

Review of Architects

Competences

Report for the Architects Registration Board

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. In May 2020 the Architects Registration Board (ARB), the body responsible for the registration of architects in the UK, commissioned SQW to explore the views of stakeholders on: the role of an architect in the 21st century; the competences architects require to fulfil this role; and the means by which architects can acquire and maintain these competences.
2. SQW's study is Stage two of four in a process through which ARB will update the regulatory model for architects in the UK. SQW's study builds on Stage one of the review which consisted of comparative research into architecture profession in other countries, other professions in the UK and analysis of ARB's Call for Evidence. These elements were undertaken by Carol Stanfield Consulting.
3. Throughout this study, SQW and Carol Stanfield Consulting have worked closely together to ensure the findings of Stage one and two combine to provide an evidence base that ARB can use to inform their future work.

Context

4. The Architects Registration Board (ARB) is the statutory body for the registration of architects in the United Kingdom. Under the Architects Act 1997, the ARB has responsibility for prescribing qualifications and practical experience required for entry onto the UK Register of Architects. The General Criteria describe the subject material for students gaining qualifications prescribed by ARB at Part 1 and Part 2. The Professional Criteria at Part 3 set out additional knowledge and skills expected in order to register and practise in the UK.
5. The current criteria for qualifications has been in place since 2010. Since then, there have been a range of contextual and technological developments which have implications for the profession. These include the Hackitt Review (as a result of the Grenfell tragedy), the growing prominence of environmental and sustainability considerations, and the regulation of qualifications post-Brexit. The new Building Safety Bill also contains provisions to provide new legal powers to enable ARB to monitor the competence of architects throughout their career.

Methods

6. In undertaking this research, SQW completed two phases of research. Phase one was a scoping exercise which involved a series of scoping interviews, a literature review, a review of ARB's records and membership register, and an analysis of labour market data. Phase two was the main research stage and comprised five parts: the Survey of Architects, the Survey

of large employers, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and deliberative enquiry workshops.

Findings

7. The research was not planned to provide definitive answers at this stage, but to provide a robust evidence base on which to progress the Competence Review in later Stages.
8. Over 4,500 practising architects, academics and architecture students participated in one or more parts of the research between May 2020 and January 2021. The scoping phase with ARB, interviews with key stakeholders and a detailed literature review gave the research a clear, evidenced focus of the key issues on which to build. The volume of responses to the Survey of Architects (over 4,400), Call for Evidence and the detailed contribution of interviewees and focus group participants, offer a degree of confidence that the findings which have emerged are reflective of the current views of the profession and provide a solid evidence base for ARB to use.

Roles and competences required of architects

9. In the UK, the criteria for registration are relatively brief compared to other countries reviewed. Some skills are more explicitly defined in other countries' criteria, or have different emphases on theory and design, technical approaches, collaborative working and management. In comparison with other UK professions, the research found that there are some generic competences which might be relevant for architects, but are not as explicitly stated in the current ARB criteria as they are for other professions.
10. The Survey of Architects reported that the tasks that architects most commonly undertook as part of their job were designing proposals and preparing architectural drawings (undertaken frequently by 87% and 85% of respondents respectively). From the list presented, the least commonly undertaken task was the use of building information modelling (BIM) (33%), particularly where respondents worked for smaller businesses.
11. Over the last five years, the Survey of Architects found that management of health and safety, and climate change/sustainability had become more important to architects' roles. The survey also found the following factors were expected to become increasingly important over the next five years: climate change/sustainability (90% of respondents), followed by management of health and safety risks (72%) and digital developments in the sector (71%).
12. A longer-term trend was identified by architects in which their role has been moving from the traditionalist concept of an architect with a broad skillset, reflected in the General Criteria, to a design focused role and specialist skillsets (such as designing for low carbon emissions, inclusive access or heritage). This change has placed architects within larger planning and development teams, and often on the periphery of project site delivery.

However, there was uncertainty about how this might change in the future given the implications of the Hackitt Review which may widen the role once again.

General Criteria

13. The research explored perceptions of the fitness of the criteria given the current and expected role of Architects. The breadth of competences covered in the general criteria remain valid and were generally viewed as appropriate. The feedback suggested the criteria could be strengthened or developed further to emphasise issues such as climate change and health and safety. A more developed specification would be in line with the evidence gathered through the reviews of international practice and other UK professions and may help address some concerns raised about the apparent variation in what is taught in accredited courses, which it was thought then impacted on students' outcomes with certain students being seen as more skilled.

Figure 1: Key findings on roles and competences required of architects

- There was broad agreement that some skills are becoming more important, including sustainability, health and safety and digital.
- While these changes are important, the breadth of competences covered in the general criteria remain valid and were generally viewed as appropriate.
- The general criteria could be strengthened by given greater recognition to emerging skills and being more directive on the weighting that should be applied to some elements, especially technical skills.

Routes to registration and competences attained

14. Most architects surveyed felt that the amount of time it currently takes for new architects to become registered in the UK was 'about right'. While there were some concerns from architects and students with the length of route to registration, there was no strong view that shortening courses would be a positive move (unless viewed from a financial perspective). However, there was interest in reviewing the content and structure of courses to ensure the time spent was put to best use. In particular, there was widespread support for changes to improve access to the profession, increase exposure to practice and increase opportunities for students to gain more practical skills.
15. Research participants acknowledged that there was a gap in the profession's ability to integrate other architecture-related professionals and support that in their route to registration. This was widely seen as a weakness and in contrast to practice internationally and in other UK professions.

- 16.** Through the Deliberative Enquiry workshops, participants discussed a number of options which could be used to adapt the current routes to registration to enable architecture students to gain more practical experience. These options were: greater work experience during training, a clearing system for work placement accessibility, the use of modular, shorter term placements, expanding the apprenticeship offer, and using mandatory and optional criteria for work placements. Participants reported improved work placements and the Degree Apprenticeship route would be the most effective way to adapt the current system. They also thought that there could be scope for a job brokerage for placements.

Professional work placements

- 17.** The accessibility and quality of work placements was consistently highlighted as highly variable within the sector and this has wider implications for the diversity and competence of the registered profession. Students had a desire for greater exposure to practice earlier within Part 1, in part to ensure all students do gain some experience before the break between Part 1 and Part 2. Linked to this, students would appreciate more support from HEIs to access work placements, specifically within architecture practices.
- 18.** It was recognised that there were instances of HEIs implementing their own adapted courses and these were generally welcomed, but thought to be offered by a fairly small number of institutions. While there was a desire for greater employer involvement, there was also caution that this should not be mandated to an extent which caused problems when the sector was in recession.
- 19.** Participants thought that the student experience could be improved by guidance on what was expected of the employer (perhaps linked to the Code of Conduct) and the availability of training for employers in how best to support placement students. This could be further strengthened through more consistent input from the Professional Studies Adviser in checking in with students during their placements.

Degree Apprenticeships

- 20.** The research suggested that there had been more interest from employers and students in the architecture Apprenticeship at Level 7 (Part 2), than Level 6 (Part 1). For employers, this was due to the perceived benefits of students having gained the knowledge and design grounding in Part 1 and prior work experience.
- 21.** Generally, those working in the sector and the HEIs consulted were positive towards Apprenticeships. While fairly new and so needing monitoring over time, there was some optimism that they could widen diversity in the profession and provide an alternative route to registration. They also highlighted a need for improved marketing and awareness raising among employers to improve the supply apprenticeships.
- 22.** While underrepresentation within the profession was widely acknowledged, research participants recognised that increasing inclusivity could not solely be achieved through

Apprenticeships, especially given the limited opportunities at Level 6. Wider efforts to raise awareness much earlier in the education system was viewed as a more appropriate way to improve the diversity of the profession.

Figure 2: Key findings on routes to registration and competences attained

- There was no strong view that shortening courses would be a positive move (unless viewed from a financial perspective). However, there was interest in reviewing the content and structure of courses to ensure the time spent was put to best use.
- There was strong support for having an improved work experience element built into architects' training, with greater clarity about what placements should cover and how students should be supported.
- There was widespread support for new, more flexible entry routes to the profession, including growing the use of apprenticeships and access for people coming from outside the UK.

Maintaining and demonstrating competence

23. Architects in the UK are reported to undertake above average levels of CPD compared to others in EU. However, CPD is not required for renewal of registration in the UK, which is different to most other nations researched. In the other five UK professions reviewed, only solicitors do not have any CPD requirements on renewal.
24. Just under half of the architects who responded to the survey said that they would like to do more CPD than they currently do. When asked what barriers prevented them from undertaking as much CPD as they would like, most cited a lack of time. Within the focus groups, research participants raised concerns over cost due to the financial pressures faced by practices and the quality of the current CPD offer, which they felt was often more akin to business marketing and product promotion than knowledge development.
25. There was broad support (and even expectation) from practising architects of a tightening up on the current process of demonstrating competence. Changes to a more defined set of expectations would place architects in the UK more in line with those in other countries and a number of other professions in the UK. However, there were significant concerns about a range of options (e.g., a specified number of hours or periodic examination). This in part reflected inherent risks of introducing any, more formal system (no route is risk free). The views put forward were the most diverse of the three research areas and there was no strong, consistent support for any approach. This likely reflected that this was the one area where all options were in effect entirely new to the profession. Therefore, this element could benefit from further testing and refinement in the next stages of the project. Areas to consider might include the:

- Fit to existing structures, expectations and recording procedures
- Balance between updating general against more specialist competences
- Ensuring that any new system recognised quality CPD outcomes, formal and informal activity and took a risk-based approach to auditing.

