

PART 3 HANDBOOK

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BROOKHOUSE

PART 3 HANDBOOK CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	vii
1 PREPARING FOR PART 3	1
The professional architect	1
The ARB and the RIBA	4
The Part 3 Criteria	10
Skills	12
Reflective practice: learning from experience and professional development	13
The role of practice in preparing for Part 3	14
Choosing a Part 3 provider	15
2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE PEDR	18
Part 3 professional experience: the documentation	21
Summary	30
3 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS	33
‘Why use written examinations in the context of a professional assessment?’	33
The different types of written examination	34
Dispelling myths about written examinations	36
What makes a bad answer	38
Examination technique	38
Critical success factors	39
Typical examination question formats	45
Types of question and how to answer them	49
Putting these ideas into practice – some sample examination questions and answers	54
Conclusions	103
4 THE CASE STUDY	105
The role of the case study in the Part 3 examination	105
Getting started	106
Frequently raised issues	108
Confidentiality	116
Negotiation, ownership and time management	116
Case study structure	117
Length of study	119
Looking at each section in detail	120

A wider perspective	133
Good practice	134
Some case study myths	135
Conclusions	138
5 THE ORAL EXAMINATION	140
The role of the interview	140
'Why use an interview format?'	140
Format of the interview	144
'Where do examiners come from?'	146
'What benchmarks do examiners use?'	147
'Why do interviews seem to vary?'	148
Typical questions and strategies for answering them	148
Preparing for the interview	154
The end of the interview	156
Key points about the interview	156
What happens if you fail?	157
Myths and legends	158
Conclusions	158
6 AFTER PART 3	161
Registration	161
Professional membership	162
Continuous Professional Development	163
Further professional development	163
Taking on further responsibility	164
The changing profession	164
NOTES	167
APPENDICES	
1 The Part 3 Criteria 2010	174
2 Useful sources and links	179
3 Schools of Architecture offering Part 3 in the UK and other providers (RIBA)	183
4 APSAA Mentor's Guide	190
5 RIBA Plan of Work (2007) (revised)	194
6 RIBA CPD Guidelines (2011)	197
INDEX	201

FOREWORD

Part 3 is the culmination of an architect's formal education in Britain. It is the final gateway to being registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and, in most cases, becoming a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). This is not to say that it is a prerequisite for producing great architecture; rather, it places on architects the standards and principles that define their relationships with society, clients, colleagues and those that commission and use their buildings. It provides the framework in which great architecture can germinate and grow, and it is what makes architects members of a recognised and respected profession.

As the second edition of this book shows, the Part 3 qualification bestows on architects the mantle of being acknowledged as experts with integrity, not just in the way they design and deliver great buildings, but also in the way they conduct themselves and lead others. Students must understand and embrace the codes of conduct issued by the ARB and RIBA, and indeed embrace the reasons behind them, as they provide a clear, ethical structure that validates calling oneself a British architect.

Most students assume that their undergraduate degree (Part 1) and their postgraduate qualifications (Part 2) provide most of the skills to practise as architects. This is not the case. Many students who successfully complete Part 3 realise that this course is the final part of a journey that brings with it a daunting adjustment to understanding the process of delivering what architects do – designing and helping to build our environment while dealing with regulation, contracts, disputes, practice issues, fees, business models and the plethora of matters that now confront architects daily as they help to make the world a better place. Part 3 is about ensuring competence in all these areas, guided by the principle of complete integrity.

Like most other professionals, architects are expected to exercise judgement – and this is something that constantly taxes students and qualified architects alike, even those with many years' experience. But this is really what Part 3 is about: measuring how you respond to technical and complex contractual or business issues, the way you exercise judgement in assessing options and selecting the way forward, and, most importantly, reflecting afterwards on whether these decisions have achieved the desired result. This excellent book shows the student the map, but without the light of judgement the path will remain obscure.

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INTRODUCTION

This book has been written primarily for students who are about to start the final part of their architectural education: the Part 3 examination. Unlike your earlier experiences of higher education, which comprised a set of stages along a path, Part 3 is the gateway to the profession. If you pass through that gateway and register as an architect, both the public and the architectural profession will expect a level of competency and skill in the conduct of your professional life that distinguishes you from other professionals in the construction industry. It is for this reason that Part 3 is taken so seriously by those involved in the delivery of Part 3 courses, the architectural practices that contribute to your professional development and the examiners that assess you.

