

## QUESTION

**Q. 1. Do you believe that setting and assessing competence requirements would promote best practice among architects?**

- a. This would have a sizeable impact on promoting best practice
- b. This would have a moderate impact on promoting best practice
- c. This would have a minimal impact on promoting best practice
- d. This would have no impact on promoting best practice

**Q. 2. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.1.**

**Q. 3. Do you agree that monitoring or testing of competence would be beneficial to architects?**

- a. This would have a sizeable benefit
- b. This would have a moderate benefit
- c. This would have a minimal benefit
- d. This would have no benefit

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**Q. 4. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.3.**

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**Q. 5. How confident are you that effective criteria can be established which would improve an architect's competence?**

- a. Very confident
- b. Moderately confident
- c. Not very confident
- d. Not at all confident

**Q. 6. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.5.**

**Q. 7. If you answered c. or d. to Q.5, would any changes to the current regulatory landscape increase your confidence of the establishment of effective criteria?**

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**Q. 8. Do you agree with the proposal that the Architects Registration Board (ARB) should monitor and assess an architect's professional competence?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 9. Which skills, knowledge, experience or behaviours should be overseen and assessed by the ARB?**

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**Q. 10. Do you agree that the competence requirements should take account of the competence standards currently being developed by the British Standard Institution with the built environment industry?**

- a. Yes

b. No

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**Q. 11. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.10.**

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**Q. 12. Do you agree with the proposal that the ARB is obligated to review and update the competence standards after a set period?**

- a. Yes - Competence standard reviews should occur every year
- b. Yes - Competence standard reviews should occur every 3 years
- c. Yes - Competence standard reviews should occur every 5 years
- d. No - It should be at the discretion of the ARB Board

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**Q. 13. How should the ARB develop the new competence requirements? Please select all that apply**

- a. Through consultations with other organisations such as the Royal Institute of British Architects
- b. Through consultation with universities and Schools of Architecture
- c. Through written consultations with the wider sector
- d. Through oversight and advice from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
- e. By examining the regulatory standards of other nations
- f. By examining the regulatory standards of other professions
- g. Other (please explain below)

**Q. 14. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.13.**

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**Q. 15. What form should the assessment of competence take? Please select all that apply**

- a. A mandated number of hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- b. Regular testing of all architects
- c. Testing of a random sample of architects
- d. An annual declaration
- e. Other (please specify)

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**Q. 16. If you are an architect, do you already undertake learning to maintain or develop professional skills (Continuous Professional Development)?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 17. If you answered yes to Q.16, how is this administered? Please select all that apply**

- a. Mandatory through your workplace

- b. Optional through your workplace
- c. Mandatory through your professional body
- d. Optional through your professional body
- e. Other mandatory learning
- f. Other self-sought learning

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**Q. 18. If you answered yes to Q.16, how many hours per year do you spend on Continuous Professional Development (CPD)?**

- a. Less than 5 hours
- b. Between 5 and 10 hours
- c. Between 10 and 20 hours
- d. More than 20 hours
- e. Unsure

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**Q. 19. If you are an architect, do you currently undertake any testing to demonstrate competence?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 20. If you answered yes to Q.19, who administers the testing and what material is examined?**

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**Q. 21. With regards to the appeals process, would your preference be for the appeals hearing body to be:**

- a. An internal independent Committee within the ARB
- b. An external independent body

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**Q. 22. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.21.**

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**Q. 23. If you selected an internal Committee within the ARB, do you agree that it is reasonable for individuals to pay a fee (determined on a cost-recovery basis) if their case is unsuccessful?**

- a. Yes

b. No

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**Q. 24. If you selected an external independent body, would you support the creation of an independent body if it meant a higher annual retention fee, but no fees relating to appeals?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. It would depend on the increase of the retention fee

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**Q. 25. Do you agree that when a disciplinary order is undergoing an appeal, this should be stated on the architect's register entry?**

a. Yes – the register should note if a disciplinary order is undergoing appeal

b. No – the register should not change disciplinary orders until they have been successfully appealed

