



The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

STATEMENT OF POLICY
ON
ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
 - 1.1 Statement of Policy**
 - 1.2 The Responsibilities of the RIAI in Education**
 - 1.3 Institutional framework for RIAI Education Policy**

- 2. CONTEXT**
 - 2.1 Core Documents**
 - 2.2 Other Reference Documents**

- 3. EDUCATION POLICY OF THE RIAI**
 - 3.1 Aims of Education Policy**
 - 3.2 Scope of Education Policy**
 - 3.3 Implementation of Education Policy**
 - 3.4 Education of Architects**
 - 3.4.1 Fundamental Requirements for Architectural Studies
 - 3.4.2 Duration of Academic Education
 - 3.4.3 Validation/Accreditation
 - 3.4.4 Practical Training / Experience
 - 3.4.5 Domain Specific Knowledge
 - 3.5 Education of Architectural Technicians**
 - 3.5.1 Fundamental Requirements for Studies in Architectural Technology
 - 3.5.2 Duration of Academic Education
 - 3.5.3 Validation/Accreditation
 - 3.5.4 Practical Training / Experience
 - 3.6 Continuing Professional Development**
 - 3.6.1 Policy
 - 3.6.2 Duration and Content
 - 3.6.3 Validation / Accreditation
 - 3.7 Monitoring Changing Requirements for Architectural Education and Training.**
 - 3.7.1 Initiatives at Undergraduate Level
 - 3.7.2 Initiatives ad Post-Graduate Level
 - 3.7.3 Initiatives in Continuing Professional Development
 - 3.8 The Advancement of Architecture in Society**

- 4. THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION**
 - 4.1 Status within the RIAI**
 - 4.2 The Work of the Board**
 - 4.3 The Scope of the Board in Education and Training**
 - 4.3.1 Formulation and Review of Education Policy
 - 4.3.2 Membership of the RIAI
 - 4.3.3 Recognition and Accreditation of Courses
 - 4.3.4 Conduct of RIAI Courses and Examinations
 - 4.3.5 Programme of Continuing Professional Development
 - 4.3.6 Public Education

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Policy

- This statement sets out the policy of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland on the education, training and continuing professional development of architects and architectural technicians and on the promotion of architecture in society.

1.2 The Responsibilities of the RIAI in Education

- The provision of education in architecture and architectural technology is a shared responsibility in which the Institute, its individual members, member practices, educational institutions and the State play complimentary roles .
- From its foundation in 1839, the RIAI committed itself to the development of knowledge required for the practice of architecture. The RIAI's responsibility in the matter of architectural education stems from its role in fostering the evolution of the architectural profession in Ireland.
- That responsibility is placed within the context of the architectural profession in Europe by virtue of the Directive of the Council of the European Communities, published in June 1985 (85/384/EEC). In addressing the mutual recognition by Member States of diplomas, certificates and other formal qualifications in the field of architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services, the E.C. Directive recognised the RIAI as the competent professional body in Ireland.

1.3 The Institutional Framework for RIAI Educational Policy

- The Council of the RIAI is charged with determining all matters relating to the educational policy of the Institute.
- In discharging this responsibility, the Council has established the Board of Architectural Education as a committee of the Council. The function of the Board is to advise Council on matters relating to the education and training of architects and architectural technicians and to carry out such related functions as Council may determine.

2. CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE RIAI

2.1 Core Documents

In formulating its policy on education the Institute will have regard to:

- The RIAI Articles of Association, which includes among its Objects:

Article 3(b): To undertake and encourage the general advancement of architecture and to promote and facilitate the acquirement of the knowledge of the various arts and sciences connected therewith.

Article 3(i): To increase the confidence of the public and advance and encourage professional study, either directly or through the medium of kindred Institutes, Associations or Societies by organising classes for study, competitions for prizes to be given by or with the approval of the Institute and the delivery of lectures and by examinations or such other means as may be thought expedient.
- EC Council Directive 85/384/EEC on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services (*'The Architects' Directive'*).