For the Part 3 examination, what you learn in the workplace is more important than what you are taught in the classroom. Your main objective in Part 3 is to pass an examination and naturally what you are assessed on will act as a focus for your learning. This book concentrates on the separate elements that comprise the Part 3 examination, the so-called 'academic portfolio', in the light of real experience. These elements, which all reflect your work-based learning, are: the Professional Experience and Development Record (known as the PEDR), your curriculum vitae and career appraisal, written examinations and/or coursework, the case study and the oral examination. The book is not a Part 3 'primer'; it does not contain the knowledge that you will need, except to show how it can be applied to best effect in the context of the elements that you are required to produce.

Even mature, postgraduate, part-time students, possibly with a Master's degree in addition to RIBA Parts 1 and 2, need guidance on how to make the most of this work-based learning experience at a critical point in their professional development. The personal commitment and depth of part-time study that you must undertake in order to pass the examinations and assessments, both written and oral, is often not fully appreciated by students, employers and examiners. You will have to balance studying with your full-time professional work commitments. However, the discipline needed to be successful mirrors that needed to be a successful architect.

One of the recurrent themes in the book is the necessity of mastering certain skills to equip yourself effectively for a career in architecture. Inevitably these skills include time management and presentation as well as the ability to work autonomously under pressure, all skills that you will have acquired to some extent in your career to date. One of the most sophisticated skills needed is that of reflection: the ability to

challenge and review your experience and learn from it in an informed way. The way you acquire these reflective skills and the importance of them permeates all parts of this book.

The context for Part 3, both politically and economically, has changed significantly since the first edition of this book was published. Despite the adverse effects of the economic recession on the construction industry the architectural profession has risen to the challenge and deployed its many talents and skills to adapt to a fluid, more competitive professional environment. This book aims to guide Part 3 students through the last stage of formal education and help equip them for future – as yet unknown – challenges for the profession.

How to use the book

The book uses the different components of the normal Part 3 submission as its structure. It takes you through each element, from the written examinations to the final interview, and gives guidance on how to satisfy the Part 3 criteria (2010) and the appropriate standard of achievement. It does not duplicate technical, legal or managerial information that is available elsewhere unless it is helpful in illustrating or making a point. However, the appendices include sources that are referred to in the text and other useful information. Schools will have their own reading lists and preferred texts. It complements the information available on the PEDR website (www.pedr.co.uk), aiming to provide an appropriate framework within which you can place your knowledge and experience. To this effect it focuses on how to meet the assessment requirements – the ‘outputs’ – by guiding you through the process.

You do not need to read it from start to finish, but if you do you will get a comprehensive overview of what examiners are looking for in Part 3 candidates. You will make the best use of your time and avoid abortive work by reading the relevant chapter before you start that particular element of your Part 3 submission. Where the advice contradicts the advice given by your school you will have to make up your own mind about which is most appropriate. However, the main objective is similar to that of Part 3: to provide best practice models as points of reference for your progress through this key experience in your professional development.

PREPARING FOR PART 3

CHAPTER 1

This chapter:

- > *gives you an overview of the requirements for Part 3 and the professional and regulatory organisations that monitor and control it;*
- > *explains the professional role of the architect in the construction industry, the rationale for the Part 3 examination and the organisations that control it;*
- > *outlines the Criteria against which Part 3 students are judged;*
- > *discusses in general terms the skills that students need to meet the standards set by the profession;*
- > *explains your employer's role in supporting your personal development; and*
- > *discusses how to choose the right Part 3 provider to suit your individual strengths.*

The professional architect

Part 3 is the culmination of a long period of architectural education, a process that was established many years ago: a three-year degree leading to Part 1, a year of professional experience (Stage 1), and a further two years of postgraduate study leading to a further academic award – Part 2.¹ However, many students who pass Part 2 decide not to continue with Part 3 without necessarily leaving the business of architecture. For example, it is possible to go on to senior positions in large practices or teach in schools of architecture without the Part 3 exam under your belt. In both situations you can influence and shape the architectural education and professional development of future architectural professionals. In the UK, although the title of ‘architect’ is protected, the role is not. In short, anyone can practice architecture, but only if you have passed Part 3 and are registered with the ARB can you *call* yourself an architect. This begs the question, ‘Why bother with Part 3?’ Having got this far you are likely to have your own view, but it is a good starting point for introducing the concept of what it means to be a professional architect.

If you are reading this book, you are likely to be on the threshold of undertaking the Part 3 exam. By now you will have considerable knowledge of design and construction and will understand that the architect is a member of a multi-disciplinary professional team. The process of designing and constructing buildings will have been revealed as requiring the implementation and coordination of a complex set of activities carried out by many

different people. Each project is characterised by uncertainty, risk and a certain fluidity. This coming together of diverse groups for a single purpose has been described as a 'temporary multi-organisation'.² However, the physical results are far from temporary, remaining in place for a considerable time, and mistakes can be costly to both owners and occupiers.