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**Q. 26. Which cases should be within the remit of the appeals body? Please select all that apply**

a. Appealing decisions relating to the removal of an architect from the register under the competence regime

b. Appealing decisions relating to the removal of an architect from the register under the existing complaints procedure

c. A complainant appealing a decision against an architect with whom they are unsatisfied

d. An applicant appealing an unsuccessful application to join the register

e. Other (Please state)

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**Q. 27. Do you agree that the register publicly displaying disciplinary orders against a registered architect would promote public confidence in the profession?**

a. Yes

b. No

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**Q. 28. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.27.**

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**Q. 29. Do you agree that the register publicly displaying disciplinary orders would act as an effective deterrent to acts of unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence?**

a. Yes b. No

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**Q. 30. Do you agree that the ARB Board should determine the rules for the length of time a disciplinary order is visible on the register?**

a. Yes  
b. No

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**Q. 31. If you disagree, what alternative would you propose?**

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**Q. 32. Do you agree that the length of time a disciplinary order is visible on the register should be set depending on the severity of the order?**

a. Yes  
b. No

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**Q. 33. What level of transparency is appropriate when the ARB Board determines the rules setting out the length of time a disciplinary order is listed? Please select all that apply**

a. ARB Board papers are published on the ARB website and decisions are detailed in those papers  
b. The lengths of time and the rules determining them should be published and accessible on the ARB's website

- c. The ARB should undertake consultation with the sector
  - d. The ARB should seek governmental approval
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**Q. 34. When a disciplinary action is displayed against an architect, what information should be accessible?**

- a. The register should detail the reasons for the disciplinary order, including the date of the offence and length of the disciplinary action
  - b. The register should only state the disciplinary order which has been placed on an architect, with more information available on the Professional Conduct Committee page on the ARB's website
  - c. Other (Please state)
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**Q. 35. Do you agree that the proposals set out to amend the powers of the Architects Registration Board to charge fees are proportionate and would minimise the impact on the annual retention fee?**

- a. Yes
  - b. No
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**Q. 36. Which of the following do you think is the most appropriate way to determine which services the ARB can charge for?**

- a. Chargeable services should be listed in secondary legislation
  - b. The ARB Board should determine the services for which it can charge
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**Q. 37. If b, what level of transparency should be required when the ARB Board wish to amend chargeable services or fee amounts? Please select all that apply**

- a. ARB Board papers are published on the ARB website and decisions are stated in those papers
  - b. The list of chargeable services and fee amounts should be published and accessible on the ARB's website
  - c. The ARB should undertake consultation with the sector
  - d. The ARB should seek governmental approval
  - e. Other (Please state)
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**Q. 38. Are there other services or types of services that should be included in the list set out in paragraph 3.5?**

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**Q. 39. Do you agree that UK schools of architecture should pay a fee for their qualifications to be prescribed by the ARB?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 40. Do you agree that international schools of architecture should pay a fee for their qualifications to be prescribed by the ARB?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 41. Do you agree that architects' initial registration fees should vary based on the route of their recognition, on a cost-recovery basis?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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**Q. 42. For which services or types of services would it be reasonable for the ARB to charge a fee? Please select all that apply**

- a. International registration - provision of evidence for UK qualified individuals wishing to register abroad
- b. International registration - individuals holding international qualifications wishing to register in the UK
- c. Prescription of qualifications provided by domestic Schools of Architecture
- d. Prescription of qualifications provided by international Schools of Architecture
- e. Other (please specify)

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**Q. 43. What level of transparency should be required when the Board is determining which types of individuals or institutions are liable for the payment of fees? Please select all that apply**

- a. ARB Board papers are published on the ARB website and decisions are stated in those papers
- b. The process for payment should be published and accessible on the ARB's website
- c. The ARB should undertake consultation with the sector

- d. The ARB should seek governmental approval
- e. Other (Please state)

