

Architecture

UK architectural training is highly regarded throughout the world. Tight regulation and control by professional bodies ensures that it maintains exceptional standards. A UK qualification will enable you to work virtually anywhere in the world.

Checklist: Why study architecture in the United Kingdom?

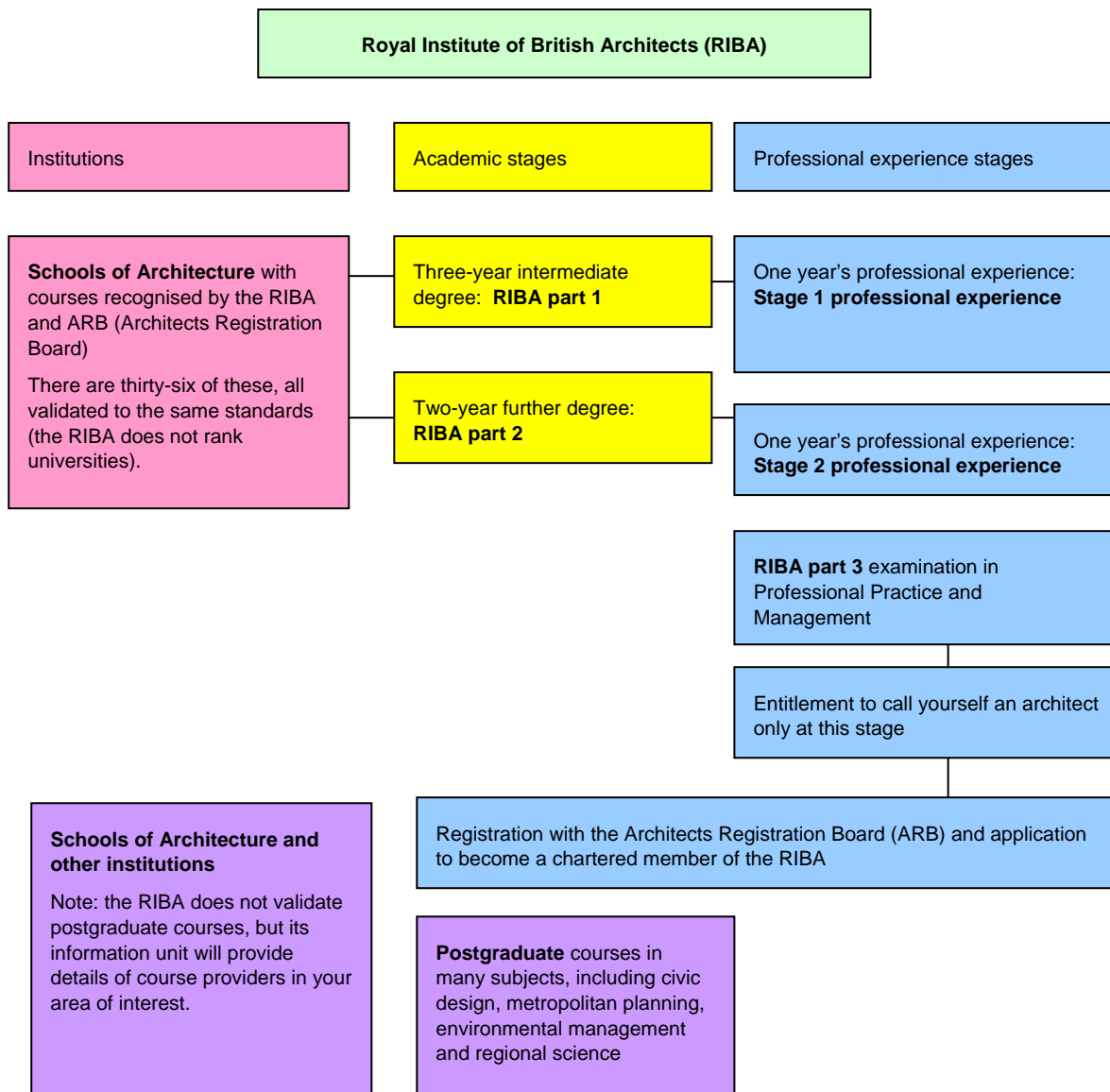
- the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) oversee the entire training process. The RIBA validates and the ARB prescribes undergraduate architecture courses, thus ensuring that high standards are maintained
- UK innovation is respected throughout the world and UK architects are called upon for high-profile projects throughout Europe and beyond
- architectural training is highly practical as well as theoretical and artistic, involving at least two years' professional experience in an architect's office or a similar environment
- choosing to study in the UK will bring you into constant contact with speakers of English, the language of international business, commerce and technology.