Architects are a key, if sometimes relatively small (at least in terms of numbers of people), part of the construction industry. The industry, in turn, comprises approximately ten per cent of our economy, and UK expertise in design and construction contributes significantly to exports. It is a global industry with international contractors, designers and suppliers. The industry, though, is characterised by fragmentation and, not surprisingly, few commentators can agree on its boundaries. There are also several different professions involved and the relationships between these different parties are not always clear. The industry is also characterised by spectacular multi-million pound disputes arising out of this uncertainty and complexity. Within this fluid, project-led environment it is essential to know what each key professional does and the boundaries of their respective knowledge and skills.

Professions have been defined as having four distinct defining characteristics. They must:

- > own a distinct body of knowledge;
- > erect barriers to entry to maintain standards;
- > serve the public interest; and
- > enjoy mutual recognition from other professions.³

Architects own a clear body or 'silo' of knowledge and competence that is distinct from the other 'silos of knowledge' held by other members of the design and construction team, such as quantity surveyors. By the time you reach Part 3 that knowledge will already be both wide and deep. Now you will be expected to acquire new knowledge as well as continue to broaden and deepen existing competencies. The professional bodies, architectural practice and the schools of architecture all contribute to this body of knowledge, which is expressed in a set of Criteria which effectively sets the reasonable boundaries for this professional knowledge and competence. These Criteria will be discussed in more detail later.

How to demonstrate your competence and the standards to be met are set by the profession and maintained by the professional institutions. In reference to our definition of a profession, this is the 'barrier to entry', the quality control measure imposed by professions requiring a mix of recognised educational qualifications and relevant professional experience. The two overriding objectives in setting these barriers are, first,

to protect the public and, second, to maintain the reputation of the profession. For the architectural profession in the UK, the Part 3 examination functions as the final barrier, the last point of control.

Mutual recognition by other professionals is important, especially in the complex environment of design and construction. A profession that is not recognised by other professions has little or no effective status. The professional bodies therefore work hard to be members of a network of similar professions. Professional bodies seek wider recognition to reinforce their position. Traditionally, the royal charter that gives members 'chartered' status is the highest form of accolade and ensures recognition by other chartered professions. Uniquely in the construction industry, architects have their own statutory control as well as professional membership. In other words, two bodies control the profession: the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Linked with this idea of 'public protection' is the public interest: the professions place the public good above financial reward. This is typically expressed as maintaining impartiality and is, in effect, a trade-off for public recognition. This aspect of the profession of architecture (and the professions in general) has changed significantly in recent years, with the public demanding more of them and putting them under increased scrutiny amid cases of restrictive practices that are neither competitive nor transparent. Despite these concerns the traditional professions continue to survive but their status has diminished. The status of the parish priest as a figure of moral authority is diminished, the local doctor has his or her judgement questioned, accountants and lawyers continue to be embroiled in international criminal proceedings following spectacular company failures. Nonetheless, in a fast-changing and demanding world, special knowledge and expertise is at a premium, and the professions continue to be the best model for developing a secure knowledge base.

From these characteristics you will see that some 'professions' fail the tests of barriers to entry, mutual recognition and public interest. Hairdressers and footballers, for example, who are sometimes described as professionals, do not make it because they do not serve the 'public interest'. Efforts to professionalise traffic wardens and cleaners through training and qualifications are unlikely to bring them the same level of professional recognition as architects and engineers.

Part 3 has been developed within the professional context of architectural practice. It will continue to develop as the demands on the profession change. At present it is set within a secure recognised framework, the Criteria held in common by the RIBA and the ARB.

The ARB and the RIBA

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) are the two controlling bodies affecting architectural education in general and at Part 3 in particular. Part 3 is especially important as it is the gateway to professional practice and, as such, is distinct from the earlier steps in your education. The following summaries will give you a clear idea of how each organisation came into existence, where they obtain their powers, what or who controls them and their key functions.