Figure 3: Key findings on maintaining and demonstrating competence

- While architects in general appear to undertake high levels of CPD activity when compared to others in Europe, there was broad support (and even expectation) of a tightening up on the current process.
- However, there were a wide variety of views about what might work best and about the shortcomings of each approach, and no clear view of a preferred way forward.
- In developing a way forward ARB could consider how best and to what extent to recognise specialisms; and how to ensure quality CPD outcomes rather than simply logging activity.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Architects Registration Board (ARB) is undertaking a Review to ensure that architects have the knowledge, skills and competencies required in the 21st Century, thereby helping to ensure the ARB's regulatory system protects the public and maintains confidence in the profession¹. As well as defining the competences that architects require, the Competence Review will support the development of the regulatory policies and processes needed to ensure they are met and maintained throughout an architect's career.
- 1.2** The ARB is the body responsible for the registration of architects in the UK. Its duties are described in the 1997 Architects Act, and cover six main areas:
- Prescribing – or 'recognising' – the qualifications needed to become an architect
 - Keeping the UK Register of Architects
 - Ensuring that architects meet the standards for conduct and practice
 - Investigating complaints about an architect's conduct or competence
 - Making sure that only people on the Register offer their services as an architect
 - Acting as the UK's regulatory authority for architects.
- 1.3** Registration is currently dependent on the successful completion of three stages of education and practical experience (Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3) which have been in place since 1958. Part 1 is typically a three- or four-year undergraduate degree; Part 2 is typically a two-year second degree and Part 3 is typically attained on completion of two years practical training experience and professional examinations.
- 1.4** In June 2018, the Institute for Apprenticeships (now the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) approved the standard and end point assessment for a Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship (the Architectural Assistant apprenticeship). This typically encompasses a four-year programme which includes Part 1 of the requirements for registration. At the same time, the Institute also approved the standard and end point assessment for a Level 7 Degree Architect Apprenticeship, which typically encompasses a four-year programme which includes Parts 2 and 3 of the requirements for registration.
- 1.5** The current [Criteria for prescribing qualifications](#) in architecture have been in place since 2010. Since then, many issues have changed which potentially impact on the profession. These changes include on-going developments in technologies and materials, a growing concern about environmental issues, and changing education policies and funding arrangements. In addition, the Grenfell fire and subsequent Hackitt review in response are

¹ <https://arb.org.uk/competence-review/>

impacting on the role and expectation of the whole construction sector² and Brexit has led to ongoing reconsideration around the regulation of professions and recognition of professional qualifications in the UK.

1.6 The most recent [Government-led Periodic Review](#) of the regulation of architects and the ARB (March 2017) also recommended that the ARB should proceed with a review of the routes to registration to:

- Explore opportunities to streamline the prescription of qualifications in architecture
- Consider a reduced frequency of renewing prescription and monitoring where qualifications are unchanged
- Consider the flexibility in length and structure of architecture qualifications.

1.7 While the ARB's Competence Review has focused on the regulatory requirements for entry to the profession, it is important to understand the role of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Its focus is on developing the profession, and it provides:

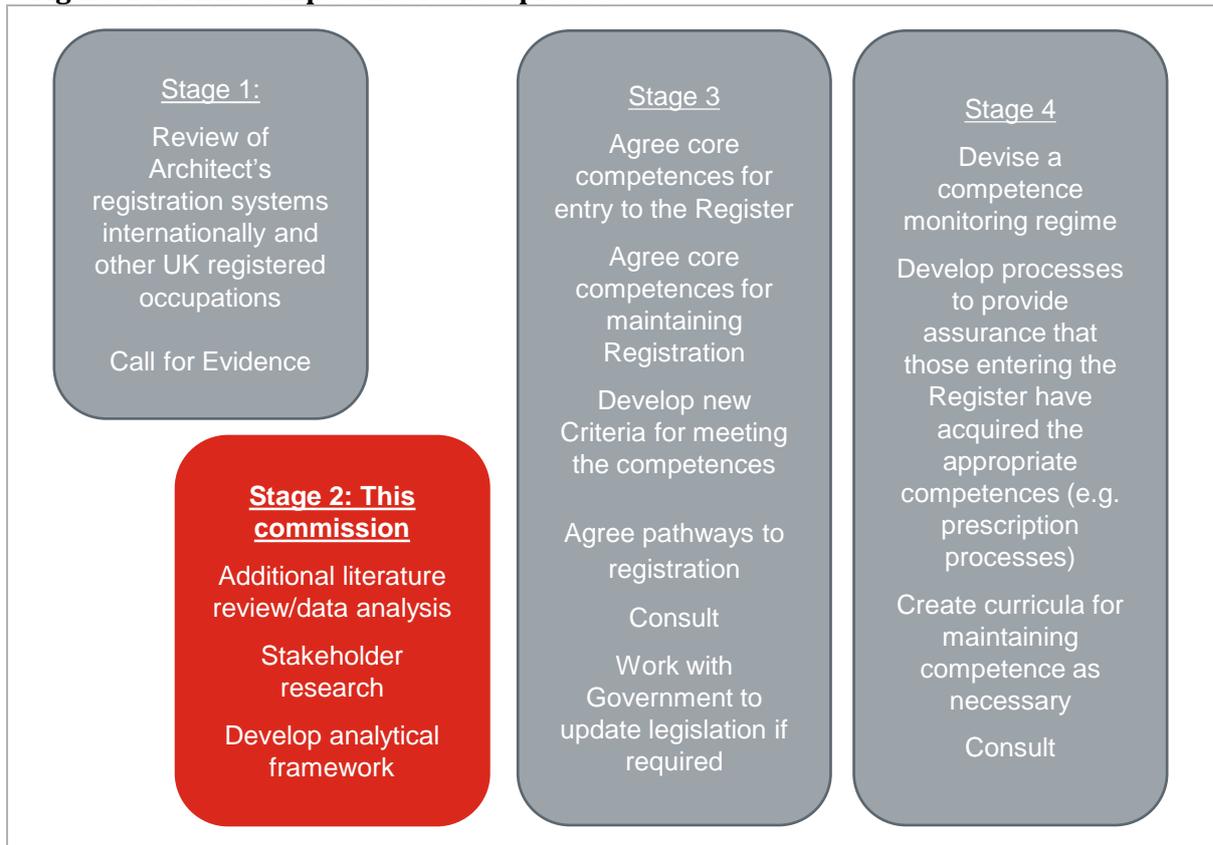
- a Code of Professional Conduct which extends beyond the minimum entry standard
- Continual Professional Development (CPD) resources
- Certification for architects and architectural practices.

The ARB Competence Review process

1.8 The review is being carried out in a number of [stages](#) and is intended to run to 2022, drawing on a range of research elements and subsequent consultation, as illustrated in Figure 1-1.

² [Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Hackitt review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Figure 1-1: ARB competence review process



Source: ARB

- 1.9** The first two stages focussed on research and evidence gathering from a range of sources. Stage 1 reviewed international regulation of architects in six other countries - New Zealand, Australia, US, (using California as an example as regulation is a state matter), South Africa, Canada and Ireland, as well as evidence from EU-wide surveys and resources. The countries were selected on the basis of their similarity to the UK in regulatory regimes. Additionally, the regulation of UK architects was compared with five other UK professions – Doctors, Vets, Solicitors, Chartered Civil Engineers and Chartered Surveyors. These were selected to provide professional or sectoral similarities with the architect profession but with a spectrum of regulatory regimes.
- 1.10** In May 2020, ARB appointed SQW to conduct the second stage of the Review – extensive research including a literature review and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders on the issues central to the Review.
- 1.11** In August 2020 ARB launched a call for evidence. This gathered almost 200 responses. The full results are available on the [ARB website](#) and summarised throughout this report.
- 1.12** This report draws together the findings of Stages one and two from Figure 1-1 above as a robust evidence based for the next stages of the review.

The research

Focus of the research

1.13 It is important to note that this research was not planned to provide definitive answers at this stage, but to provide a robust evidence base on which to progress the Competence Review in later Stages.

1.14 The research project was focussed on three core questions:

- What skills and competencies does a 21st century architect require
- How should those competencies be obtained and demonstrated
- How should competencies be maintained and demonstrated?

Scoping data gathered

1.15 The project began with a literature review exploring these three questions, focussing on evidence in the UK to complement the earlier international literature review. Labour market data³ and the ARB's complaints records and database of registered Architects were reviewed for evidence which might inform the review and a series of scoping interviews with key stakeholders were held to help shape the research.

Initial scoping findings

1.16 The initial findings from the scoping interviews and associated research informed the focus and development of research tools in the main stages of the research. A scoping report was delivered to ARB in July 2020. The key findings are detailed below.

Role and competencies required of architects

1.17 The architect's traditional role as a generalist or principal designer has diminished in recent years, with architects increasingly expected to play a more specialised role within a wider team. This is particularly the case for architects working in large practices or multi-disciplinary firms. Architects working in small practices or as sole traders are relatively more likely to maintain a more generalist role in their projects.

1.18 To understand where required competencies may currently be lacking SQW explored complaints data held by ARB. Overall, the complaints referred to and investigated by the ARB largely concerned architect's business management and professional skills, rather than

³ SQW noted a difference between the number of registered architects with ARB (c.42,000) and the number of reported architects through the Annual Population Survey in 2019 (c.54,900). ARB do prosecute those who use the title of architect when they are not registered in order to protect the public. Some individuals may self-identify as architects having passed Part 2, but not Part 3 qualifications. However, at present we do not have any evidence of what has caused this difference.

their technical competence as an architect. Between 2012-2019, most complaints focused on a lack of clear communication between architects and their clients during delivery of a project, failing to provide adequate terms of engagement, and not recording agreed contract variations in writing.

- 1.19** The themes within the complaints data were supported by the scoping interviews. There was thought to be an existing shortage of professional and 'soft' skills within the profession, including project management and collaborative working skills, and understanding of the commercial imperatives of design and construction.
- 1.20** Existing skills gaps were also reported in digital skills. Shortages were primarily attributed to employers (often smaller practices) lacking the resources to acquire hardware/software or invest in upskilling their existing workforce in response to newly emerging technologies.

Routes to registration and competences attained

- 1.21** There was a view that individuals who followed a vocational route to registration (such as an apprenticeship) may develop a greater range of professional skills prior to registration than those who take more academic routes, due to the greater amount of time spent training in a professional environment. However, these vocational routes have only been established relatively recently and so the extent to which they do so is yet to be demonstrated. More generally, there was support for new routes which would widen access to the profession.