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**The Government is proposing amendments to the recognition system for international architects which would give both EU and non-EU qualified architects the same opportunities to seek recognition in the UK. The government is considering two potential options for this new recognition system:**

**Option 1** - To allow the ARB to recognise international qualifications it deems equivalent to UK standards, allowing holders of those qualifications to be exempt from sitting prescribed exams. Once qualifications are deemed equivalent, they would be added to a list held by the ARB. This would be a single, cohesive system of recognition, which would provide the same opportunities for recognition to architects qualified in the EU and the rest of the world. The ARB would have the flexibility to prescribe compensation measures to ensure that all individuals registering under this process are held to equivalent standards. This option would enable architects with international qualifications to register with the ARB more quickly which would preserve the flow of international talent into the UK. Any compensation measures would be designed to identify and address gaps, to ensure all architects registering in the UK meet the same standard. The existing prescribed exam route would remain for holders of qualifications which are not listed. This is the government's preferred policy option.

**Option 2** - The ARB expands their prescribed examination route so that EU qualified architects without any potential arrangements under a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the UK apply through the existing third country recognition route. This would be a less flexible option as individuals would have to undertake UK examinations and at least a year of further study. However, it would ensure that all architects registering in the UK are held to exactly the same requirements.

**Q. 44. To what extent do you agree that Option 1 would be beneficial to UK architectural practices wishing to recruit international architects?**

- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
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**Q. 45. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.44.**

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**Q. 46. To what extent do you agree Option 1 would encourage international architects to practise in the UK?**

**Select one:**

- a. Significantly encourage international architects to practice in the UK
- b. Moderately encourage international architects to practice in the UK
- c. Neither encourage nor discourage
- d. Moderately discourage international architects to practice in the UK
- e. Significantly discourage international architects to practice in the UK

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**Q. 47. To what extent do you agree that Option 1 would facilitate trade of architectural services?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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**Q. 48. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.47.**

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**Q 49. Would you support Option 1 if the system was not reciprocal (for example, the ARB recognises qualifications from another jurisdiction, but that jurisdiction does not recognise UK qualifications in the same way)?**

- a. Yes b. No

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**Q. 50. How confident are you that effective criteria could be established for compensation measures?**

- a. Very confident
  - b. Moderately confident
  - c. Not very confident
  - d. Not at all confident
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**Q. 51. If you answered c. or d. to Q.50, would any changes to the current regulatory landscape increase your confidence of the establishment of effective criteria?**

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**Q. 52. What form should compensation measures take? Please select all that apply**

- a. The ARB conducts an interview with the applicant before Registration
- b. The applicant undertakes a written test before Registration
- c. The applicant undertakes some online learning before Registration
- d. Other (Please state)

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**Q. 53. What level of scrutiny would be appropriate when qualifications are added to the list under Option 1? Please select all that apply**

- a. ARB Board papers are published on the ARB website and decisions are stated in those papers
- b. The list of qualifications is published and accessible on the ARB's website
- c. The ARB should undertake consultation with the sector
- d. The ARB should seek governmental approval
- e. Other (Please state)

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**Q. 54. How confident are you that Option 1 would ensure competence equivalent to domestically trained architects?**

- a. Very confident
- b. Moderately confident
- c. Not very confident
- d. Not at all confident

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**Q. 55. If you answered c. or d. to Q.54, would any changes to the current regulatory landscape increase your confidence of the competence of architects registering through Option 1?**

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**Q. 56. To what extent do you agree that Option 2 would be beneficial to UK architectural practices wishing to recruit international architects?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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**Q. 57. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.56.**

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**Q. 58. To what extent do you agree Option 2 would encourage international architects to practise or work in the UK? Select one:**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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**Q. 59. To what extent do you agree Option 2 would facilitate trade of architectural services?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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**Q. 60. Please briefly explain your answer to Q.59.**

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**Q. 61. What impact do you think requiring all internationally qualified architects to go through the prescribed examination route under Option 2 would have on promoting higher architectural standards amongst architects? Select one:**