1 What can I study?

Professional architectural education in the United Kingdom (UK) has a special structure. It is generally divided into three parts which take a minimum of seven years before the title 'architect' may be used. The seven years combine study in a university with substantial periods of professional experience in architectural practice. There is some variation in the pattern of these seven years in different schools of architecture, but the most standard pattern is as follows:

- a first degree (a BA, BSc or BArch) in architectural studies, which takes three years and qualifies you for the RIBA Part 1 professional qualification
- a 'professional practice' in architectural practice, when you work as an architectural assistant and learn about professional life as an architect
- a diploma or second degree in architecture (BArch), which takes two years and qualifies you for the RIBA Part 2 professional qualification
- at least one more year of experience in architectural practice before you can sit the RIBA Part 3 examination. **The examination in Professional Practice (or 'Part 3') is the final stage in an architect's education and training** – and the foundation for life-long learning and development as a member of the architectural profession.

You may only call yourself an architect (by law) when you have passed the RIBA Part 3 examination. Usually, one of the years of experience in architectural practice may take place outside the UK.



Undergraduate courses

There are thirty-six institutions offering undergraduate degrees in architecture. A list of these may be viewed on the RIBA President's Medals website www.presidentsmedals.com/

Postgraduate courses

It is important to distinguish between the courses you can take in order to obtain your RIBA Part 2 professional qualification (see above), which often carry the title postgraduate diploma, and the courses that are intended for those who have already qualified in architecture or a related discipline and who want to study a particular area in depth (for example, urban planning, environmental design, history and theory of architecture, digital architecture, landscape architecture, teaching of architecture). The former are two-year courses, the latter are usually one-year courses (if taken full time). Most schools also offer research degrees in architecture (MPhils and PhDs).



Distance learning

This is not currently an option at undergraduate level, but some Part 3 courses and Master's-level schemes are beginning to use distance learning. The vast majority of undergraduates study full-time at one of the schools (or departments) of architecture. The RIBA has an examination programme for office-based candidates, but there is currently no resource available to offer this to international students.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The RIBA requires qualified architects to do thirty-five hours' CPD per year. Its regional offices often organise courses.

Short courses

Some colleges organise summer holiday courses. The RIBA information unit keeps a list of current courses (see below, 'Where can I find more information?').

Can I take part of my course in the United Kingdom?

There are several ways of achieving this:

- Many architecture courses run exchange programmes with other universities abroad. It is accepted that one year of study can be done overseas. This usually takes place during the final two years (diploma or second degree stage) of your academic training.
- There are other government schemes, such as Erasmus and Leonardo, that can help European students to spend time in other European countries. Guidance notes are available on the website of the Council for International Education (UKCOSA) www.ukcosa.org.uk
- If you have completed a degree in your own country, you may be able to take the diploma or second degree in the UK. Your degree would have to be assessed by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) assessment panel to ensure that it was equivalent to a UK degree.



Checklist: Choosing the right course

- all RIBA-validated courses are designed to ensure that students achieve the required standard in the core areas of study. Some courses also offer specialist areas of study, or have developed strengths in particular areas, such as technology, design history or theory. So your first step in choosing the right course is to look carefully through the prospectus of each school or department of architecture
- for a comprehensive listing of degree courses in architecture look at the RIBA President's Medals website www.presidentsmedals.com
- contact individual schools of architecture, or consult their websites, to establish the particular structure they follow
- ask about course content, as this can vary between schools, with some adopting a more 'artistic' and others a more 'scientific' approach to architectural education
- visit some schools on their open days (if possible) or go to the end-of-year degree shows where students exhibit their work
- look at student work on the RIBA President's Medals website www.presidentsmedals.com
- read the publication *Visions for the Future: The President's Medals Student Awards 2003 incorporating Directory of Schools of Architecture 2003/2004* (see below, 'Where can I find more information?')
- think about your own preferences – would you rather be based in a large city or somewhere more rural?
- for an objective view of the standard of the department, look up the Teaching Quality Assessment www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm to see how it has scored. See *Quality issues* in this series for further information.
- if you wish to take a postgraduate research course, you can compare departments by looking up research assessment exercise results at www.hero.ac.uk/rae/index.htm

2 Entrance

What level of academic achievement do I need to be accepted on to an undergraduate degree course in architecture?