How should competencies be maintained and demonstrated

- 1.22** Up-to-date knowledge of existing regulations and legislation was considered crucial but inconsistent across the profession. Formal CPD requirements are set by other professional bodies, which operate voluntary membership (RIBA and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)). As such, any requirements those bodies currently set therefore do not apply to all architects. For architects out with these bodies, and registered with ARB, existing checks on architects' CPD are generally retrospective (i.e., someone's CPD record is considered if there is an issue with their performance, but not routinely checked).
- 1.23** The ARB complaints data showed that the architects most likely to be the subject of a complaint were sole traders and/or those over the age of 45. The ARB's thematic report note that older architects are more likely to be practicing alone or in small practices. It is therefore difficult to determine whether it is the architects' age (or length of time since qualification) and/or environment within which they are working that is contributing to their likelihood of being subject to a complaint.

Data gathered for the main stage of research

- 1.24** SQW then devised a questionnaire based on the issues raised. An online survey was distributed to all 42,546 architects on the ARB register (Survey of Architects). Once final responses had been cleaned⁴ the survey had received a total of 4,405 responses, 10% of ARB register members. This level of response is fairly typical for this type of survey and the absolute number of responses is large, giving confidence in the findings at aggregate level.
- 1.25** In addition to answering questions about their personal skills, respondents were asked if they were responsible for hiring, recruitment and/or staff development of architects within their organisation. If so, then most were asked an additional series of questions, while those working in larger organisations (more than 100 people) were asked who the best contact for a subsequent survey would be. The findings from the survey are available on the ARB [website](#).
- 1.26** The findings also informed the next stages of the research:
- The subsequent online survey of larger business which employ architects, covering both practices employing over 100 people and larger, multidisciplinary businesses, which generated 26 replies (Survey of Large Employers)
 - The survey covered: the skills priorities, gaps and shortages currently experienced by employers; the support employers provide to trainee architects; and employer views on the General Criteria and process for registration renewal
 - A set of 13 consultations with key stakeholders
 - Semi-structured interviews covered: the role and competences of architects, identifying any factors which may have influenced change; the competence of newly qualified architects and views on the HEI entry route into the profession, as well as thoughts on the new apprenticeship model; views on the General Criteria and the current system for maintaining competence
 - Six consultations with higher education institutions (HEIs) through the semi-structured interviews around the themes described above
 - Eight focus groups, five with currently practicing architects, identified through the survey, and three with students
 - The focus groups' content differed depending on the group: currently practicing architects discussed the competences of an architect, their route to registration and maintenance of competences; and architecture students discussed their routes into studying architecture, their professional experience and how well prepared they felt for entering work

⁴ To remove those which did not complete sufficient questions to be usable, and a small number of duplicate submissions.

- Two deliberative enquiry sessions were then held with a small group of architects to explore some of the issues that arose from the focus groups in more detail, in particular those about how competences are obtained and the role of practical experience.
 - Five models which would adapt an architect's experience of the route to registration were discussed (these are further detailed in chapter 3).

1.27 A detailed methodology of all research components is provided in Annex [NBSQW].

Report structure

1.28 This report is structured to bring together the range of evidence gathered against each of the three core questions set out above. The following three chapters, one for each of the research questions, follows a similar structure in setting out the findings from international comparators and approaches from other professions in the UK, before moving on to describe the evidence gathered through SQW's stakeholder research and then setting out the conclusions reached about each issue. Insight from the Call for Evidence are presented in boxes.

1.29 One issue which arose at various points and especially in the focus groups was a debate about how far the profession should be regulated by name (as now) or by function. This is not a core purpose of the Competence Review, but provides an important context, therefore, the views gathered on this are set out in the annex.

2. Role and competencies required of architects

Introduction

- 2.1** The first theme of the research focused on the role and competences of architects. The findings developed a picture of a profession where changes have been taking place over the last ten years and are expected to continue due to market demand and policy developments.
- 2.2** This chapter looks at various, available depictions of the role of architects and how competences of architects are defined internationally. This is mainly through entry criteria, but also codes of conduct which provide evidence of the nature of the role and surveys of practice⁵. The chapter also considers how cross-cutting / generic competences are defined for other professions in the UK.
- 2.3** Following this, the report draws on the Stage 2 research to explore the current view of the profession in terms of how an architects role has evolved in recent years, what factors have influenced this, and what further changes are expected in future. This discussion then links to views on the General Criteria and their suitability in light of the changing context.
- 2.4** The survey tool and subsequent discussion around the changes in role and competences were informed by the literature review and scoping interviews. They highlighted a number of emerging issues which we then sought to test. This was done by asking questions about specific issues and by asking directly about the suitability of the General Criteria.

International approaches

- 2.5** In considering the role of architects internationally, we reviewed the criteria for registration. In the UK, the criteria are relatively brief compared to other countries reviewed. It is difficult to determine whether greater detail in criteria in other countries includes wider expectations of competencies or if the ARB is describing the same competencies more concisely. However, in reviewing Ireland (as it adheres to the common European directive), some skills are more explicitly defined:
- Two-way communication – listening and understanding as well as giving information
 - A leadership role within the process, e.g., a need for design leadership and greater emphasis on collaboration and appropriate project leadership in implementation
 - 3D design
 - Ability to guide a project through the planning process

⁵ E.g., the US Practice Analysis of Architecture was reviewed, but this dated to 2012 and did not add anything of significance to this study. Findings from the Architects Council of Europe survey on roles are included in later sections.

- Project management and general management principles.

2.6 Australia appears to have less emphasis on requirements for the teaching of theory and fine arts than the UK; and greater emphasis on a task-based approach, including more detail on collaboration and technology and project management.

Additional criteria for architects in the UK

2.7 In this section, it is also worth considering expectations of the role of UK architects as expressed through the recently developed Degree Apprenticeship Standard for architects and through RIBA's Code of Conduct.

2.8 Whilst the employer-led Degree Apprenticeships Standard necessarily aligns to ARB's criteria, there are some differences in emphasis:

- In Design, the use of 3D models and of CAD
- In Role of the Architects, *less* emphasis on building users or society
- *Less* detail in 'Structure, Construction and Engineering' than in the criteria
- Addition of 'alternative construction materials, processes and techniques...' and specific reference of building information modelling (BIM) and other technologies in the design process within Technologies.

2.9 RIBA's recently amended Code of Professional Conduct, which stretches beyond the ARB minimum threshold for entry, but suggests what roles UK architects may currently be undertaking, has more explicit emphasis on:

- Employment practices within firms
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- The environment, community and society, heritage and conservation
- Building performance, health and safety
- Town and country planning and adherence to legislation
- The provision of inspection and certification services.

Approaches from other professions in the UK

2.10 In considering the competencies required of other UK professionals, there are some generic competencies which might be relevant for architects, but are not as explicitly stated in the current ARB criteria as they are for other professions:

- Specific requirement to be fully conversant with/commit to the Code of Professional Conduct

- Greater attention to business management
- Greater attention to technical and commercial leadership
- Risk management, continuous improvement and project management
- Greater emphasis on self-evaluation of performance and effectiveness of solutions
- Greater attention to Intellectual Property
- Greater attention to interpersonal interaction including communication, leadership, management and team working.

The role of an architect

Insights from the Call for Evidence

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 ranging inter-personal, technological, and technical (practical building) competencies frequently cited alongside knowledge of the environmental and social impacts of architecture.

2.11 The Survey of Architects began by exploring the frequency of the tasks architects undertook (Table 2-1). The most commonly reported tasks were designing proposals and preparing architectural drawings (undertaken frequently by 87% and 85% of respondents respectively).

Table 2-1: Frequency of job tasks

	Never		Very infrequently		Infrequently		Frequently		Very frequently		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Design proposals in accordance with client briefs and regulations	76	2.0	139	3.7	295	7.8	1187	31.4	2078	55.0	3775	100
Personally, prepare architectural drawings and other relevant documentation	80	2.1	204	5.4	300	8.0	1011	26.9	2170	57.6	3765	100
Use Computer Aided Design (CAD)	302	8.0	256	6.8	333	8.9	710	18.9	2161	57.4	3762	100
Use Building Information Modelling (BIM)	1430	38.2	516	13.8	553	14.8	468	12.5	774	20.7	3741	100
Quality assurance	467	12.6	352	9.5	772	20.8	1418	38.2	706	19.0	3715	100

Carry out administration of building contract	588	15.6	643	17.1	937	24.9	995	26.5	597	15.9	3760	100
Act as project lead (incl. acting as Principal Designer)	325	8.7	311	8.3	577	15.4	1404	37.4	1134	30.2	3751	100
Client relationships & marketing	228	6.1	339	9.0	639	17.0	1211	32.3	1334	35.6	3751	100
Business administration	406	10.8	459	12.2	673	17.9	1028	27.3	1196	31.8	3762	100

Source: SQW analysis of ARB survey.
Base: 4,405. N=Total for each task

- 2.12** More architects qualified since 1991 reported designing proposals frequently, compared to architects who qualified earlier. More respondents from smaller businesses reported undertaking this task frequently (90%) compared to those from larger businesses (79%). That these tasks were more often undertaken by more newly qualified people and those working in smaller firms suggests that more experienced (senior) people in larger firms are delegating this task to more junior staff and that there is less opportunity to delegate in smaller firms.
- 2.13** The task that the fewest respondents undertook frequently was use of building information modelling (BIM) (33%). Two thirds of respondents from businesses with fewer than nine employees (including freelancers) report never or very infrequently using BIM, compared to 35% of businesses with over 10 employees. Half (52%) of architects qualified since 2011 reported using BIM frequently, compared to 34% of those qualified between 2001 and 2010.
- 2.14** Another task reported by fewer respondents was the administration of building contracts (42%), and it was more likely to be undertaken by those who qualified earlier, likely reflecting seniority.
- 2.15** The Survey of Architects also explored what issues had become more important to their own job in the last five years (Table 2-2). It shows that almost all respondents reported the management of health and safety risks (96%), and almost nine in ten reported climate change/sustainability (88%) and digital developments (86%) had increased in importance. Eight in ten reported increasing demand for specialisms (79%) and a similar proportion reported competences associated with consideration of residents and wider wellbeing had increased (76%). Also cited by a majority as having increased in importance are Acting as a project lead (68%) and BIM (67%).