- a. Sizeable positive impact on promoting higher architectural standards
- b. Moderate positive impact on promoting higher architectural standards
- c. Minimal or no impact on promoting higher architectural standards
- d. Moderate negative impact on promoting higher architectural standards
- e. Sizeable negative impact on promoting higher architectural standards

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**Q. 62. To what extent do you agree that Option 2 would result in fewer internationally qualified architects practising in the UK due to the length of the prescribed examination process?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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**Q. 63. Please briefly set out the reasons for your answer to Q.62.**

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**Q. 64. Which method do you think is preferable for recognising international architectural qualifications?**

- a. Option 1 – listed qualifications
- b. Option 2 – prescribed examinations

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**Q. 65. Please briefly set out the reasons for your answer to Q.64.**

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**ANSWER**

**b. This would have a moderate impact on promoting best practice**

The majority of architects in Northern Ireland are members of RSUA/RIBA in addition to being ARB registered. The RSUA supports setting and assessing competence. RSUA members are already required to carry out CPD to maintain and improve competence in practice. For this reason, we believe that the legal requirement will have limited effect on promoting best practice among RSUA/RIBA members over that required by their membership. We do however believe that it is likely to have a greater impact on non- chartered architects who are not members of a professional organisation.

The proposal does not however address the competence of those who provide architectural services but who are not covered under the Act as they are not architects. In Northern Ireland there is a poor understanding amongst the general public, of the difference between an architect and a non registered person who 'draws plans' particularly at consumer level.

Consumers are exposed to a wide variety of ability in the group of non architects, some of whom may not carry Professional Indemnity Insurance. This proposal to improve architects' competency will have very limited impact if the function question is not addressed at the same time. Indeed, the additional requirements run the risk of making architects more expensive thus making non-architects more financially desirable for those consumers who do not understand the risks associated with using untrained and/or unqualified people.

**b. This would have a moderate benefit**

The RSUA believes that active monitoring of CPD is likely to be beneficial to architects. The benefits of testing competence will be directly related to the type of testing and the validity of the test to the actual competencies required by architects in their particular practice. The range and extent of work carried out by architects in practice is extremely wide and simplistic testing regimes need to be carefully considered in order to achieve the benefits sought. Where testing is proportionate and appropriate to the particular practice of any architect, it is likely to be of benefit. There will be no benefit if competence monitoring and testing becomes a 'tick-box' exercise with no meaningful relationship to the practice of the individual.

In addition, it would be critical that any requirement to demonstrate competence does not replicate or double up on work that is already required by membership of a professional organisation. Additional paperwork or form filling to replicate records for ARB in addition to a professional body is likely to be counterproductive and lead to a 'tick-box' mentality rather than a genuine wish to improve competency.

The avoidance of duplication of paperwork is extremely important for RSUA members, many of whom work in the Republic of Ireland and are also RIAI members and already have to deal with CPD requirements in 2 jurisdictions. Any additional bureaucracy in relation to ARB registration over professional membership of RIBA/RSUA and RIAI, in addition to the complexities recently introduced by Brexit (CE, UKCA and UKNI marks and their impact on specification writing and site inspections for construction materials) would have a serious and disproportionate impact on NI architectural practices, most of whom are micro and small practices and all of whom are SMEs.

b. Moderately confident

The RSUA believes that it should be relatively straightforward to establish a range of subject areas within which an architect should address their competence in relation to their own field of practice.

The more difficult task is to establish profession-wide criteria against which competence could be assessed within these subject areas. This is due to the range and complexity of work that architects in practice carry out - from advising on single room domestic house extensions, to multi-million pound complex infrastructure projects and large scale masterplanning projects.

Some areas may be more straightforward than others. The RSUA has been running a highly successful Construction Professionals Health and Safety training course with assessment in order to obtain a Construction Professionals' Health and Safety Card. The RIBA has also recently announced a requirement to demonstrate competency through mandatory testing in relation to Health and Safety knowledge, including fire safety.