THE ARB

The ARB is a statutory body established by Parliament in 1997 to regulate the architects' profession in the UK.⁴ It draws its powers from the Architects Act 1997 and has five key functions:

1. Prescribing – or 'recognising' the qualifications needed to become an architect
2. Keeping the UK Register of Architects
3. Ensuring that architects meet the standards for conduct and practice
4. Investigating complaints about an architect's conduct or competence
5. Making sure that only people on the register offer their services as an architect.⁵

As a statutory body the ARB is also the vehicle for enacting any relevant European legislation. The ARB is the UK's designated competent authority for architects under the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] the Directive facilitates the recognition of qualifications for architects arising from the Directive. It also examines professionals from outside the EU to ensure that they meet the published Criteria.⁶

The objectives of this statutory body broadly align with the characteristics of a profession by setting the barriers for entry and policing public interest issues by disciplining registered architects who do not meet the standards laid down in its Code of Conduct. In addition, it has the further role of protecting the title 'architect' by prosecuting individuals or organisations that pass themselves off as such. This is seen as another way of protecting the public interest. The public interest mission is further reinforced by the composition of the ARB's 15-member controlling Board, where elected architects are in the minority and 'lay' members prevail. The eight lay members are appointed by the Privy Council⁷ 'to represent the interests of users of architectural services and the general public'.⁸ The seven architect members are elected by the profession itself.

In 2011 the chair had a background in the public sector and the vice-chair was an architect. Previous chairs have included a retired judge.

The ARB is a stripped down version of an earlier body, ARCUK (the Architects Registration Council of the United Kingdom),⁹ which had around 70 Council Members with very few non-architect members. It also had limited disciplinary powers that did not deal with issues of competency. The rationale for the change was the widespread pressure to modernise the structure of regulation for architects against the general background of the public's desire to make all the professions more openly accountable.

The ARB is led by its Registrar who heads up a small staff, which is divided into three main teams: Registration, Regulation and Qualifications. Disciplinary matters are handled by the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) made up of some Board members, publicly-appointed lay members and publicly-appointed architect members.

THE RIBA

The RIBA's remit is wider than the ARB's: to promote architecture as well as uphold the standards of the profession. Its vision is to be a 'champion for architecture and for a better environment'.¹⁰ It is a membership organisation (with approximately 30,000 members) and was granted its first Royal Charter in 1837.¹¹ There are also byelaws that provide the RIBA's operational framework. These are approved by the Privy Council.

The RIBA sets out its mission as follows:

The RIBA champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members. We provide the standards, training, support and recognition that put our members – in the UK and overseas – at the peak of their profession.

With Government we work to improve the design quality of public buildings, new houses and new communities.¹²

As you would expect, it has barriers to entry (you cannot join as a 'chartered member' unless you have completed Parts 1, 2 and 3). It has a Code of Conduct, disciplining members that fail to meet its standards, has a key role in architectural education and also acts as a resource for members in practice. In terms of our key characteristics of a profession, it is prominent through its role in education and practice, in defining and maintaining the architectural 'silo of knowledge'. Its Council, the large majority of whom are chartered architects (generally elected by other members), controls the RIBA and is responsible for its conduct and development. As such and in contrast to the ARB, there is no public representation.

The RIBA has two main parts: RIBA Council and the RIBA Board.

RIBA Council is the 'charter body' and is ultimately responsible for the conduct and development of the institute. It comprises 60 members, the large majority of whom are chartered architects.

The Council passes down detailed responsibility and technical focus to the RIBA Board and executive.

The RIBA Board is the group board, responsible for directing the overall business of the RIBA. It operates under the overall authority and policy of the elected Council.¹³

The RIBA is led by a Chief Executive and has a number of departments in London and a presence in the regions and nations of the UK and has a staff of around 200. For example RIBA Professional Services has four departments: Education, Research and Development, Practice and Membership. The RIBA also relies on its membership to contribute to the running of the institute through a series of committees, with particular responsibilities: for example Education.

REVIEWING THE PROFESSION

The two organisations are very different in their objectives and character. However, some of their roles, including education and discipline, overlap. This sometimes leads to friction. The issue of whether the public or the profession wanted a statutory registration body in addition to the RIBA was reviewed in the early 1990s as part of a general government review of statutory regulation and culminated in the Warne Report of 1993, which recommended deregulation.¹⁴ However the RIBA and its members lobbied hard for continuing registration. Hence the creation of the ARB.

During the early 2000s the RIBA began to take the view that the ARB was exceeding the powers granted in the 1997 Act and lobbied government, unsuccessfully, for a review. In 2010, following the election of the Coalition Government, the ARB was reviewed together with all 'quangos'¹⁵ as part of a wider review of the government's mission and involvement. This was part of a well-publicised drive to cut 'red tape' and government bureaucracy in order to help reduce the economy's structural deficit. This time the RIBA changed its position and lobbied for the dismantling of the ARB and the transfer of its main functions to the RIBA. The ARB survived the review intact. The main reason given by the government was that the ARB had a technical function that could not be provided satisfactorily by any other body. Its independent regulatory function is also seen as a model for other professions and to move these functions to the professional membership body, the RIBA,

was seen as contrary to the general trend of the independent review of professions generally and the wider representation of consumers in the conduct of professionals.