Table 2-2: Issues reported as increasing in importance (last five years)

Issues	Rated 'more' or 'much more' important (%)
Management of health and safety risks (incl. fire safety)	96
Climate emergency/sustainability	88
Digital developments ⁶	86
Demand for specialism	79
Residents and wider wellbeing	76
Acting as a project lead (principal designer)	68
BIM	67
Building contract management	24

*Source: Survey of Architects
Base: 4,405. N=varies by issue.*

⁶ Such as the Internet of Things, 'smart' buildings/cities and augmented/virtual reality.

2.16 Whilst these factors are growing in importance, our qualitative research with stakeholders highlighted wider concerns about external forces impacting on the profession, which was narrowing its role. This was identified as a long-term trend which has been **moving from the traditionalist concept of an architect with a broad skillset reflected in the General Criteria to a design focused role and specialist skillsets** (such as designing for low carbon emissions, inclusive access or heritage). This change has placed architects within a larger planning and development team, and often on the periphery of project site delivery.

2.17 There was an apparent tension within those we consulted as to how far the profession should:

- Aim to return to the central coordinating role, by upskilling in technical, business and regulation areas, to regain perception of competence, or
- Accept the changing role, and develop specialist skills to fit into more specialist roles and advocate the importance of these. Specialisations are a way for the individual practitioner or small practice to be able to engage more in larger and more complex project work.

2.18 These changes have been driven by wider macro trends such as changes in UK law regarding building regulations (e.g., the Building Safety Bill 2019) and procurement models, technical and technological advances driving specialisation across construction with more roles created outside of the architects' profession and more emphasis on the specialisation of architect roles. In addition, there have been changing approaches to risk and liability.

2.19 Due to these changes, the role of the architect and the skills required to perform have been evolving. There was **uncertainty about how this might change in the future**. On the one hand it could continue as now, leading to a narrower, more specialist role; or promoted by the Hackitt review, the role could broaden out again as architects become the principal designer; or indeed both paths may be possible for different people in the profession.



Traditionally the architect is the orchestrator and is central to the construction process. What we have now is an additional buffer between ourselves and the clients and the rest of the design team. The impression that gives is that somebody else is scheduling meetings and organising the design and construction team. You sometimes question whether these people share the same expertise as architects did traditionally



Focus Group participant

Emerging issues

2.20 The Survey of Architects explored what issues were expected to become more important to the role of an architect over the next five years (Table 2-3).

2.21 Nine in ten (90%) respondents reported that they expected climate change/sustainability to become more or much more important over the next five years, followed by management of health and safety risks (72%); digital developments in the sector (71%); BIM (67%) and 67% reported the needs of individual residents and wider social wellbeing (including equality and diversity issues). A growing need for specialisms was anticipated to be much more or more important in the next five years by 59% of the respondents to the Survey of Architects.

2.22 Additionally, one third reported (33%) that they expected acting as a project lead to become more important over the next five years, with 55% reporting no expected change in this area (although 68% of all architects who responded that **acting as a project lead (principal designer)** was a task frequently undertaken within their role, as shown in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3: Issues expected to be more or much more important (next five years)

Issues	Rated 'more' or 'much more' important (%)
Climate change/sustainability	90
Management of health and safety risks	72
Digital developments	71
BIM	67
Individual residents' and wider social wellbeing (including equality and diversity issues)	67
Demand for specialisms	59
Acting as project lead (incl. acting as Principal Designer)	33
Building contract management	24

*Source: Survey of Architects
Base: 4.405. N=varies by issue*

2.23 This section now goes on to explore these emerging issues in greater depth, drawing on the survey, consultations and focus groups.

2.24 Regardless of business size, respondents thought **climate change** would become more or much more important. The focus groups affirmed the importance of this with the impact of zero carbon building regulations (including requirements on the use of sustainable materials) noted by participants as likely to force new skill and knowledge needs. Improvements needed would include knowledge of non-traditional methods of construction and improvements in carbon literacy within the profession.

2.25 The demand for **improved knowledge and understanding of legislation** (existing and upcoming) and the need to satisfy statutory building regulations and requirements in the design process was identified as an area of growing importance in the focus groups. Reflecting the survey findings, **knowledge and management of health and safety, specifically fire safety**, has emerged as a key competence, driven in part by new focus on building regulation in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy. Understanding, owning and **working with risk and liability** was a key issue raised by focus group participants.

2.26 Architects within the focus groups identified increasing importance in raising awareness of what digital tools and frameworks architects and/or practices can use to manage risk and the impact on some practices who face barriers to owning risk in terms of liability and insurance costs. Architects were also clear about the increasing importance of identifying when in the process the design responsibility and risk transfers from the architect to the principal contractor (and, in other cases, to others in the supply chain).

2.27 The reasons for growing importance of **digital developments** identified in the Survey of Architects was explored in the focus groups. Two main reasons were identified with the first relating to risk management as digital software is being employed more to support a practice with their risk management processes and to evidence compliance with regulations. Architects also acknowledged that the **use of digital software (BIM)** was increasingly required to remain competitive in the market. BIM might also be seen as a proxy for technological sophistication of architects, in keeping with ensuring a digital ‘golden thread’ of building information as advocated in the Hackitt Review.⁷

“**Digitally the candidates that come through universities now are infinitely more competent than the people in practice. When they take on new people, they will have different skills in this area and knowledge of different packages and that is when the practice will switch to BIM. This avoids the financial cost of training up existing employees**”

“ ” Focus Group participant

2.28 However, perspectives on the importance of digital skills were more nuanced depending on the seniority of the architecture professional and the business size. While most survey

⁷ The 2018 Architect’s Council of Europe survey explored a practice’s use of BIM. In the UK, a quarter (25%) of practices were aware of BIM above the European average of 19%. Accessed: <https://www.ace-cae.eu/activities/publications/sector-study-2018/>

respondents agreed in the importance of digital skills for architectural practice, one diverging view which emerged from the focus group research was that these skills didn't have to be in-house and could be outsourced. One example was from a multidisciplinary firm which works with small, design led practices, and offers wrap around services such as access to digital tools. This is an example of how outsourcing can be used to meet demand for specific skills, especially where practices are unable to sustain specialist skills in-house due to variable demand. The growing influence of individual and social wellbeing on the role of the architect reported in the Survey was also evident in the focus groups and particularly amongst access architectural consultants who feel architects are becoming more conscious of inclusive design and more aware of their legal obligations in addition to meeting building regulations.

2.29 Whilst the Survey of Architects reported that a **demand for specialisms** had become more important over the last five years, there were diverging views over whether this importance was expected to grow over the next five years, with a roughly two to one split in terms of whether this would or would not become more important in the next five years. This was reflected in the focus groups as participants considered that the increasing demand for broader knowledge and understanding of the legislative and regulatory environment, meant it was currently unclear whether this trend would persist or reverse.

2.30 Leadership skills were viewed as essential in the profession in future in the qualitative research. Architects within the focus groups were clear that there needed to be more advocacy for high-quality building design and design principles, and for advancing customer centric design processes. The ability to communicate a project vision in the context of the architect's narrowing role and collaborate with other businesses, were seen as ways to prevent any further role reduction.

2.31 Larger businesses were more likely to think digital developments would become more or much more important (82% compared to 73% of businesses with less than 10 employees), while smaller businesses were more likely to think there would be no change in this area. In addition, respondents from larger business were more likely to think that management of health and safety risks and demand for specialisms will become much more important (37% compared to 22% of businesses with less than 10 employees and 26% compared to 15% respectively). This might suggest a lack of awareness of coming issues amongst smaller practices, which in turn may highlight a risk in future (recalling that most complaints to ARB are about smaller practices⁸).

2.32 Having identified the role of architects and how that varies, and the importance of factors which has driven the role in the past and future, the research next explored stakeholder

⁸ Although it should also be noted that in the view of some consultees this was because where there were issues with larger practices, they tended to be dealt with at a corporate level rather than through ARB.

views on the ARB criteria for entry to the profession and whether this still reflected the competencies architects need to do their role.

Opinions on the General Criteria

Insights from the Call for Evidence

Fewer respondents commented on the General Criteria – perhaps reflecting a lack of familiarity with them. Of 200 respondents to the Call for Evidence, responses to questions on the criteria dropped to under 50. As with other parts of the Call for Evidence, responses were very diverse

Comment on the criteria tended to focus on specific drafting points rather than suggesting a wholesale change, with the 11 Criteria generally seen to work well –they are articulated in a way which does not demand constant 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

With regard to attributes, some respondents suggested refocussing, however, a realignment to existing QAA Standards was suggested by SCHOSA and ARB’s Chair of Prescription Committee and echoed in RIBA response.

2.33 The research explored perceptions of the fitness of the criteria given the current and expected role of Architects. The pattern of changing needs identified through the research to date was also reflected in the feedback on the existing General Criteria (GC). **Those most widely thought to need more emphasis were climate change and health and safety,**

but all options were thought under-represented by over one fifth of respondents.⁹ Respondents were much more likely to report that issues did not have sufficient emphasis than that they had too much, although it should be noted that the number of respondents reporting that the current criteria had the right amount of emphasis almost always outweighed those thinking that there should be a change.