Whilst the general fields of study can be broadly described, we believe that each professional will need to be responsible for assessing their own needs within the framework outlined. The criteria for assessment may perhaps take the form of submission of a mandatory development plan accompanied by evidence that the goals are being met - very much along the lines of the RIBA CPD requirements, in addition to specific criteria or assessment for aspects where the subject field is well defined and narrow.

N/A

We agree that ARB is the appropriate body to oversee the implementation of a system, however we do not believe that ARB is best placed, nor would it be value for money for ARB to actually run and manage systems to monitor, oversee and assess an architect's competence, especially when the RIBA/RSUA/RIAS/RSAW etc already have systems etc in place for CPD, which we believe with minimal work would meet the requirements to demonstrate competence.

We believe that ARB should work with the existing professional bodies to ensure that the professional body CPD standards and systems (including any assessment) are aligned with the agreed goals of the law and that members of the RSUA/RIBA/RSAW/RIAI who meet their professional body requirements are also deemed to meet the Statutory requirement. This would mean that ARB/RIBA alignment is all that would be required.

The issue would then be how the system would be run and managed for non RIBA/RSUA/ RSAW/RIAS members and ensuring that those architects whose membership of a professional organisation meets compliance requirements, do not end up subsidising ARB members who cannot demonstrate compliance through a professional organisation and require a separate system run by ARB. This would have to be based upon full cost recovery only from those ARB members using this route and not cross subsidised by those using the RIBA route. It may be that ARB would wish to speak to the professional bodies about the possibility of extending CPD services to non-members for a fee payable by the non member.

Yes

The skills and competencies on the RIBA CPD criteria are a good starting point for defining the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required of architects. They should be supplemented with specific requirements to demonstrate competency in relation to fire safety , ethical practice and sustainability (appropriate to the practice of the architect).

a. Yes

Any competence framework needs to be developed in the context of existing knowledge and standards. The standards being developed by BSI should be taken into account, not only by ARB, but also by the professional bodies in setting their own CPD requirements. The professional bodies shall be responding to these. The BSI document however is a broad document devised to cover the entire construction industry and consultants with an emphasis on HRRBs. It does not acknowledge the role of architects as the only regulated profession in the construction industry nor does it consider the benefits to be gained where the function of an architect is protected in tandem with mandatory competence demonstration.

c. Yes - Competence standard reviews should occur every 5 years

a, b, c, e, f

The RSUA believes that the profession itself has the greatest understanding of the range of work that architects undertake - a range and complexity that is often misunderstood outside the profession, particularly by those not directly involved in construction, so it is vital that the profession is consulted and inputs into the competence requirements. We believe this is best done via the professional bodies to formulate requirements with a profession wide consultation at the end for comment prior to implementation.

Consultation with universities and Schools is vital in order to get buy-in to the range of competencies required and to ensure that there is an emphasis on a holistic approach to course content i.e. that health and safety and sustainable aspects of design are seen as being as important as other aspects. The 'culture' of design starts in university and the 'real world' aspects and impacts of design need to be kept in focus whilst students design skills are being developed.

Items e and f should be carried out in advance of consultation with profession, to inform the consultation with industry/the profession.

**a, c, d, e**

**e other -**

**The annual declaration could be a certificate of compliance eg from RIBA based upon evidence uploaded to the RIBA CPD website - the declaration should be a pre-condition of re-registering (suggest that this would be phased in - in year 1 and 2 it would not prevent registration, but afterwards would).**

**Testing will be appropriate for some aspects of CPD (see the RSUA Construction Professionals Health & Safety Card, or accreditation for work on historic buildings, or other specialisms such as tall buildings) as a good example but we believe that any review of CPD on a random basis needs to be appropriate to the nature of practice of the individual. It may be better carried out as peer review interview - where the candidate is asked to explain the nature of their practice, the type of work they do and talk through the CPD they have carried out and the competencies they have improved upon. This could be carried out remotely. In the first few years candidates selected for random assessment should be notified at least 6 months in advance of the CPD year end.**