In other EU states, by contrast, only one body, the professional members' organisation, controls entry to the profession and administers the Architects' Directive. In the UK you have to pay a registration fee to the ARB to call yourself an architect and have the choice of paying, in addition, a membership fee to the RIBA to call yourself a chartered architect. The majority of the profession follow the latter route.

Fortunately both organisations agree on the standards for entry to the profession and the knowledge, skills and competencies required for practice. These are set out in the Criteria for Part 3 that are held 'in common' by the RIBA and the ARB.

Both organisations exert significant control over the Part 3 examination. The ARB 'prescribes' qualifications through a paper-based exercise and the RIBA 'validates' courses and qualifications through its five-year cycle of inspections and intermediate visits. Each organisation requires schools of architecture¹⁶ to map the delivery and assessment of the Part 3 course against the agreed Criteria.

DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

Both the ARB and the RIBA take disciplinary matters very seriously, as you would expect given that this is central to the idea of the 'public interest'.

The Architects Act 1997 sets out the disciplinary powers of the ARB. The ARB is obliged, as a consumer-facing organisation, to take each complaint seriously. Complainants can download a complaint form from the ARB website and then answer a short questionnaire. Not all complaints are valid but nevertheless have to be considered. It is a transparent process and both complainant and the architect concerned are circulated with each other's correspondence, allegations and responses. Both parties are encouraged to mediate the problem but some complaints go to the heart of professional conduct and may warrant prosecution under the 1997 Act. The decision to pass a case to a disciplinary tribunal is taken initially by the ARB's Investigation Committee (IC), which effectively acts as a filter. This committee's representation mirrors that of the Board with a majority of lay members. The two architect members give technical and contextual advice. The IC does not have any disciplinary powers but may give limited advice and issue a caution. The process is private and confidential and the IC does not publish its decisions. However if the IC considers that there is a case to answer it notifies the

complainant and the architect and passes the casework to the Registrar. It is then for the ARB's solicitor to make a case for prosecution. The ARB can only prosecute on two grounds: i) serious professional incompetence and ii) unacceptable professional conduct. The Code and Standards act as guidelines – and inevitably overlap in content. The ARB's PCC acts as an independent tribunal – the ARB makes its case, and the architect gives a response (similar to a defence) and the PCC arrives at an independent decision, which either party may appeal to the High Court.¹⁷ At no time is the tribunal acting for the ARB. Each tribunal is chaired by a solicitor who sits with one lay member and one architect. The PCC can issue a very limited number of penalties from a reprimand to removal from the register. (The range of penalties is published on the ARB website.) The hearings are held in public and are reported in the press if the matter is of public interest. The ARB also publishes the decisions on its website. These are worth reading to get a flavour for the issues that result in prosecution. From around 500 initial complaints made annually by the public about 12 are considered serious enough to reach a tribunal.

The RIBA has recently reviewed its disciplinary procedures. Before the review disciplinary proceedings were held 'in camera' by its Hearings Panel. The Panel was made up of chartered members who were appointed in a less-than-transparent way to make decisions about other chartered members based on complaints brought by the public which were rarely published. The new process is administered by the Professional Standards section of the Practice Department and its Professional Services Board. The emphasis, understandably, is on architectural practice and the relationship between client and architect, a reflection of the membership it represents and their source of income. Although there are many similarities between the RIBA and ARB processes, the RIBA takes as its starting point that complaints generally arise because of a dispute between clients and their architects. As a first step it encourages early resolution of disputes. Complainants and architects are encouraged to mediate and to this effect the RIBA offers a free telephone consultation with a specialist consultant. If this fails complainants may lodge a formal complaint. Cases are first assessed by an appraisal team made up of two chartered members and one non-member. The complaint may then be passed to a Hearings Panel made up of three non-members with at least one RIBA Chartered member as a non-voting expert adviser. The RIBA does not, unlike the ARB, appoint a solicitor to make its case to a tribunal.

The Panel considers the complaint in relation to the relevant Byelaws. The allegations are then considered in relation to its own Code of Professional Conduct or whether the architect:

*behaved in a manner that is considered to be unacceptable in a professional person.*¹⁸

In theory this last statement gives the complainant and the Panel a much wider remit. It also aligns with one of the concepts referred to earlier that underpins professionalism – the mutual recognition and respect of other professionals. The potential grounds for a complaint, therefore, go far wider than the RIBA's own Code of Conduct or the ARB's Code and Standards. In practice, it would be very difficult to prove a case on this basis alone.