Table 2-4: How sufficiently do you think the General Criteria reflect each of the following issues? (% respondents)

	Not enough emphasis	Right amount of emphasis	Too much emphasis
Climate emergency/sustainability	44	32	3
Management of health and safety risks (incl. fire safety)	38	38	3
Acting as project lead (incl. acting as Principal Designer)	34	42	2
Building contract management	30	45	4
Demand for specialisms	28	36	3
Individual residents' and wider social wellbeing (including equality and diversity issues)	28	42	4
Building Information Modelling (BIM)	27	34	9
Digital developments within the profession	22	38	8

*Base: 4,405 N= varies by issue. Don't know responses excluded
Source: Survey of Architects*

2.34 Most participants in the focus groups **did not have strong views on the need to change the GC**, although there were observations made on the content which provided some insight into their thinking:

- Generally, the GC are 'well rounded' and reflect the traditionalist role of the architect. The GC can act as an instrument which shows how much a student should know and what the balance of knowledge is as they go through the process to qualification
- Each GC has equal weighting, which doesn't seem to reflect ARB's requirement for 50% of

“Architects who work on huge carbon heavy projects do not have any higher responsibility than any other which is questionable

” Stakeholder Interview

⁹ Fewer survey respondents engaged in the survey questions related to the general criteria than in other parts of the survey.

the architecture curriculum to be on design¹⁰, while requiring appreciation of the fine arts feels slightly outdated and maybe sustainability should weigh more

- They are written in a language that doesn't reflect current industry and the opportunities available
- Research skills and engagement with research are not explicitly covered. In comparable professions, there is more focus on what constitutes professional knowledge and engagement with research. Side-lining research misses an opportunity to promote the value of the profession.

2.35 There were also some comments from both employers and HEIs which were less about the content and more about the ways which they can and are being interpreted in higher education courses:

- The GC can be very broadly interpreted in teaching which leads to variations in teaching content. Universities have freedom over interpretation and can teach in a way that demonstrates their values, their view of the profession and understanding of routes in which can be a healthy approach
- However, GC is 'purist' in its approach to the theory and practice of design, and that can lead to technical and practical elements being under-emphasised in education and creating gaps in Part 3 student knowledge
- This can also lead to adopting a 'tick box' approach to covering the content, and assumes sufficient competence on the first day in work
- The GCs should also be about how to train students to research and think to keep up with the professional context changing
- Certain elements would be better standardised – like safety – standardised form of delivery would be useful as it is not possible to currently verify the level of people's safety understanding.

Conclusions

2.36 The range of views collected provide some core areas of agreement and yet an element of uncertainty. **The core areas of agreement were around the changing skills needs which architects require, with relatively broad recognition around a range of subjects and skills which are becoming more important, including sustainability, health and safety and digital.**

2.37 However, while these changes are important, the breadth of competences covered in the **general criteria remain valid and were generally viewed as appropriate.** The feedback

¹⁰ ARB (2010) Prescription of Qualifications: Criteria at Parts 1,2 and 3. Accessed: [Criteria 123 - Prescription of qualifications \(arb.org.uk\)](https://www.arb.org.uk/qualifications/criteria)

would suggest some could be strengthened or developed further. A more developed specification would be in line with the evidence gathered through the reviews of international practice and other UK professions and may help address some concerns raised about the apparent significant variation in what is taught in accredited courses, which it was thought then impacted on student outcomes with certain students seen as more skilled (which is expanded on in the next chapter). This might include:

- Adding more detail on the anticipated weighting on elements in addition to design, especially around more technical aspects
- Moving beyond statements of “understand” and “knowledge of” in the prescription of qualifications to detail what should be taught or the competence to be demonstrated
- Development of the criteria to specify sustainability and health and safety.

2.38 More challenging is how to deal with the reported growing specialisation in the profession and especially if that is happening alongside the narrowing of the role. These latter issues were not specifically tested through the research as they emerged through the process. However, they raise several **options for ARB to consider in the next stages of the review:**

- Do all newly qualified architects need same broad base as now, or **should specialisation be a formal option at the qualification stage**, or
- Could routes to specialisation come later
- Do these more specialised routes need to be regulated with particular type of work or tasks restricted to those with some training in that area?

3. Routes to registration and competencies attained

Introduction

- 3.1** The second theme of the research focused on the routes aspiring architects follow to qualification and how well these prepare people for the profession. It was clear that architects have a diverse range of routes into the profession in terms of the educational content they learn, the time they take to qualification and the type of work placements they are able to gain. Some architects also have prior careers and have chosen to retrain, returning to complete the traditional architecture degree, as a route into architecture.
- 3.2** This chapter looks at the routes to registration for architects in terms of time to qualification, educational content and professional experience. It starts with a review of international architecture routes and a review of other, non-architecture UK professions. Following this, findings from the surveys, interviews and focus groups inform a view on the effectiveness of current routes to registration for architects in the UK.
- 3.3** These findings formed the basis for the deliberative enquiry workshops which focused on five models that would adapt an architect's route to registration. The results of these workshops are reported in two sections of this chapter (professional work placements and the Degree Apprenticeship route), which are then followed by our overall conclusions.

International approaches

- 3.4** In Europe, the length of academic routes to registration do not vary dramatically compared to the UK (6-8 years) and in keeping with the EU Guidelines, enabling mutual recognition. In the other countries reviewed, the length of required professional experience is longer:
- In the US, it can take up to 14 years with average longer periods of study (5.6 years) and of professional experience (6.4 years) reported
 - In Canada, 3 years professional experience is required
 - In New Zealand, typically 2.5 – 5 years professional experience is reported
 - In Australia it can take up to 5 years to compete the required 3,300 hours of professional experience.
- 3.5** While these routes appear longer than the UK, there was fairly consistent feedback through the research process that while people in the UK can qualify in 7 years, for many the qualification period is longer and often approaching 10 years.
- 3.6** The UK is unusual in not having a non-education route in. For example, in South Africa, a person can progress through the four categories of architect (Architectural Draftsperson,

Architectural Technologist, Senior Architectural Technologist, Professional Architect), by means of Recognition of Prior Learning.

- 3.7** The 2017 Periodic Review noted that the ARB has been recognised as an exemplar of good practice by the Higher Education Regulation Review Group for its robust but light-touch accreditation processes, complementing, rather than duplicating the activities of the sectors' own Quality Assurance process and that of RIBA. However, Internationally, in Australia and New Zealand, only Masters courses are accredited and no other country (where data were available) has an annual monitoring process.

Approaches from other professions in the UK

- 3.8** All professions reviewed have four- or five-years education as a requirement, with post-graduate training and further learning expected. Access to quality work experience during this period varies. Clearly, work experience for doctors is highly regulated and is provided and managed through the NHS Teaching Hospitals and Medical Schools. Vet Schools tend to have veterinary practices where students gain experience, but Schools are increasingly working with employers in the community in the delivery of experience and training. Vets are also encouraged to work in practices, even before starting and during their education.
- 3.9** Solicitors are moving away from a system based on training contracts, to a non-training exam from 2021. Applicants will be required to have a degree, experience and pass a character and suitability test prior to taking the exams. There will be greater flexibility for solicitors in the types of professional experience they can record toward qualification, with the regulatory authority hoping to open up more flexible routes to qualification and encourage greater diversity. The counterbalance to encourage employers to offer quality of experience and support is the intention to publish pass rates by firm of those who sit the professional qualifying exam.
- 3.10** For engineers, there are three tiers of registration – technical engineer (EngTech); incorporated engineer (IEng) and chartered engineer (CEng). The usual route to Chartered status is to attain an accredited four-year integrated MEng degree or a bachelor's degree which is accredited as CEng, an accredited master's degree with further learning at work, either through the employer or independently. There is no specified length of work experience, just the ability to demonstrate competence. Surveyors are required to have two years professional experience certified through an Assessment of Professional Competence.
- 3.11** Engineers, surveyors and solicitors have Degree Apprenticeships, non-accredited degree and non-degree routes to registration. For example, the civil engineering profession is based on the assessment of competence regardless of how the competence has been acquired. Someone who leaves school at 16 with no qualifications can embark on this, but it will take longer than through the academic route. People with non-accredited degrees can complete an Academic Assessment which will be reviewed by a panel of experts, assessing qualifications against the Engineering Council's requirements. People without the right

academic qualifications can enter an assessment process with an experienced engineer as a mentor and three sponsors. This process comprises the successful production of evidence reports and academic and professional interviews and a written exercise.

Effectiveness of routes to registration: time and content

Insights from the Call for Evidence

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 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

Five or six years were often cited as appropriate by those who thought seven years (minimum) too long, along with alignment to HNC/HND routes and more blended learning (but note point above about the challenges in securing quality placements)

- 3.12** Four in five recruiting architects reported a lack of skills amongst applicants to their firm. Although this does not specifically relate to new recruits, and is relevant to both this question and the question on maintenance of competence, it is an indicator of the supply of skills and competencies of the profession. Of those who said they had recruited architects within the previous year and responding to the Survey of Architects, 81% said they had found applicants lacked the skills or knowledge needed in the firm. These respondents primarily reported that applicants lacked the necessary skills relating to building contract management/ design and build, along with the skills/knowledge to manage health safety risks and procurement. The number in the Survey of Large Employers was a similar 14 out of 17 (who had recruited in the last three years) observed a lack of skills in applicants when recruiting newly qualified architects. .
- 3.13** Most of the architects surveyed felt that they had been well prepared by the point they became a newly qualified architect: 14% felt very well prepared and 45% that they were prepared. While a majority, this does suggest scope for improvement. Indeed, 22% said they had felt unprepared at that point, although this fell to 17% for those qualified since 2010.

3.14 One of the main dimensions in routes to registration, as we have seen above, is the length of time taken. Most (57%) architects surveyed felt that the amount of time it currently takes for new architects to become registered in the UK was 'about right'. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the variation in views on the length of time to registration.

Table 3-1: Views on the length of time it currently takes new architects in the UK to become registered

Length	% of responses
Much too long	7
Too long	25
About right	57
Too short	5
Far too short	1

*Base = 4,405. Don't know and missing responses are excluded.
Source: Survey of Architects*

3.15 Table 3-1 shows that almost one third (32%) of architects surveyed thought the length of time to registration was too long. The concern was primarily due to the length of time that trainees spend in higher education (rather than the work placement element): of those who said the current route to registration is too long, 70% said this was due to the length of time spent in higher education.

3.16 There was fairly consistent feedback across the qualitative research that querying length of time to qualification for architects was not the right focus when looking at the development of skills and competences. Architecture students considered the length of course was appropriate given the amount of content covered, the responsibility expected of a professional architect and the diversity of sections which split up the seven-year route.