**After an introductory period, we believe that there should be random assessment, initially of records followed up by peer review interview, with consequences for anyone not meeting the standard. Follow up might be a further interview with sanctions should improvement not be demonstrated.**

**Not directly applicable -**

**a. RSUA members do already undertake CPD**

**Not directly applicable**

**c. CPD is mandatory through your professional body (RSUA)**

**Not directly applicable**

**d. RSUA members are required to complete more than 20 hours**

**Not directly applicable**

**a. Yes - RSUA members undertake testing to demonstrate competence**

**RSUA Health & Safety Course leading to the Construction Professional's Health & Safety Card - reassessed every 4 years.  
This assesses a very particular aspect and only demonstrates competence in the aspects tested.**

**a. An internal independent Committee within the ARB**

**a. Yes - but the fees need to be set at a level that don't deter people from appealing, and need to be published in advance. There also needs to be a review process of ARBs procedures to ensure that members are not bearing the cost of successful appeals due to errors in ARBs processes.**

**a. Yes – the register should note if a disciplinary order is undergoing appeal**

**a, b, c, d, e**

**e include decisions that result in a fine and/or endorsement - not just those that result in expulsion**

**b. No.**

The RSUA supports the proposal to display disciplinary orders against the name of a registered architect as this would help consumers and inexperienced clients make informed decisions as to their choice of architect and therefore better protect the public.

We do not however believe that it would promote public confidence in the profession as it is not tied with protection of function. Inexperienced members of the public could see architects with disciplinary orders and compare those with non architects who have no such controls - and may therefore be at risk of concluding that using a non architect is a better route than a register that appears to have people on it who have had sanctions against them.

a. Yes

a. Yes

N/A

a. Yes

b, c

**c, other**

**Option b, with a live link to the relevant Professional Conduct page, so that the reader does not have to do another manual search and can just click a link if they want further details.**

**a.Yes**

**a. Chargeable services should be listed in secondary legislation**

**N/A**

**b. No**

**a. Yes (and this should be a higher fee than UK schools if implemented)**

**If a reciprocal agreement is put in place between ARB and RIAI it may be appropriate to have an exemption from the standard international fee for schools of architecture based in the Republic of Ireland.**

**a. Yes**

**b, d, e (everyone should have permanent access to their record and the ability to reproduce the records required for international registration from the website without ARB staff doing any manual processes).**

**b, c**

**a. Strongly agree**

**This system would allow practices to refer to ARB recognition as demonstration of a minimum standard, thus taking the 'guess' work out of assessing qualifications for staff from different overseas locations. It would also potentially make the UK a more attractive location.**

**b. Moderately encourage international architects to practice in the UK**

**d. Disagree**

**It is not clear that option 1 would facilitate trade (suggests 2 way movement). It will facilitate inward movement of architects - there does not seem to be a reciprocal arrangement for UK trained architects to work elsewhere. We would be concerned that a 'blanket' recognition policy would weaken the UK's negotiating position in relation to other countries recognising UK trained architects.**

**b. No**

**c. Not very confident**

Establishment of effective compensation measures is likely to be a time consuming and onerous task. It is not clear how this would be done (school by school or country by country?). The RSUA is concerned that many of the competencies referred to in the BSI consultation document referred to in question 11 require a UK based experience and knowledge of the legal, ethical and regulatory environment - very much as covered in the Part 3 qualification. It is likely to be an extremely onerous and expensive task to assess and facilitate the implementation of compensation measures.

d. It is unlikely that a one size fit all set of compensation measures is likely to be appropriate for applicants based in different countries. A combination of all methods may be required. Option a should be the minimum and it should be based on an interview with a panel of ARB registered architects.

a after c

c. Not very confident

**d. Disagree**

**d. Disagree**

**c. Neither agree nor disagree**

**b. Moderate positive impact on promoting higher architectural standards**

**a. Strongly agree**

**a. Option 1 - if implemented well.**