

# ARB – governing the work of architects

The Architects Registration Board is the UK's statutory regulator of architects. The ARB is working to raise awareness that architects are regulated. Architect is a protected title under UK law and for an individual to call him or herself an architect, he or she must be registered with the ARB. Architects have to undertake many years of academic training and a period in industry, and are rigorously tested to ensure they meet the criteria to be registered. Individuals who say that they provide architectural services or architectural consultancy may not be registered.





The Architects Registration Board was established by Parliament in 1997 to regulate the architects' profession in the UK. It is an independent, public interest body and its work in regulating architects ensures that good standards within the profession are consistently maintained for the benefit of the public and architects alike. There are over 30,000 architects on the statutory register which ARB maintains; a register of individuals and not of practices. The statutory register contains the details of around 34,000 individuals who have the right to use the title architect in business or practice. The register can be checked online by visiting the Architects Register website ([www.architects-register.org.uk](http://www.architects-register.org.uk)). The Register allows visitors to search by name, area, registration number or postcode. For a practice to refer to itself using the word 'architect' in connection with its business then the elements of its work which relate to architecture must be under the control and management of a registered architect.

As clients of architects, construction professionals are completely within their rights to ask for information about which architect is overseeing their work. The Architects Code of Conduct requires that principals in practices ensure that architectural work is managed by one or more architects and that the names of the architects are made know to clients and potential clients. Principals should also notify clients promptly of any changes in the architect responsible for their work.

For clients, there are many benefits to using a registered architect. Architects must undertake many years of training covering all building stages from conception to completion. For architects who qualify in the UK, this consists of a minimum of seven years of training. They must achieve qualifications at Part 1 (a three year undergraduate degree), Part 2 (a two year masters or diploma) and Part 3 (an examination in professional practice) including 24 months appropriate experience. EU nationals wishing to practice must have obtained qualifications listed in the EU Professional Qualifications Directive, which is a piece of legislation which facilitates freedom of movement and be entitled to practice in their own country. For individuals who hold certain qualifications, but who do not meet these requirements, there is an alternative route; they can take the ARB's own exams at Parts 1 and 2 followed by a Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice and Management at a UK school of architecture and 24 months appropriate experience.

Architects are required to act in accordance with the Architects Code which sets out standards of professional conduct and practice. The Code covers how an architect should conduct him or herself. The Architects Registration Board provides a mechanism for dealing with allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and serious professional incompetence against architects.

Practising architects are expected to hold adequate and appropriate insurance to cover claims regarding negligence in their work.

Architects are expected to follow Standards of Professional Conduct and Practice. Architects are expected to be honest and act with integrity, be competent and promote their services honestly and responsibly.

In their work, architects are expected to manage their business competently and consider the wider impact of their work, carrying out their work faithfully and conscientiously.

All architects must have the appropriate insurance arrangements and are expected to maintain the reputation of architects as a profession.

In the event of a dispute or complaint these must be dealt with appropriately and architects are expected to co-operate with regulatory requirements and investigations and have respect for others.

Many construction professionals are clients of architects and the ARB is keen to raise awareness amongst this key group of the UK's statutory Register of Architects and the work of the ARB.

Statutory protection of the title 'architect' came into force in 1931 through the Architects (Registration) Act which established ARCUK (the Architects' Registration Council of the United Kingdom) to maintain a Register of qualified architects. This original legislation was promoted by RIBA. This was followed by the Architects Registration Act 1938 and a number of Architects Qualifications EEC & EC Recognition Orders [Statutory Instruments] which came into force in the late 1980s, but other than these developments the regulation of architects remained fairly static for many years.

In February 1993, the Warne Review, commissioned by the Department of the Environment, was published; it recommended that the regulation of architects should not continue. Nonetheless, there was considerable strength of feeling from those within the profession and consumer organisations to keep statutory protection so all previous legislation relating to architects was brought together into a single act – the Architects Act 1997 which is what is in place today.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are currently conducting an independent periodic review into the regulation of architects – readers will be able to find out more about this when it is published on the DCLG website.