3.17 There was a wider concern in the other focus groups that the time was not always well spent and that it could be better used to improve in some skill areas. This was often linked to the comments in the previous chapter about the coverage of the criteria and curriculum.

3.18 However, another factor concerning the length of time taken to registration was that the **time in higher education was reported to impact upon widening participation in the profession, the cost of study and on student wellbeing.** Architecture students reported that the seven-year route led to some students needing to take breaks from their studies due to fatigue and cost. Cost was also considered prohibitive and an influence on students' diverse routes through to qualification in terms of length of time spent in practice or alternative work. We found evidence of people having to take breaks from the qualification pathway for financial reasons. Architects who had qualified most recently were more likely to state that they thought the route to registration is too long. There was a noticeable jump for those qualifying since 2010, which may well be related to the introduction of tuition fees.

3.19 Architecture students reported variable experiences in terms of their education content depending on the HEI they attended.

There was a split between those students who followed a more technically focused course or one which had a design and theory emphasis. Where the balance was more towards design and theory-based learning, current students felt there was a duplication of learning in Part 2, which made them consider the course length less appropriate or more often how the time could be better used. This inconsistency in course content was identified by employers in focus groups who felt some newly qualified architects had too great a focus on aesthetic design experience.



When people qualify, there is a disconnect between professional practice and design. It should be more integrated



Stakeholder Interview

3.20 Concerns were raised by participants about the time spent in Part 2 studies on design tasks and ‘compliance projects’. These are projects which are artificially constructed to meet the General Criteria elements. Compliance projects were viewed as poor practice for two reasons: covering issues in isolation from how they would be addressed in practice; and creating generalists, without reflecting the specialisms within the profession. However, the research also found that HEIs were finding adapting their curriculum to be a challenge as there is limited capacity to add more content, and limited finance to buy access to specialists to cover new content (e.g., experts on fire, climate and sustainability).

3.21 Research participants **acknowledged that there was a gap in the profession’s ability to integrate other architecture-related professionals and support that in their route to registration.** This was widely seen as a weakness and in contrast to practices we have seen internationally and in other UK professions. It was highlighted that there was no way of validating experience for individuals apart from through part 3. In one instance, this led to an experienced technician having to return to part 1 study as none of their qualifications or experience could be recognised by the HEI.

Exploration of options to adapt current routes to registration

3.22 Based on the previous research findings and discussions with ARB, five options were identified which would, if implemented, adapt the current routes to registration for architecture students. These five options were tested with participants in the Deliberative Enquiry workshop (part one). A summary of these options and the feedback from the workshop is presented in Table 3-2. Following this, in the Deliberative Workshop (part two) participants identified two of the options they felt were worth more detailed consideration: Professional work placements and the Degree Apprenticeship route. These two options form the focus of the next chapter and reveals evidence from all of the research on these options. .

Insights from the Call for Evidence

There were 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 generally suggested)

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

Table 3-2: Options for changes to the routes to registration (Deliberative Enquiry findings)

Options	Considerations for	Reservations	Potential Conditions
A: Greater work experience element built into architects training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves students' exposure to professional working environments and expectations Acknowledges student demand Work experience placements can also act as trials for Level 7 apprenticeship positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices are vulnerable to market fluctuations and make placements unstable Quality of teaching and mentoring will vary between employers (and this can be observed in Part 3 exams) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear guidance for practices on what they should be offering and for students about what they should expect Offer of training / guidance to employers to deliver a better experience Add an expectation to the Code of Conduct to give greater emphasis to good mentoring
B: Clearing system for work placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could help practices attract applications for a wider range of students – backgrounds and courses Could allow monitoring of the scale of placements on offer and extent to which individual businesses are supporting the development of future architects Recognises that some jobs are gained through connections and this could be made more equitable May reduce the role of recruitment agencies and fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More attractive to smaller than larger practices who don't receive as high volumes of student applications Doesn't acknowledge that HEI relationships with businesses are important and help to understand the culture, needs, and knowledge of the practices Employers would want to retain the right to vet applicants to match their work type and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal jobs board or brokerage was strongly viewed more appropriate, a pared back model compared to clearing system
C: Change the nature of placements to more modular and shorter term (say 3 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers might feel more able to offer placements if shorter and more specific Students would move around more, which could provide a broader set of experiences, enhance access and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take time to settle into a work environment and learn how best they can contribute which would be very difficult in c.3 months This could be resource intensive for employers in regular recruitment and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might be beneficial as a follow up after initial longer placements, but not as a default to start with

Options	Considerations for	Reservations	Potential Conditions
<p>D: Expand the scale and nature of the apprenticeship offer</p>	<p>minimise any risks of a poor placement experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is ongoing as a way of improving access to the profession and supporting the wider Government policy of introducing apprenticeships across all sectors • Allows students to learn while supporting themselves financially • Greater exposure to practice and a working environment helps students develop professional and technical skills 	<p>inductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices and so the number of places available are vulnerable to market fluctuations and make apprenticeships unstable • Workings of the apprenticeship levy system not helpful (not just recognised in this sector) • Ofsted involvement in HEIs is a concern – where does the accreditation responsibility lie – which could reduce HEI involvement • More of a solution for Part 2 than Part 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidance for practices on what they should be offering • Some employers would require a form of ‘teacher training’ or mentoring to ensure they knew how best to support their students • Requires more marketing and work with employers to increase awareness of opportunities and funding to improve the uptake • Improvements in Level 6 funding to encourage more uptake
<p>E: Have mandatory plus optional elements in the criteria to be covered through work experience, with practical elements strongly represented in the mandatory set of criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for practices to improve their awareness of the criteria and what is needed by students • Architects need to be generalists, but students also need support to identify their potential specialisms early, which increases their employability to some practices more than others, but it also is where their value lies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialism is not such an issue before registration - it is more important that everyone reaches the general level of competence • Limited skills / experience in practices to deliver or assess a mandated curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There remains a strong case for drawing on the expertise and systems of HEIs

Professional work placements

3.23 The accessibility and quality of work placements was highlighted consistently as highly variable within the sector and this has wider implications for the diversity and competence of the registered profession. Almost four in five large employers (19 out of 24) surveyed had taken on a Part 1 qualified architect over the last three years. Of these employers, most had employed up to five Part 1 architects over this time. Similarly, almost three quarters of employers (17 out of 23 respondents to this question) reported they had taken on a Part 2 qualified architect over the last three years.

3.24 A common concern raised in the research regarding work placements was variation in entry into the sector. Whilst interviewees wanted a more consistent process, they also cautioned against too rigid a process which would not be able to flex with the economic cycle, recognising that students needed to gain experience and progress even when firms were not hiring at scale.

3.25 Architecture students reported barriers to accessing work placements such as having no connections in the sector to help secure a placement, experiencing a mismatch of portfolio focus to the types of employers available, and the limited numbers of employers available in some areas of the country. Students had a desire for greater exposure to practice earlier within Part 1, in part to ensure all students do gain some experience before the break between Part 1 and Part 2. Linked to this, students would appreciate more support from HEIs to access work placements, specifically within architecture practices.

3.26 These concerns were recognised through the focus groups and deliberative enquiry sessions. The participants recognised that even within their own firms they tended to recruit from a fairly narrow pool, which was something at least some were seeking to address. They also noted the challenge of approaching and building links with local courses as students often wanted to move elsewhere in their time out. For a few this led to a reliance on recruitment agencies, which they did not want to use but didn't see a good alternative.

3.27 Participants were not supportive of changing the nature of student placements to shorter, modular placements of around three months. The capacity of employers to engage with recruitment more frequently was raised as a barrier. In addition, participants questioned whether both the employer and student would gain any value from a short module, as in their experience it can take a while for a student to settle into the firm, understand the work



It would be very useful for students to have some kind of practise experience much earlier in their studies, so they know what to expect



Deliberative Enquiry participant

and make a valuable contribution. However, shorter placements were considered a possible option if they followed an initial longer placement with the same firm.

3.28 These issues around placements appear common but become more acute when economic conditions work against firms hiring. The overall lack of opportunities means that students tend to gravitate to what is available, but others then miss out. At its most extreme, the consequences of less work experience can delay their qualification, but more immediately is likely to reduce their capacity to flourish or contribute to the class group while completing their Part 2.



Some kind of informed facilitation of - or support for - student placements would help, to assist students of all backgrounds to reach the kinds of practices that would suit them, and practices to find the right students for them.



Deliberative Enquiry participant

3.29 HEIs were aware that the scale, scope and accessibility of employer opportunities in stable economic times (and during periods of instability) would need careful monitoring. Participants felt that more formal, consistent links between HEIs and business could help HEIs to develop a more accurate picture of the supply of opportunities available for their students. This would also raise students' awareness of their potential opportunities depending on their chosen HEI.

3.30 Participants highlighted the benefits in providing a diversity of routes into the profession for students to use to reach registration. It was recognised that there are multiple models in addition to the traditional seven-year HEI route and new apprenticeship model, such as the Oxford Brookes University Foundation Course, the University of Nottingham's MArch Architecture with Collaborative Practice Research and the whole school approach by the London School of Architecture (Table 3-3). Some of these models include specific mentoring opportunities for young people, an approach which was highlighted by some stakeholders as a useful way to engage and retain young people and improve diversity within the profession.

Table 3-3: Examples of diverse routes to registration

HEI	Course	Length	Employer Engagement
Oxford Brookes University	RIBA Foundation in Architecture course (pre-Part 1)	Flexible	Part-time - study while working in a design practice for a minimum of 200 hours
Oxford Brookes University	RIBA Certificate (Part 1) RIBA Diploma (Part 2)	Flexible	Work towards either Part 1 or Part 2 qualification whilst working full-time, under the direct supervision of

HEI	Course	Length	Employer Engagement
			an architect in the office and with a personal tutor
University of Nottingham	MArch Architecture with Collaborative Practice Research (Part 2)	2 years	Gain a second year in practice without lengthening the route to qualification
University of Sheffield	MArch Architecture: Collaborative Practice	2 years	Two semesters of practice-based education in the first year
London School of Architecture	MArch in Designing Architecture.	2 years	In the Inter-Practice Year students are employed in 3 day/week, 12-month placements hosted by the Practice Network; in their other time they work on LSA projects.