2.2 Other Reference Documents

The Institute will also take note of:

- The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Education and Training in the Field of Architecture with regard to Education and Training provided as part of a Social Betterment Scheme (XV/E/8397/4/95-EN).
- The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Education and Training in the Field of Architecture with regard to Part Time Studies (XV/E/8341/7/94-EN).
- The UIA/UNESCO Charter for Architectural Education, June 1996.
- The UIA Recommended Guidelines for the Accord Policy on Accreditation / Validation. / Recognition. 1999
- The UIA Recommended Guidelines for the Accord Policy on Practical Experience / Training / Internship, 1999
- The UIA Recommended Guidelines for the Accord Policy on Demonstration of Professional Knowledge and Ability. 1999
- The UIA Recommended Guidelines for the Accord Policy on Continuing Professional Development. 1999

3. EDUCATION POLICY OF THE RIAI

3.1. Aims of Education Policy

- The aim of the Education Policy of the RIAI is to promote standards of excellence in the field of and in the practice of architecture in Ireland.

3.2. Scope of Education Policy

The Education Policy of the RIAI is effected in four areas:

- The education and training of architects;
- The education and training of architectural technicians;
- The promotion of continuing professional development among its members;
- The promotion of awareness and appreciation of architecture in society.

3.3 Implementation of Education Policy

The Education Policy of the Institute is implemented under six main headings:

- The setting and monitoring of standards of admission to the profession, in accordance with the obligations of the Institute as the governing body of the profession in Ireland;
- Liaison with educational Institutions with regard to the conduct and content of courses devoted to education and training of architects and architectural technicians;
- The accreditation of architectural courses and of architectural technician courses which are consistent with the RIAI Education Policy;
- The provision of continuing professional development courses for members of the RIAI and others, in order to increase competence, teach new skills and to provide intellectual and creative stimulation;
- Monitoring changing requirements for architectural education and training.
- The undertaking of initiatives to increase public information on architecture and the involvement of the public in the promotion of high standards in architecture.

These headings provide the framework for the activities of the Board of Architectural Education under the direction of the Council of the Institute. In the case of initiatives on continuing professional development and on public information on architecture and the involvement of the public in the promotion of high standards in architecture, these responsibilities are shared with other divisions of the Institute.

3.4 Education of Architects

- The Institute takes the view that the particular characteristic of the architect lies in the capacity for creative design and realisation of the built environment in the service of society. Thus, formal qualifications in architecture must be based on qualitative and quantitative criteria ensuring that those possessing these qualifications are able to understand and give practical expression to the needs of individuals, social groups and communities as regards spatial planning, the design, organisation and construction of buildings, the conservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage and the preservation of the natural environment.
- The Institute takes the view that the basic training and education of the architect is best achieved through full-time undergraduate courses in architecture conducted at university or equivalent level, and extending over a minimum of five years, supplemented by at least two years of post-graduate approved or accredited practical experience.
- It is the policy of the Institute to promote a diversity of approach to the education and training of architects. In consequence, it is the policy of the Institute that there be maintained within the state at least two schools of architecture, together with the Institute's examinations and regulations for professional qualification.
- The RIAI supports the concept of social betterment as a principle. It advocates equality of access to architectural education and supports initiatives to that end, providing always that the integrity of architectural education is maintained.

3.4.1 Fundamental Requirements for Architectural Studies

Architectural studies should be balanced between the theoretical and practical aspects of architectural training and should ensure the acquisition of:

- An ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
- An adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences.
- A knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design.
- An adequate knowledge of urban design and planning and of the skills involved in the planning process.
- An understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment and of the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale.
- An understanding of the ethical basis of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors.
- An understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project.

- An understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design.
- An adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and of the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate.
- The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations.
- An adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations, contracts and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.

3.4.2. Duration of Academic Education

- Candidates for registration as architects should complete an academic professional education at university level, over a minimum of five years full-time equivalent of academic study. The learning outcomes must satisfy the Fundamental Requirements listed at 3.4.1. The candidates' performance will be assessed by the academic institution.
- Alternative educational routes for part-time or office-based candidates, provided by accredited educational institutions, may be appropriate as part of social betterment programmes. Learning outcomes must satisfy the Fundamental Requirements listed at 3.4.1. The performance of candidates must be subject to assessment and must reach a standard not less than that required of candidates taking part in full-time courses.

