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## **Education Futures - A report by Alan Jones and David Gloster to the Board of The Royal Institute of British Architects (approved 13 Sept 2018) and endorsed by the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects (27 Sept 2018)**

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**RIBA Council  
Education Futures  
27 September 2018**

**Item 12**

**Classification:** public

**Executive summary**

Following presentations made to the RIBA Board on 10 May and 13 September 2018 and by Alan Jones (Vice President Education) and David Gloster (Director of Education), it was agreed a report would be made to Council on specific education-related matters, as follows:

- 1 the changing context of architectural education (nationally and internationally)
- 2 status update on progress of RIBA Education Review (RER)
- 3 the modernisation of architectural education, and challenges to this
- 4 progress update on RIBA/ARB dialogue re architectural education
- 5 future RIBA strategy for architectural education

**Objective:** As education is one of only two RIBA Charter objectives, the RIBA will be respected for its position in representing architects and architecture nationally and internationally by developing education to drive progress, modernity, and inclusivity in the profession, creating a membership demographic reflecting the diverse societies and communities architects and architecture should serve.

**Remit** ref Reg 5.1

*5.1 Council shall ensure that such boards and committees are appointed as necessary to advise it on policy matters, to execute business on its behalf, and to represent the interests of the Institute.*

**Financial and resourcing implications**

None at this stage

**Link to Strategic Plan 2016-2020**

A strong profession

- *....we will ensure that our profession thrives by attracting the best and most diverse talent with access to the education, knowledge and skills to succeed...*

*1.1 Lead and support the highest professional and ethical standards  
place social purpose, professional standards and ethics at the heart of action and debate about architecture and the profession*

*1.2 Attract and retain the best and most diverse talent*

- *engage school-age students to inspire an interest in architecture*
- *work with schools of architecture and practices to engage the next generation of architects in the future of the profession*

Provide access to education, knowledge and skills

- *lead and support changes to architectural education to deliver better value, more flexibility, and greater integration with practice*
- *provide our members with access to skills and knowledge that support effective practice and successful business*
- *define, promote and maintain the highest global standards for architectural education*

Help our members engage with the challenges and opportunities of a changing world

- *ensure that our members have access to the information, skills and technology to embrace digital opportunities*
- *support our members to work around the world to deliver better outcomes*

- for clients, industry and wider society*
- *help our members to connect with clients, provide improved services and expand business opportunities*
- *facilitate local, regional and national activity by members*
- Build a body of knowledge and facilitate collaboration, research and innovation in practice
  - *facilitate innovation and improve practice effectiveness and outcomes through research and knowledge sharing*
  - *enable members, the construction industry and academia to collaborate, and share knowledge and information digitally*
  - *provide a forum for and stimulate theoretical and cultural discourse in the field of architecture*
- 2.1 Advocate for architects and architecture
  - *develop an evidence base and analysis and harness the expertise of our members to ensure that clients, potential clients, politicians, other built environment professionals and the public understand the impact and value of architecture and architects*
  - *create a better understanding of the wide-ranging skillset, impact and contribution of the architect's role within the built environment*
  - *facilitate debate and the exchange of ideas about architecture and its practice*
- 2.2 Deliver inspiring programmes that celebrate architecture and create wide-reaching public and professional engagement with the value and purpose of architecture
  - *deliver a national and international awards programme that celebrates and promotes excellence in architecture, education and research to public and professional audiences*
- Enhance the value of our offer to members and others
  - *develop and improve our offer to members, clients, customers and professional and public users and align the products and services with our brand, across the RIBA Group*
- 3.4 Strive for operational excellence
  - *review processes to facilitate collaborative working and continuous improvement, pool resources and prevent duplication*

## **Communications**

None at this stage

## **Consultation:**

- Vice President, members of Board
- RIBA Education department
- RIBA East Midlands Education group
- RIBA Education Committee
- Virginia Newman (*RIBA Ambassador* for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion)
- Professor Alex Wright, University of Bath

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**Executive Director** Adrian Dobson

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## Education Futures

**objective** As education is one of only two RIBA Charter objectives, the RIBA will be respected for its position in representing architects and architecture nationally and internationally by developing education to drive progress, modernity, and inclusivity in the profession, creating a membership demographic reflecting the diverse societies and communities architects and architecture should serve.

