

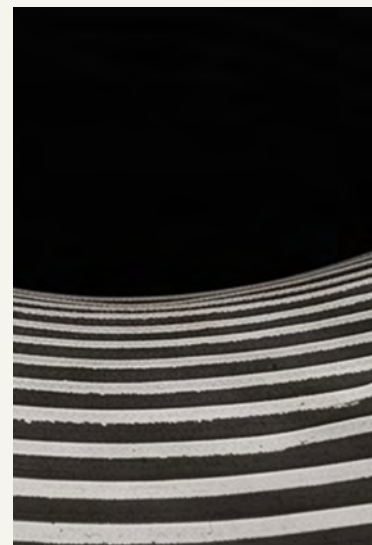
- While your learning provider should help you, it ultimately remains your responsibility to find suitable opportunities, and you should not rely on them to do this for you unless they have said they will.
- You should consider whether the employer is one where you can acquire the experience you need to meet the Practice Outcomes, as well as the support you can expect to be available to you and the compatibility of the employer with your own personal preferences. Both this guidance and ARB's guidance for employers provide further information on the characteristics of a suitable employer.
- You should gain experience on UK-based projects as this will help you meet the Outcomes covering regulations, standards, codes of practice and policies related to the development of the built environment.

2. Understand the purpose of practical experience

- Your primary purpose during this period is to gain experience that helps you meet the Practice Outcomes set by your learning provider and ARB.
- While support should be available to you, it is important that you also take responsibility and ownership of your own experience and development. Be proactive in seeking out learning opportunities, asking questions and engaging with the work you're given.

3. Act professionally

- You are expected to conduct yourself with the same professionalism you would show as a registered architect: reliability, punctuality, respect and integrity. Although you are not yet an architect, you should understand and act in accordance with the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice.
- Understand that it is a significant commitment for an employer to offer professional practical experience. Make an effort to learn, collaborate, share information and support your colleagues whenever you can.



- Follow your employer's policies, including confidentiality, data protection, and health and safety procedures.
- If you're unsure about anything—especially legal or safety issues—ask before acting. You should expect to have support from senior colleagues when you need it.

4. Commit to your learning

- You should receive a structured induction. Engage fully with the induction process and make sure you understand how your time in professional practice will work.
- Understand what experience you need to complete your Practice Outcomes and your qualification. Your learning provider should help you do this and you should regularly discuss with your employer the plan for acquiring it.
- If you feel you don't understand a task, or haven't been shown enough to complete it safely, say so promptly.
- Discuss with your employer any personal circumstances that might affect your training.



5. Objectives, progression and your Trainee Record of Experience

- You are responsible for maintaining your Trainee Record of Experience (your Record) accurately and promptly.
- Clear objectives should be agreed between you and your employer at the outset, then revisited regularly as part of reflecting on your progress. The Record should help to do this and ensure the discussion is focused on helping you to acquire the experience you need.
- Keep notes to help you record and reflect on your experience—don't try to

reconstruct months of work at the end.

- Your Record should be corroborated by a registered architect. This would give you and others involved in supporting you more assurance about the experience you've gained. Your learning provider may choose to use the Record as part of assessment towards your qualifications. As part of this, they might set additional requirements on you surrounding its use, such as who should corroborate the experience recorded.
- The aim of corroborating is to confirm your recording of the experience, helping you, your employer and learning provider to understand your progress, not to necessarily assess the quality of your work.
- As far as possible, employers should ensure you have opportunities to gain experience across different stages of work.
- During your practice level qualification, there may be occasions when you struggle to gain the experience you need to demonstrate acquisition of the Practice Outcomes to a learning provider. In this situation, while providers may not be able to guarantee or secure experience for you, they should have a strategy for support and guidance on alternative options to give you the best possible opportunity to complete your qualification.

6. Other support and supervision

- During your employment, a range of professionals may be capable of giving oversight, training and support to help you carry out tasks safely and competently. ARB's guidance to employers says they should ensure you receive this.
- ARB's guidance to employers also says you should be assigned a mentor who oversees, coordinates, and reviews your experience during your 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.
- Be open to constructive feedback, even when it's uncomfortable—it's part of becoming a competent architect.
- Give feedback respectfully where asked, especially if parts of your experience are not working well.

- If you are struggling or feel overwhelmed, tell a mentor or someone else supporting you early rather than waiting for problems to escalate.

7. Conditions and concerns

- Your employer should understand and meet their legal obligations towards you, including on pay and working conditions. If you are an employee (as opposed to being self-employed) then you must be provided with a contract of employment and be paid the National Living Wage (or the National Minimum Wage if you are under 21).
- Your employer should be mindful that you may have competing demands on your time from work and education. They should be clear about expected work hours when advertising a role, so that you can decide whether it is appropriate for you. Where possible, they should allow time away from work for your essential academic activities. Coordination and communication between you, your employer and your learning provider will help to anticipate and manage these situations.
- If you experience discrimination, harassment, or behaviour that feels inappropriate or unsafe, raise it with a mentor, your supervising architect or other senior staff at the employer, or your learning provider. Your learning provider might not be able to intervene directly but should be able to provide assistance or direct you to another specialist organisation that can assist you.
- If concerns are not resolved, or raising them internally is not appropriate, then use the ARB Guidance on 'Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing' to better understand your options for escalating them. There is also advice on ARB's website if you have concerns about employers, including other organisations that might be able to help you. You do not have to stay quiet – there will be support for you.

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