Source: SQW

3.31 These course options offer different ways of integrating academic input and time in practice. However, these types of options appear to be available at only a few institutions (alongside traditional courses) and there is a question over the level of awareness students have about these options prior to applying to their preferred route.

3.32 There were strengths and weaknesses with an approach which integrates more practice engagement:

- The closer links with employers were welcomed but it was mentioned that it was challenging to deliver this in times of recession
- HEIs in larger cities are likely to have access to a much larger pool of opportunities than others.

3.33 It was also recognised that the quality of experience through work placements varied greatly. The expectation was of a varied experience with the opportunity to learn about different aspects and reflect on these. However, it was widely reported that this did not always happen. There was a tension as to where the responsibility lies for an architectural student while on placement, especially between the education provider and the employer. It is common for students to complete the RIBA Professional Experience and Development Record (PEDR). This has to be signed off by both the employers and a Professional Studies Adviser (PSA) at the HEI.

3.34 Participants were less supportive of introducing mandatory criteria to work placements to ensure students covered consistent topics. While participants felt it was important for practices to raise their practice's awareness of the General Criteria, they were concerned that some practices may not have the skills or capacity to cover all mandated topics. There was also concern that mandated criteria would require assessment and that was not seen as the role of the practice or something many had expertise in.

3.35 Employers may have some conflict of interest when hosting students on placement. Concerns were expressed about experience in small and larger practices, where the short-term advantage to the employer was to have the student doing a lot of drawing work, at the expense of involvement in other tasks. It was reported that while the expected behaviours of employers were covered in the criteria for RIBA Chartered Practices, this is not monitored. In addition, many practices are not chartered but will still offer placements.

3.36 The PSA might be best placed to provide an independent view of the experience however:

- Not all students complete the PEDR as they go, which was attributed to cost, a lack of appreciation of the advantages of filling it in in real time, the length of the document and its lack of applicability to Part 1 and Part 2 students. This lack of timely completion means the PSA would not be sighted on issues
- The PSA is quite remote, and it was questioned how much could be gathered through reading the words on the page. Some good practice was flagged of regular (say quarterly) calls or meetings to check in, which were thought to give better insight – but this was not thought to be common
- Students often change provider between parts of their education. This means that their links are with an institution which they may not return to, which reduces the link to the PSA.

3.37 Research participants felt that the habits and cultures students experienced during placement also influenced their professional approach during their career (which is covered more fully in the next chapter). In particular, this was around the approach to completing their PEDR. PEDRs are a required document for Part 3 students to evidence the skills and competences they have learned and performed during their time in practice. However, the same document is used to ask Part 1 and Part 2 students to record their experience which may be quite different earlier in their studies, and could require a different set of reflective questions. Participants felt that these records were often completed retrospectively and did not align particularly well with the professional standards and the General Criteria which students were supposed to evidence their experience had covered.

The Degree Apprenticeship route

3.38 The qualitative research findings suggested that **there had been more interest from employers in supporting an architecture Apprenticeship at Level 7 (Part 2), than Level 6 (Part 1)**, due to students having gained the knowledge and design grounding in Part 1 and prior work experience. This was considered helpful as each student starts with a base knowledge and some practice experience. It would also imply that practices are more comfortable supporting young people who are a little bit older and more mature. However, the disparity in the maximum funding available for architecture apprenticeships (as opposed to other sectors) in addition to the differences between Level 6 and Level 7 funding

available were raised as barriers to participation for employers, leading to fewer opportunities for students.

- 3.39** That said, take up even of Level 7 was described as quite limited. It is noticeable that even across those firms surveyed as large employers, over two thirds of large employers (17 out of 24) had not yet employed a degree apprentice.
- 3.40** While the uptake of Level 7 Apprenticeship courses was viewed as positive in removing some financial barriers to participation, the limited uptake of Level 6 may mean that the opportunity to widen diversity and inclusivity within the profession offered by the Apprenticeship is lessened as people still have to undertake several years at an HEI to progress onto Level 7.
- 3.41** Linked to this, while underrepresentation within the profession was widely acknowledged, research participants recognised that increasing inclusivity could not solely be achieved through apprenticeships. They pointed to the need for efforts to raise awareness much earlier in the education system at secondary school level with practices engaging more in the careers activities of schools and in wider communities. Architects for Change also highlighted the need to consider the merits of other qualifications such as BTECs and portfolio evidence to widen access. This reflected their concerns that people were put off applying by the length of time required to become qualified, although in the nature of the research we did not have any way to reach ‘discouraged applicants’ to test this view.
- 3.42** Interestingly the (non-Degree Apprenticeship) students we interviewed were also concerned about the Level 6 Apprenticeship. Their worry was over the potential lack of design and creativity opportunities in the workplace for apprentices who chose to start at Level 6. Through the workshops, some students felt that there wouldn’t be space or time in practice to spend exploring their design ideas as their focus would be on project delivery. It was unclear where they had picked up this concern from. However, it was also an issue which was raised in consultation with a few HEIs and this may reflect a wider concern among academic staff.
- 3.43** Some students were however very interested in the Level 7 Apprenticeship. Several would have applied had they known this option was available, while one did apply but was unable to gain a place despite attending multiple interviews. Reasons given for their interest included feeling that Apprenticeships would help them develop better connections with employers within the industry, reduce financial dependence on family or loans, and access a different style of learning compared to academia. Students also reported that this model was a possible option in terms of widening participation to some student groups and lowering costs to make the profession more accessible.
- 3.44** Generally, **those working in the sector and the HEIs consulted were positive towards Apprenticeships**. However, they often then commented that the model was relatively new and so needed to be monitored and adapted as experience grew. They pointed to a need for:

- **Improved marketing and awareness raising among employers** – research participants involved in the roll out of Apprenticeships commented that awareness among employers was low and better targeted approaches could be used to increase interest and engagement
- **Guidance for employers on expected experience for apprentices within a practice** - there was agreement in the discussions that employers would find it useful to have clarity around what they were expected to provide and that this would help them flag what was possible within their practice at the outset
- **Training for employers on mentoring an apprentice** – research participants felt it was unrealistic to expect all employers to have people within their practice able to teach and mentor an apprentice in a way that provided a quality experience
- **Role of HEIs in providing a safety net for apprentices** – it was suggested that HEIs could play a greater role in supporting apprentices in the event of an economic downturn and this was a policy which was being explored in some institutions.

“
Mentors particularly are asking for more support. I get the impression that not all practices involved are providing the same level of support to their apprentices

”
Deliberative Enquiry participant

3.45 It may be more acute because the Apprenticeship route is fairly new, but it is noticeable that many of the skills and information gaps highlighted above could also be applied as issues/solutions to the wider discussion above around work placements in general.

Conclusions

3.46 While the research found that there were concerns with the length of route to registration, there was no strong view that shortening courses would be a positive move (unless viewed from a financial perspective). However, there was **interest in reviewing the content and structure of courses to ensure the time spent was put to best use**. In particular, changes to reduce any repetition of design elements and improve the quality (and for some the amount) of work placement were supported by research participants.

3.47 It was recognised that there were instances of HEIs implementing their own adapted courses which took into account some of the feedback above around improving access to the profession, increasing exposure to practice and opportunities for students to gain more

practical skills. Any change therefore needs to acknowledge the range of options which already exist in some places, and learn the lessons from these in terms:

- The competence of people who complete these courses and their attractiveness to employers
- Their attractiveness to students, including from diverse backgrounds
- Their deliverability across the economic cycle and in different parts of the country, including urban and non-urban environments.

3.48 That said, **there was widespread support for new, more flexible entry routes to the profession.** Architecture appears to be out of line with other professions in the UK and indeed architectural practice in other countries. This was seen as a barrier to entry, and one that was impacting on diversity and inclusion in the profession.

3.49 Given the range of implications for adapting the routes to registration, a series of options was tested with participants in the deliberative enquiry sessions. These were complex issues discussed with a small group of people in a relatively short amount of time. However, their input provides a basis for ARB to explore how it, as regulator, can address some of the challenges found on entry to the profession through the remainder of the Competence Review. **The participants were clear that three of the five options presented had most appeal, namely:**

- A: Improved work experience element built into architects training, with greater clarity about what placements should cover and how students should be supported
- B: Clearing system for work placements – but only in a simplified form more akin to a jobs board or brokerage
- D: Expand the scale and nature of the apprenticeship offer.

4. How should competencies be maintained and demonstrated?

Introduction

- 4.1** The third theme of the research was to explore how architects maintained and evidenced their competences after they had registered with ARB. At present the requirements are relatively light touch. Standard 2 of the Architects Code indicates that architects are expected to keep their knowledge and skills work up to date. Those wishing to be retained on the register must be able to demonstrate relevant activity in the last two years. It is worth noting that the new Building Safety Bill contains provisions to provide new legal powers to enable ARB to monitor the competence of architects throughout their career. The ARB will be given the power to ‘monitor competence of the architects on their Register’ and set the criteria for competence (in collaboration with other relevant bodies e.g., RIBA). It will also allow ARB to report disciplinary orders alongside an architect’s name on the Register, to increase transparency for consumers.¹¹
- 4.2** This chapter begins by looking at the international approach to maintaining competence for architects in comparison to the UK, and then at equivalent processes in other UK professions. Following this, we explore evidence of skill deficiencies which may indicate failings in CPD. We outline the current approach to professional development as reported by research participants and explore some limited options for potential ways to monitor competence.