**1 context** The context in which UK universities and their students operates has changed fundamentally in the last two decades. Briefly, the reasons are as follows:

- a) together with the overhead for accommodation, materials, and subsistence, the introduction of tuition fees in 1998<sup>i</sup> has created a significant financial burden on all UK students of architecture
- b) consequently, in parallel to the apprenticeship scheme, more earn and learn courses are emerging
- c) anecdotally, few registered architecture students attend university full time as they need to work to support their studies (which may be beneficial or disadvantageous, depending on the individual)
- d) the cyclic British economy, especially following the 2008 banking crisis, has eroded those casual jobs which provided students with supplementary income, causing further financial pressures
- e) there are now 51 RIBA-recognised schools in the UK<sup>ii</sup>. Architecture is seen by universities as a flagship offer, and a means to top up recruitment in areas of higher education less attractive to applicants
- f) international students (including those from the EU) form circa 30%+ of both part 1 and part 2 cohorts
- g) the Architects Act of 1997 (and the ARB) formed an additional polarity in UK architectural education, and limited the mobility of graduates in the globalised economy for architects

Across the world, the construction industry, universities, and schools of architecture have experienced significant change. To summarise:

- h) studying architecture is an important contribution to the professionalisation and profile of economies with a growing middle class<sup>iii</sup>, with those areas of the global economy growing at especially fast rates (China, the Gulf, Turkey) creating specific demand for construction professionals
- i) the erosion of the Soviet bloc has released a range of oil and gas rich republics (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan etc.) which aspire to become academic centres of excellence, although operate with curricular standards and content unrevised for many decades
- j) there is tension in some economies created by private education charging high fees set against less demanding standards, and the established provision where standards are high, but funding limited
- k) with schools proliferating globally, contrasts increase between education funding, academic monitoring, interpretations of the architect's role, and continuous development of professional skills
- l) Brexit may compromise the numbers of EU students and EU-registered architects coming to the UK
- m) agreements for the mutual recognition of qualifications between the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand may isolate the UK from new markets
- n) recent construction failures (e.g. Grenfell, Scottish schools etc.) emphasise the need for students to have greater awareness of professional ethics and liability

## 2 the RER

- a) The 2013 RIBA Education Review (RER) built on an enthusiasm for educational review (1924 Congress; 1958 Oxford Conference) to define learning structures responsive to modern practice. The principal concerns were:
- b) framing strategies for architectural education reflecting the EU Professional Qualifications Directive
- c) creating a better value equation treating the issues of cost, debt, and course duration inhibiting recruitment of students of architecture, and the creation of a more diverse profession
- d) maintaining the UK's competitive advantage as an educational paradigm for architecture, with no loss of intellectual, professional, and technological rigour
- e) addressing the anomaly of the outboard part 3, and lack of integration of professional skills teaching in first and second degree programmes
- f) producing an educational framework which facilitates rather than inhibits graduate registration on the UK register of architects

To progress the RER, the following work developed from the 2015 RIBA Education Forum<sup>iv</sup>:

- g) 12 regional workshops explaining the implications of the RER to UK schools of architecture;
- h) Birmingham, Brighton, Glasgow, Hull, London, Manchester (2015-16)
- i) review of best practice across other professions re. recording of CPD and practical training: Royal Pharmaceutical Society; Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons; Institution of Structural Engineers etc.
- j) reviewing proposals for RER-reactive educational frameworks: meeting UK schools to discuss and advise upon their proposals
- k) creating The Compact to go live in 2019, i.e. an employment contract for Chartered Practices and their graduate employees that structures the transition from school to practice, manages graduate and employer expectations, and maximise the benefits the graduate brings to the workplace
- l) redesigning/trialling the recording platform (RP) for practical experience and CPD: the RP forms a lifelong digital footprint of the architect from first stage professional practical experience to retirement;
- m) the RP is currently in the scoping/discovery phase, with delivery intended in 2019

**recommendation 1** that, on its introduction, the RIBA encourages all practices to commit to use of The Compact and RP, with these requirements agreed as extensions of the eligibility criteria for RIBA Chartered Practice

## 3 a modern profession

The academic agenda of UK schools mean that themes for study and resolution in the studio (and through research) are reviewed annually. The internal paradox we face is that the profession, whilst very responsive to the context it operates within (e.g. building and employment legislation, cash flow, cyclic demand for services etc.) does not review its own models of practice.

*...trapped in an obsession with title, while the services they supply are fragmented and outsourced, architects forget that they have no natural right to exist as the discrete profession that was invented in the Victorian era...a fact that is not lost on the present generation of students, some of whom are eschewing normative practice [Prof Sean Griffiths interviewed by Richard Waite Architects' Journal 21 December 2017]*

The challenges to creating a modern profession may be summarised as follows:

- a) models of practice many practices think and operate in a manner which is hardly contemporary. Whilst this may create profit for partners and deliver services to particular sections of the client community, it marginalises the appeal and value of architecture to those communities potentially benefiting the most from the strategic design skills of the profession
- b) project delivery over 30 years, demand for architectural services dependent on project management systems has eroded traditional creative design-dependent approaches to project conceptualisation and delivery. Whilst every client has the right to efficient delivery systems, overly managed projects may pre-empt service standards over design standards when both are in fact critical
- c) L/XL practice - modern procurement favours larger practice as, without critical mass, eligibility to tender on major projects is limited. Whilst inter-disciplinary turnkey practices and the use of BIM as a *lingua franca* optimise project delivery, they are a disincentive to graduates wishing to engage with (or offer) more intimate forms of practice
- d) diversity and inclusivity - there are structural issues in architectural education which limit opportunity, and require challenging
- e) fees and salaries - supplementing the value equation discussed against the RER, there is an additional problematic limiting the appeal of architecture. Student debt is formidable, but flatlined starting salaries and poor career progression must not compromise the development of the profession
- f) wellness/mental health - working methods and habits developed during academic study are now thought to contribute significantly to individual wellbeing, and perceptions of professional success. Publication of the Studying Architecture Well resource book will provide support for study and practice