Schools of architecture set their own entry requirements, so it's always better to check with them first. However, you are likely to need any one of the following sets of qualifications as a minimum requirement:

- three Scottish Highers, with at least three subjects passed at Standard grade (passes in two additional mathematical subjects count as one Higher)
- minimum three A-levels (or equivalent) in academic fields of study and five GCSEs including maths, English language and a separate science
- the University of Cambridge Overseas School and Higher School Certificate – at least two of the five subjects should be passes as Principal Subjects in the Overseas Higher School Certificate, and the remaining subjects may be passed either with Credit or Distinction in the Overseas School Certificate or as subsidiary subjects in the Overseas Higher School Certificate
- GNVQ/BTEC qualifications – students with suitable Diplomas or Certificates and GCSEs/SCEs are accepted by schools of architecture (candidates are advised to contact them to ascertain their specific entry requirements)
- International Baccalaureate (minimum score of twenty-six points).



Foundation courses in architecture

A few universities offer foundation courses in architecture for students whose secondary education in their own country takes them only to a level equivalent to the first year of A-level studies in the UK.

The portfolio

There is a substantial 'artistic' element to all courses in architecture. When you apply you may be asked to submit, by post or at interview, a portfolio of artwork you have done in school or in your own time. For many schools this is the most important factor in offering you a place. Your portfolio need not contain work that is specifically 'architectural', but should show evidence of imagination and technical skill. Any and all media of expressions are appropriate. At diploma or second degree level, schools will be looking to your portfolio for evidence of established skill in architectural design.

Transferring from other degrees and other countries

Professional Experience and Professional Practice Examination

If you want to complete your architectural professional qualifications in the UK you can do so. But you should be aware of the following:

- 1 Only one of the minimum two years of professional experience employment can be spent outside the UK.
- 2 If you complete your year between the degree and diploma course stages in the UK, it will be covered by the normal Student Visa, and your employer will not need to make any separate application to employ you.
- 3 After completing the diploma, however, you will need to work for twelve months in the UK under the direct supervision of a UK registered architect. If you come from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), your employer will need to apply for a Business and Commercial Work Permit on your behalf. Part 2 professional experience is no longer covered by the Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES) as was previously the case.
- 4 The new arrangement has advantages (less pressure to complete the final professional qualification in the minimum two-year period, and you are not obliged to leave the UK and not return here to work for at least two years). Disadvantages are the stricter requirements for the open advertising of these post-Part 2 training jobs, which adds to cost and complexity for employers taking on international graduates. For full information see www.workpermits.gov.uk
- 5 Once they have obtained the necessary experience, candidates may take the RIBA Part 3 examinations, known as the Professional and Management Examinations. They would usually sit the examinations at the school of architecture where they did the Part 2 stage of their course.

Can I gain exemption from some or all of the academic programme if I have a degree in a different profession?

It would be unusual. Some academic institutions may allow exceptionally able graduates from disciplines closely related to architecture (e.g. architectural technology, interior design, surveying or engineering) who have good architectural work experience to enter the second year of the Part 1 course, but exemption is unlikely to extend beyond this. In most cases individuals will simply have to start the course from the beginning and undertake the full course of study towards qualification as an architect.

Is my overseas degree valid to practise in the UK?

Not automatically. If you have completed three years' (or more) architecture training overseas, you may qualify for exemption from most or all of the Part 1 (degree) course programme here. If you have completed five years (or more) architecture training overseas and also have appropriate work experience, you may qualify for exemption from the Part 2 diploma/second degree. The Architects Registration Board have an established Assessment Panel to deal with this. The Assessment Panel is primarily in place to establish academic equivalence for students who have qualified on international architecture courses not covered by the European Community Architects' Directive 85/384/EEC. For further information go to www.arb.org.uk or contact info@arb.org.uk.



Graduates who have completed architecture studies at an EU institution recognised by the EU Directive (European Community Architects' Directive 85/384/EEC) on reciprocity of architectural qualifications can join the register of architects in the UK after two years' European practice experience. To join the RIBA you will need an additional three years' (a total of five years') work experience.

Can I do postgraduate study in the UK if I have a degree from another country?

This will depend on the entry requirements for the particular course you want to do. You should contact the institution in the first instance. Your situation may be complicated by considerations of whether you also want to try to obtain a recognised professional qualification in architecture.

3 How can I register as a professional?

All architectural registration in the UK is through the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Architects Registration Board (ARB). You cannot legally describe yourself as an architect in the UK without this. If you have trained overseas you may qualify for exemption from RIBA Part 1 and possibly RIBA Part 2 (see above, 'Is my overseas degree valid to practise in the UK?'), but you will still need to pass the RIBA Part 3 examination before you can be registered. For more information visit www.arb.org.uk

Would a United Kingdom qualification be recognised in other countries?