International approaches

- 4.3 Architects in the UK are reported to have above average levels of CPD** compared to others in EU.¹² **However, CPD is not required for renewal of registration in the UK, which is different to most other nations researched.** UK architects are expected to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, in adherence with the Code of Conduct, but failure to comply with the Code is not taken as constituting unacceptable professional conduct or incompetence, it is only considered in the event of any disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.4 The UK can be characterised as reactive in its approach to CPD, in contrast to the other countries reviewed which require some form of evidence of CPD on registration renewal,** with varying levels of specificity in terms of time or type of CPD, which is usually subject to auditing. For example:

¹¹ Building Safety Bill: Explanatory Notes (2020) Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901869/Draft_Building_Safety_Bill_PART_2.pdf

¹² Architect’s Council of Europe (2018) The Architectural Profession in Europe: A Sector Study. Available at: https://www.ace-cae.eu/fileadmin/New_Upload/7_Publications/Sector_Study/2018/2018_ACE_Report_EN_FN.pdf

- In *Ireland* 20 hours of CPD are required each year, of which 10 must be formal or structured with learning outcomes identified in advance
- In *South Africa*, evidence of CPD is the required 25 CPD credits per year is uploaded to their on-line profile in anticipation of renewal every 5 years
- In *New Zealand*, this takes the form of an interview with assessors every 5 years, but the regulatory body is unclear whether this makes a difference to the quality of architects.¹³

Approaches from other professions in the UK

- 4.5** In the other five UK professions reviewed, only solicitors do not have any CPD requirements on renewal. Others have:
- A general requirement of CPD (articulated in terms of time spent and formal or informal training)
 - Facilities sometimes available for online recording of CPD activities
 - Some form of audit by the professional or regulatory body (with varying degrees of resource put into this, based on risk assessments).
- 4.6** For example, doctors have a five year ‘revalidation’, including annual appraisals. An evaluation was conducted in 2017 after the first five years of implementation and found that the processes of review and feedback were starting to drive changes in doctors’ practice and helped healthcare organisations to identify poorly performing doctors and support them to improve.
- 4.7** Doctors might be considered to be at one end of the regulation spectrum of the five professions reviewed. For one of the Chartered professions, civil engineers, CPD is a requirement as specified in the Code of Conduct, however, the professional body is non-prescriptive regarding the quantity or nature of CPD, but recommends a process of review and evaluating CPD activities.
- 4.8** In common in these examples is the expectation of review, reflection and learning from CPD activities with a senior colleague.
- 4.9** Vet and solicitors’ firms are required to register with the regulatory body. This is voluntary for chartered surveyors’ firms, although surveyors registered with RICS have to complete and submit details of 20 hours CPD per year, of which at least 10 hours has to be formal CPD.

¹³ New Zealand Registered Architects Board (2017) Briefing to incoming Minister
https://www.nzrab.nz/Editable/Assets/BriefingIncomingMinisters/2017_NZRAB_Briefing_to_the_Incoming_Minister.pdf

Skill deficiencies

- 4.10 Overall, architects engaged in the qualitative fieldwork reported general confidence in their colleagues and standards.** The overall tone was of a competent profession, with confidence in the skills and ethics of other architects.
- 4.11** A minority (31%) of employer respondents to the Survey of Architects reported that at least some of their existing employees lacked the skills and knowledge they needed to be fully proficient in their roles. Responses focused on skills and knowledge relating to the construction process, although here a lot of respondents reporting existing skills shortages also said their employees lacked the necessary skills to use BIM (51%). Similarly, while 19 out of 25 large employer respondents to this question reported all or most of their employees were fully proficient in their role, a fifth of employers felt only some employees had the skills and knowledge required

Insights from the Call for Evidence

- *There was acknowledgment of 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.*

Continuous Professional Development

- 4.12** From the architects survey, almost one third (31%) of the sample reported undertaking over 35 hours of formal CPD per year, and a further 39% said they did 15-34 hours. These apparently high levels were fairly consistent across people working in different sizes of business, although freelance architects were less likely to complete over 35 hours, with 26% of respondents reporting this level.
- 4.13** Similar time patterns were reported by architects for informal CPD, but with more people reporting doing over 35 hours (38%).
- 4.14** Over four fifths reported that their CPD involved: self-directed reading (90%), on the job learning (87%), and training delivered by external training provider (including professional bodies such as RIBA, 80%).

Barriers to continuous professional development

- 4.15 Just under half of architects who responded to the survey (45%) said that they would like to do more CPD than they currently do.** When asked what barriers prevented them from undertaking as much CPD as they would like, most cited a lack of time (83%). The next most common response was lack of priority (39%), which in part explains why time is such a common barrier although it also likely relates to the on-going concerns about the pressures in the profession for long working hours.
- 4.16** Relatively few reported barriers, such as their employer being unwilling to fund or provide training (23%) or being unaware of where they could access formal training (17%) or information for self-directed learning (16%). Similarly, almost all large employers surveyed expected their architects would need to acquire new skills or knowledge over the next five years. Most employers said that they offered both financial support and time allocations to help employees with their training and CPD. Routine support was often in the form of study leave, training within contract hours and arranging formal training sessions, whereas financial support for CPD was more often provided on an ad hoc basis rather than a set offer to all employees.
- 4.17** This led to a more general discussion about costs and quality in the focus groups. **Cost was a concern due to the financial pressures faced by practices and a worry that any new approach would add to these pressures.**
- 4.18** Research participants shared concerns over the quality of the current CPD offer, which they felt was often more akin to business marketing and product promotion than knowledge development. This was compared unfavourably to what could be learned through detailed reading of a book or discussion with professional colleagues. However, as reported the latter examples do not fit with RIBA's current definition of CPD, which is more based around formal activities.
- 4.19** These types of concerns about what would constitute quality (or value for money) CPD led to concerns about the way any new approach might work. **It was not to argue against the need to develop the current system, more as a warning of unintended consequences and a risk that the system could be made more rigorous but not improve quality.**

Potential methods for testing competence

- 4.20** The research found a general acceptance among architects and stakeholders that **there should more regulation of competence than currently exists.** This view held very wide, but not unanimous support through our qualitative research.
- 4.21** In addition to evidencing compliance with the Code of Conduct, most large employers surveyed (20 out of 24) agreed or strongly agreed there should be a requirement for a

minimum level of CPD. However, there was no consensus on what any form (e.g., submission of continuing work; peer review, exam) of additional evidence should take.

- 4.22** The purpose of a change in regulating competence was raised. It was suggested a tightening of regulation would help to ‘secure the floor’ and protect the reputation of the profession. However, the purpose could also include or be limited to supporting the professional development of the profession, which was often related to having general confidence in their professional colleagues. In such cases the focus would be on raising standards and improving practice.
- 4.23** **There was also a widespread view that whatever was done had to build on existing systems, especially RIBA’s requirements.** While many architects are not members of RIBA (one estimate was less than half) there was concern that diverging systems would create barriers and costs which should be avoided.
- 4.24** Through the focus groups and workshops, **there was no clear consensus on the most appropriate way to enact additional regulation**, especially given the diversity of roles within the profession and the different starting points including in terms of RIBA membership, with those who were members more often wanting something aligned to this and others starting from a more open position. Also, because there was not currently a CPD process linked to maintaining registration the options were more open ended, with less direct experience to compare potential changes against. Instead, consultees just worried about the additional demand even though they supported the principle.
- 4.25** In the absence of any strong consensus view and recognising the fairly small number of people engaged in the qualitative research, Table 4-1 **Table 4-1** therefore shows the range of views on some of the main approaches that could be used to test the maintenance of competence in the profession post registration (other options exist as shown in the reviews international practice and other professions, but were not widely discussed in the primary research and so not reported here)

Table 4-1: Research participants input on some potential methods for testing competence

Option	Considerations for	Reservations
Minimum CPD requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could fit with the current approach to CPD activity of RIBA • Would allow the flexibility for people to choose what knowledge, skills and competences are appropriate to their role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable approaches by practices to support their architects to engage in CPD • Current CPD offers lack quality and are not value for money which will dictate development • Risk of abuse if this is only based on attendance
Submission of materials / case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow people to choose what is appropriate evidence for their role • Best practice case notes could 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and cost to review and assess material could be prohibitive

Option	Considerations for	Reservations
	be seen as useful to others	
Exam / test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to focus on any key issues • Could allow greater standardisation if more specific materials were developed and made available – those running courses would then more likely to consistent in their coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate effort to prepare on busy professionals when competence is generally good already • Consistency of this type may not be appropriate for the diversity roles in the profession • Likely to be differences for people working in small as opposed to large firms

Source: SQW from findings from focus groups and workshops

4.26 Additional issues were raised by participants for consideration, which included:

- **'Faculties' within the profession post qualification could be tied to different competences reflecting the specialisms within different architectural roles**, which could be underpinned by more narrowly defined CPD routes
- **Newly qualified architects needs will differ from experienced architects** and as such newly qualified architects may require a higher level of CPD, support and resource to maintain and gain competence earlier in their career (described as a 'P plate' period).

Conclusions

4.27 While architects in general appear to undertake high levels of CPD activity when compared to others in Europe, there was broad support (and even expectation) of a tightening up on the current process. However, there were a wide variety of views about what might work best and about the shortcomings of each approach. The views put forward were the most diverse of the three research areas and there was no strong, consistent support for any approach. As such, this area provided the least clear way forward of any of the three reviewed.

4.28 Changes to a more defined set of expectations would place architects in the UK more in line with those in other countries and a number of other professions in the UK. However, there were significant concerns about a range of options. This in part reflected inherent risks of introducing any, more formal system (no route is risk free). **Therefore, this element could benefit from further testing and refinement in the next stages of the project. This could consider:**

- The balance between general updating against narrower and specialist competences which people use in their jobs
- Ensuring that any new system recognised quality CPD outcomes rather than simply logging activity, and between formal and informal activity

- Fit to existing structures and expectations, especially those of RIBA and existing recording procedures
- Ensuring that time and costs do not becoming significant barriers to take up
- Taking a risk-based approach to auditing CPD which might include consideration of factors such as nature and source of complaints investigated by ARB or analysis of emerging trends in the profession
- Promoting best practice in people management within firms to encourage regular performance reflection and review.

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