Because the RIBA's procedures are concerned with disciplining its members, rather than conducting a prosecution under the Architect's Act, the sanctions available are limited to a private or public reprimand, suspension or exclusion. The RIBA cannot fine members nor can it award compensation or damages. Although the two processes are independent of each other in practice the process can be duplicated and complainants generally lodge a complaint with the ARB and RIBA simultaneously. When a member is sanctioned by the ARB, the RIBA will also consider referring the member to the Hearings Panel. It is also very unlikely that the RIBA and ARB will come to different decisions, although in theory they may as each organisation has different objectives and powers. But it is questionable whether the additional expense and time spent in effect duplicating disciplinary processes serve the best interests of the public or the profession.¹⁹

It is worth remembering these disciplinary functions. The standards that the ARB and RIBA set in their Codes are the standards that you will be agreeing to meet when you pass Part 3 and enter the profession. They are highly valued by the public and the profession. Architects who transgress not only risk personal sanction but also threaten the wider perception of the profession, hence the need to monitor professional behaviour. Interestingly, the Government's Attorney General has relatively recently emphasised the role and importance of the professions themselves, rather than the courts, in regulating and disciplining their members.²⁰

The most important point to remember is that as the professions set high entry barriers and rely on the trust and respect of the public very high standards of conduct, which exceed normal commercial standards of behaviour, are required to retain this relatively privileged position.

The Part 3 Criteria 2010

You will see that the Criteria for Part 3 are important because they crystallise the key knowledge, skills and competence that characterise architects as a separate and distinct profession in the construction industry. They also reflect the public interest in the competence to practise. The full Criteria for Part 3 can be referred to in Appendix 1 and you should familiarise yourself with them. Although each Part 3 provider is required to meet the Criteria this is not always made explicit in their course documents.

The criteria are framed in five key areas:

PC1 Professionalism

PC2 Clients, users and delivery of services

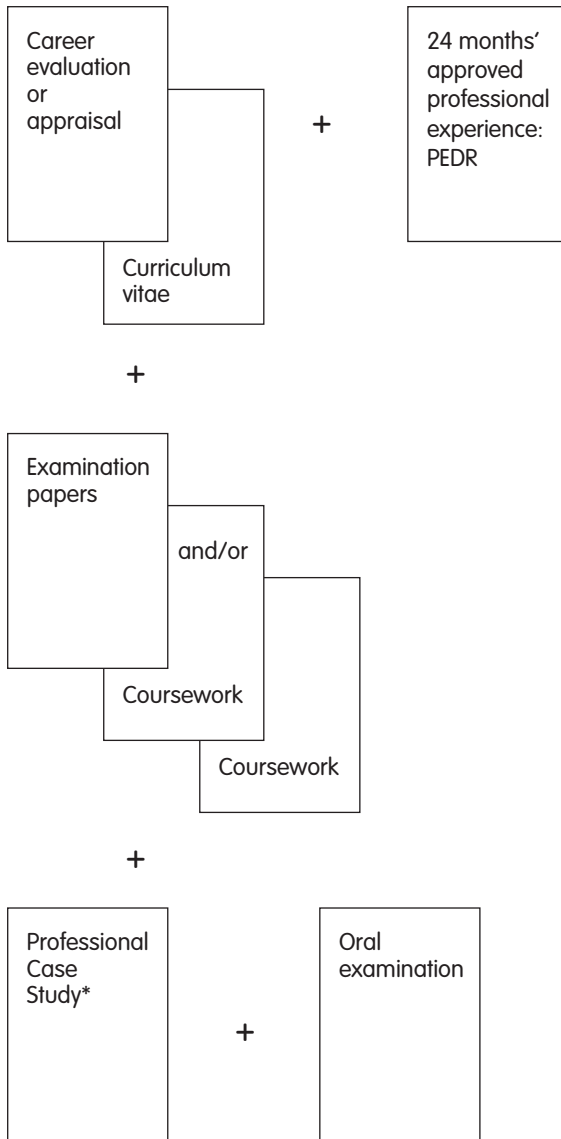
PC3 Legal framework and processes

PC4 Practice and Management

PC5 Building procurement

The Criteria set out the minimum levels of knowledge, understanding and ability that students must acquire. They represent a considered but broad view of what an architect should be able to do without either endangering the trust that the public in general and clients in particular have in them or undermining the professional standing of the profession as a whole. They provide a snapshot of the profession as viewed by members of the profession, the ARB and everyone else who was consulted including co-professionals at the time the Part 3 Criteria were last reviewed and published in 2010. Having been arrived at by consensus the Criteria are inevitably broad and inclusive. The relevance for you as you start Part 3 is that there will be many areas to which you have not been exposed in your current professional experience and where you do not have adequate knowledge. At worst, some of the Criteria will appear to be irrelevant to current architectural practice as you perceive it. However, the qualification allows you to practise as *an individual* using the protected title – what professional examiners refer to as the ‘brass plaque test’. There is, especially at this stage in your career, an unavoidable tension or mismatch between your specific experience and the wider requirements for registration.

The way you demonstrate that you meet the Criteria is through submission of a number of written components and an oral examination carried out by two Professional Examiners. It may include (Figure 1.1):



*Note: A small minority of schools of architecture do not require a case study.

FIGURE 1.1 The components of the Part 3 Examination

- > written examinations;
- > coursework;
- > a case study;
- > a curriculum vitae;
- > a career evaluation;
- > a minimum of 24 months of recorded professional experience using the professional experience and development record (PEDR).

The four terms used in the Criteria – ‘knowledge, understanding, ability and skills’ – are borrowed from the world of education; ‘knowledge’ picks up on the ‘silos of knowledge’ discussed above. The distinction between ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’ and ‘ability’ is harder to define, although they can be thought of as the application of knowledge, ‘ability’ being the *practical* application of knowledge, demonstrating professional competence. Professionals also demonstrate good judgement in their decision-making and conduct and it is this last quality, judgement, that Professional Examiners are looking for in particular in your written work and at interview.

Skills

Another way of approaching the practical aspects of your professional competence is to think about developing your relevant skills and the new criteria now, rightly, reflect the importance of professional skills. During your academic career and through your professional experience and development you have acquired particular skills. For example, the ability to design and to apply computer skills spring readily to mind, along with visual and written presentation skills. The skills needed for Part 3 build on these existing skills but require you to demonstrate them at a more advanced level appropriate for a professional qualification, which is generally equivalent to Master’s degree level. A well-written Part 3 course handbook will make these skills explicit. They may include the following:

1. *Group working*: as both a leader and a member in the workplace; delegating and managing tasks and handling conflict.
2. *Autonomy*: working with the minimum of guidance.
3. *Resourcing*: using technical, legal and commercial sources of information.
4. *Management and information*: managing time and completing tasks with the minimum of guidance.

5. *Problem-solving*: using creative and numeracy skills to evaluate issues.
6. *Communication*: engaging competently in professional reporting both verbally and in writing. (Examples include preparing a brief or design statement and making a presentation.)
7. *Reflective practice*: demonstrating continuous personal professional development through informed, structured self-evaluation.²¹

You will probably be familiar with most of these. You will see that at Part 3 level these are acquired on the course and in the workplace and, unlike undergraduate programmes, you are expected to develop these mostly autonomously. Skills 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 all share the characteristic of independent competence which relates directly to the ARB and RIBA concept of the independent practitioner – the ‘brass plaque test’. Schools of architecture try to develop reflective practice in their professional and managerial studies at Part 1 and Part 2 levels but it is especially important at Part 3. It is worth considering it in more detail as it is a thread that runs through every element of your academic portfolio.

Reflective practice: learning from experience and professional development

Reflective skills are essential to your professional development. Architectural practice is not simply a matter of applying and repeating general principles according to a set of rules. Just because you have always done something in a certain way, it does not follow that you should carry on doing it that way. ‘Reflection’ as a term is slightly misleading. It does not mean the kind of reflection you see in a mirror, which is an exact replica of the object. Rather, it is reflection in the sense of considering a matter meditatively. Reflection in professional practice is thinking about something in a structured way to see how it could have been done better.

The role of a theory or model is sometimes to change ‘what is’ to ‘what might be’. In the context of architectural practice, we constantly refer to ‘best practice models’. It might be the Code of Conduct that informs our professionalism, or a set of regulations or guidelines such as the CDM Regulations, or a set of standard tendering procedures that ensure fair play in contracting. Whatever it is, the model makes you aware that there is a problem and helps you articulate it and generate a solution. You need to *know* and *understand* the professional points of reference in order to reshape a problem, arrive at a conclusion and be *able* to implement it *competently*. You can see that this process of

reflection is at the heart of professionalism – an essential professional skill. In your written work and at your professional interview you should show that you have considered a problem, examined it using professional points of reference, reached a conclusion and shown how that might inform your future experience. To do so shows an ability to reflect on a problem and should win you positive marks.