#### **RER and the relationship with practice**

- a) to review part 3 delivery, and integrate professional skills into part 1 and 2
- b) to devote 20% of academic credits to professional skills in a framework allowing students registration upon graduation
- c) to reflect the accent on entrepreneurialism in UK fine arts education, and promote the acquisition of business and people skills in the student body
- d) to endorse apprenticeships as a critical high value alternative to full time fee-paying tuition
- e) to develop high quality national/global distance learning supplementing current routes to qualification

**recommendation 2** that an education system integrating professional skills and delivering successful graduates to registration is agreed as the principal pathway for UK students of architecture

**recommendation 3** that to extend opportunity and promote diversity and inclusivity in the profession, practices (irrespective of whether they are levy payers, or not) commit to the long-term employment of apprentices, particularly at undergraduate level, and throughout the period of study

#### **4 progress update on RIBA/ARB dialogue re architectural education**

Colleagues should be aware of issues in co-working with the statutory body, with notable challenges related to:

*Development of a modern profession*

- a) RIBA members prosper by studying and working in a fluid multicultural and transnational professional context; access to markets is hampered by mutuality of recognition issues
- b) UK-based practitioners operate globally, but need internationally-educated graduates with knowledge of the linguistic, cultural, and procedural protocols of overseas markets
- c) working in a statutory context outside direct contact with architects, it would be helpful for the ARB to become responsive to these professional pressures

*Challenges related to development of a modern education system*

- d) the introduction of architecture apprenticeships (with 7 years to registration on completion) is a progressive alternative to mainstream academic education, and reflects the ethos both of the (few) part time programmes run in the UK, and the underlying principle of the RIBA's Education Review
- e) despite the ARB agreeing that apprenticeships may progress, there is no significant review and advancement of other university-based initiatives for architectural education; with the ARB referring to the MHCLG instruction not to review routes to registration

*Challenges related to development of new validation criteria*

- f) whilst RIBA policy is to share validation criteria with the ARB, negotiations to agree a practicable structure, form of words, and content have been testing
- g) Education will report further to Council in December 2018

**recommendation 4** that, reinforced by advocacy to the MHCLG to encourage a more proactive approach by the statutory body to modernisation of the profession, the RIBA considers forming a joint liaison group with the ARB with clear terms of reference committing both to shared intent, full disclosure, and collaborative working

**5 education strategy and conclusion: a global perspective**

The following are important to the future direction, reputation, and profile of RIBA Education and the RIBA.

- a) pursuit and adoption of **a system of statutory equivalency of educational/professional qualifications in architecture**: agreements between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA
- b) adoption of **a cultural and educational programme of education-based exhibitions, roadshows, and specialist short courses to be offered internationally**; these act as soft introductions to the RIBA creating preconditions for increased membership, as well as opportunities for upskilling
- c) **development of new income streams through pursuit and adoption of RIBA distance learning** at first degree, Masters, and postgraduate levels (available online nationally and internationally)
- d) in support of the credibility of this proposal, **pursuit and adoption of Degree Awarding Powers and Independent Research Status for the RIBA**; thus, the RIBA becomes an academic analogue (e.g. similar to the British Museum) and a research body capable of bidding for research funding
- e) pursuit and adoption of a **discriminating and targeted expansion of RIBA validation**; as RIBA recognition is the only global education benchmark, there should be the capacity created to see this as both a commercial and reputational opportunity

There are challenges posed for the profession by change in architectural education:





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*Despite the number of educational systems globally which do not award an exit (i.e. Bachelors) award, there is no appetite in the UK for this, and UK schools will continue to offer a BA/BSc.*

*The so-called integrated option (where part 3 is subsumed into parts 1 and 2) is developing genuine momentum, with schools presenting their proposals to the RIBA New Courses Group*

**R3** academic credits available for 1 year of work-based learning, with the option for students to study within a framework of 4 years full time study + 3 years PPE

*This proposal has been partially overshadowed by the emergence of the (RIBA-supported) apprenticeship frameworks for architecture, offering a proper alternative to traditional (fee paying) full and part time study*

**R4** a 300 ECTS credit programme compliant with the requirements of the Bologna Agreement

*This is accepted as the paradigm for academic credits*

**R5** access to the register of architects and title of architect on successful completion of the integrated course

*The Level 7 Architect apprenticeship framework gives the apprentice access to the UK register of architects on completion of an additional 30 credit End Point Assessment module; the ARB and Institute for Apprenticeships' acceptance of this principle provides a much more equitable pathway to registration*

<sup>v</sup> ...and a means to generate additional income