Your UK qualification will be recognised all over the world, but it is essential to check with the countries in which you intend to work, as every country has its own regulations.

4 Next steps

Checklist: Your next steps

- 1 If you are an undergraduate, start by looking at the RIBA Careers website www.careersinarchitecture.net and the RIBA President's Medals website www.presidentsmedals.com, which lists validated courses, contact details and mission statements of all schools of architecture. The website also displays their best student work since 1998.
- 2 Look at the comprehensive Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website www.ucas.com for information and advice on how to apply for entry to higher education courses.
- 3 Check how competitive entry is to the course in which you are interested – ask how many applications there are for how many places, and assess realistically your chances of success in relation to the grades likely to be required.
- 4 Postgraduate study involves a major investment in time and money, so obtain full information on the course and talk to those involved in organising and teaching.
- 5 Look realistically at your personal strengths, weaknesses, interests and opportunities. Are the knowledge, skills and qualification you will gain likely to help to further your career development in the way that you hope?



5 Where can I find more information?

British Council Education information

Website www.educationuk.org

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

EducationUK Scotland

Website www.educationukscotland.org

Wales International Consortium

Website www.walesinternationalconsortium.com

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

PO Box 28

Cheltenham Website

Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0) 870 1122211

Fax +44 (0) 1242 544961

Email enquiries@ucas.ac.uk

Website www.ucas.com

Architects Registration Board (ARB)

8 Weymouth Street

London W1W 5BU

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7580 5861

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7436 5269

E-mail info@arb.org.uk

Website www.arb.org.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

66 Portland Place

London W1B 1AD

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7580 5533

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7255 1541

E-mail info@inst.riba.org

Websites www.riba.org

Other RIBA-run sites:

www.architecture.com

www.careersinarchitecture.net

www.presidentsmedals.com

Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)

15 Rutland Square

Edinburgh EH1 2BE

Telephone +44 (0) 131 229 7545

Fax +44 (0) 131 228 2188

E-mail info@rias.org.uk

Website www.rias.org.uk

Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW)

Bute Building

Kind Edward VII Avenue

Cathays Park

Cardiff CF10 3NB

Telephone +44 (0) 29 2087 4753

Fax +44 (0) 29 2087 4926

Website www.architecture-wales.com

Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)

2 Mount Charles

Belfast BT7 1NZ

Telephone +44 (0) 28 90 323760

E-mail info@rsua.org.uk

Website www.rsua.org.uk

Architecture

Work Permits (UK)

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Home Office

Level 5

Moor Foot

Sheffield S1 4PQ

Tel +44 (0) 114 259 4074

Fax +44 (0) 114 259 3776

www.workpermits.gov.uk

Design Council

34 Bow Street

London WC2E 7DL

Telephone +44 (0) 7420 5200

Fax +44 (0) 7420 5300

Website www.design-council.org.uk

D & AD (British Design and Art Direction)

9 Graphite Walk

Vauxhall Walk

London SE11 5EE



Other useful resources

Visions for the Future: The President's Medals Student Awards 2003 incorporating Directory of Schools of Architecture 2003/2004 – brief notes on schools of architecture in the UK whose courses and examinations are recognised by the RIBA. Each school provides information on the types of courses that are recognised by the RIBA, their length and the degree or diploma to which each course leads. It also gives the number of students in the school, entry requirements, the head of school and a short description of the school, its undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and in some cases, the research and postgraduate opportunities offered. (Click on <http://www.ribabookshops.com> to order a copy.)

British Qualifications 34th ed. (Kogan Page, 2004, ISBN 0 7494 4138 0) – lists every recognised qualification on offer in the UK, by schools, colleges, universities, business schools, learned societies, trade and professional bodies and associations.

Occupations 2004 (DfES, 2003, ISBN 0 86110864 7) – in-depth guide to over 600 career choices of all types from unskilled to professional work. Also lists prospects and qualifications for each occupation.

NB. Please note these books may not be available at your local British Council office.

Other suggested websites

- www.rudi.net – Resource for Urban Design Information
- www.archiplanet.co.uk – website for architecture students in the UK
- www.rtpi.org.uk – Royal Town Planning Institute
- www.li.org.uk – the Landscape Institute (chartered institute for landscape architects in the UK)
- www.ergonomics.org.uk – the Ergonomics Society
- www.bida.org – British Interior Design Association
- www.sapling.org.uk – Architecture, Planning and Landscape Information Gateway.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct and up to date, the British Council accepts no legal liability for its accuracy, currency or completeness.

June 2004

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