You should note that the process of reflection is more than self-referential navel-gazing. It requires an informed view that compares current experience with professional standards of behaviour and the current professional knowledge base. It also implies that you should never take anything at face value. This skill is very different from the task-orientated technical skills that are also highly valued in architectural practice. Examiners will be looking for evidence of reflective practice in your written work and at interview. It is a theme that runs throughout assessment at Part 3.

The role of practice in preparing for Part 3

Part 3 is a three-way partnership between you, your practice and your school of architecture. The role of practice in architectural education is a topic regularly debated by the RIBA, the schools and architectural practices. The role of practice in Part 3 is pivotal because, unlike Parts 1 and 2, Part 3 is essentially work-based. The workplace is your key learning resource without which Part 3 would be impossible to pass. This is echoed by the RIBA Regulations for Part 3 and the ARB's Rules (Rule 13b), which require you to be working under the direct supervision of a registered architect or a similarly qualified member of an appropriate professional body involved in the procurement, design and management of the built environment. Ideally, your practical experience should be in a design environment, but both the RIBA and the ARB recognise the value of working, with other members of the design and construction team.

Your office has three key functions that affect your professional development. The first is to provide you with a mentor to discuss and develop the depth and breadth of your experience, to facilitate reflection and to use the quarterly PEDR sheets as a way of recording your development in the context of the Part 3 Criteria. The second is to allow you to work on (or, exceptionally, 'shadow') a project that follows the RIBA Plan of Work and is a suitable subject for a case study. The third is a general one: to provide a supportive environment that enables you to develop your knowledge and experience and to set an example of professional competence for you to follow. The absence of any of these functions will affect your progress in Part 3.

Your mentor is there not only to offer support but also to discuss 'best practice' – enormously helpful in your efforts to reflect on practice, a process identified above as essential to your professional development. The choice of case study is equally important and is considered in detail later in this book. The role of the PEDR and guidance on its use is given on the PEDR website and you should make every effort to use it as a vehicle for your professional development in the workplace.

Architectural practices are busy places and the office's main mission will be to provide a service to its clients. Supporting your development has a direct beneficial effect on your contribution as an employee and project team member. Architects in the office will also be committed to CPD and some work-based learning. However, in a pressured environment it is sometimes difficult to make the time to support Part 3 students. You will need to develop good time-management and communication skills as well as your ability to work autonomously in order to achieve your personal goal of completing Part 3.

Choosing a Part 3 provider

Every school of architecture or provider that offers Part 3 has to assess students against the Criteria and to a recognised standard, and not all schools offer Part 3. For example, the RIBA North-West Region provides Part 3 for the Liverpool and Manchester schools of architecture. APEAS is solely an examining body created by the Scottish schools of architecture and carries out the Part 3 examination on their behalf. Part 3 courses are delivered in a variety of ways and, within certain limits, will have their own preferred methods of assessment. Some offer a series of short courses, some deliver the course in a more structured way. They should all have some independent quality assurance and periodic review system that monitors the course content, the delivery and the resources allocated to deliver and assess the course effectively. When it comes to assessment, most schools use time-limited written examinations, sometimes in the workplace, and ask you to write a case study. A few schools may use continuous assessment for the written part of the academic submission.

Your choice of provider may be influenced by the method of assessment but convenience, reputation and the level of academic support should also be factors that you take into consideration. Anecdotal evidence from recent Part 3 students is usually very unreliable when it comes to their experience in the interview but, it is worth talking to colleagues in your office and elsewhere about their experiences of the course content and delivery. For a full list of Part 3 providers, please see Appendix 3.

The cost of the course may also be an determining factor. In comparing costs, you should start by looking at your own level of knowledge and experience. Some courses are 'refresher' courses which in effect help you to refine skills you already have in preparation for the examination. At the other end of the spectrum, there are courses that deliver substantial lecture series and provide significant support in the preparation of your case study and your professional development in general. You should also realise that the cost is only a small part of the total resource required to pass Part 3 in terms of the time you give to it and the support you receive (possibly also financial) from your office.

Wherever possible you should be looking for the 'added value' that a Part 3 provider brings to the preparation of your academic portfolio and your professional development. Websites are not always helpful here so do what you would do in the office: ask colleagues and call the provider and talk to the course director. Look at the course team's curricula vitae (which should be available on the website) and for any particular expertise or achievements as well as publications.