3.4.3. Validation/Accreditation

- The Institute takes the view that independent accreditation of academic degree level studies is essential because it provides an objective assessment of performance and provides a link between the provider of architectural education, the profession and practice of architecture and the consumer of architectural services
- Courses should be subject to independent validation at not less than 5 year intervals.

3.4.4. Practical Training / Experience

- The Institute supports a minimum period of at least two years of approved or accredited practical experience, with the objective of a phased move towards a three year minimum. The learning outcome of the period of practical experience should be demonstrated by the candidate's successful completion of an examination in professional practice. Necessary components of architectural professional skills which are not subject to an examination must be demonstrated by other adequate evidence.
- The Institute takes the view that the employers of architects undergoing their period of practical experience have an educational responsibility towards those employees. Employers should provide reasonable opportunities for trainees to gain adequate experience in each training area, review trainee progress regularly

and encourage the trainees to participate in seminars and other supplementary educational experiences.

3.4.5 Evaluation of Domain Specific Knowledge

The Institute takes the view that education for architects should focus on the development of general and transferable knowledge and skills, for these are the learning outcomes which remain relevant over time and irrespective of the location of practice. However, in some circumstances, learning, attendance at courses, and/or examinations restricted to domain specific knowledge may be appropriate.

3.5 Education of Architectural Technicians

- In formulating its policy on education for architectural technicians the Institute takes the view that the architectural technician has a specialised technical role within the field of architecture. Formal qualifications in architectural technology must be based on qualitative and quantitative criteria ensuring that those possessing these qualifications are able to make technical contributions to the construction of buildings and their environs appropriate to the architecture and, in particular, to contribute to the realisation of architecture through the preparation of production information.
- The Institute takes the view that the basic training and education of the architectural technician is best achieved through full-time courses in architectural technology conducted at third-level educational institutions and extending over a minimum of three years, supplemented by at least two years of approved or accredited post-diploma practical experience.
- It is the policy of the Institute to promote a diversity of approach to the education and training of architectural technicians. In consequence it is the policy of the Institute that there be maintained within the State at least two institutions providing courses in architectural technology, together with the Institute's examinations and regulations for qualification.
- The RIAI supports the concept of social betterment as a principle. It advocates equality of access to education in architectural technology and supports initiatives to that end, providing always that the integrity of education in architectural technology is maintained.

3.5.1. Fundamental Requirements for Studies in Architectural Technology

The education of an architectural technician should include theoretical and practical training to ensure the acquisition of:

- An understanding of construction technology, including theory of structures and environmental science;
- Practical knowledge of construction technology, including construction methods, materials and equipment;
- An ability to analyse a technical problem in a critical manner and adopt and appropriate innovative approach to its solution;

- An ability to translate the architect's concept and requirements into design and production information;
- An ability to take responsibility, within the technician's competence, in the administration of construction contracts;
- An understanding of the Planning Acts, Building Regulations, Health and Safety Regulations and other relevant legislative requirements, and of the formal procedures for their implementation;
- An understanding of information technology as it relates to the construction industry and an ability to communicate through this medium;
- The ability to communicate graphically using contemporary media.
- Familiarity with historical and contemporary architecture and architectural technology;
- Familiarity with building conservation and related issues;
- Familiarity with sustainability and related issues;
- An understanding of design team co-ordination and related issues;
- An understanding of the ethical basis of architectural practice and the role of the architectural technician within the profession.

3.5.2. Duration of Academic Education

- A candidate for Architectural Technician membership of the RIAI should complete an academic education at a third-level educational institution, over a minimum of three years full-time equivalent of academic study. The learning outcomes must satisfy the Fundamental Requirements listed at 3.5.1. The candidate's performance will be assessed by the academic institution.
- The Institute takes the view that, where a mid-course period of practical training is provided, the length of the course, excluding the period of practical training, should be equivalent to not less than three years of full-time education.
- Alternative educational routes for part-time or office-based candidates, provided by accredited educational institutions, may be appropriate as part of social betterment programmes. Learning outcomes must satisfy the Fundamental Requirements listed at 3.5.1. The performance of candidates must be subject to assessment and must reach a standard not less than that required of candidates taking part in full-time courses.

3.5.3. Validation/Accreditation

- The Institute believes that independent accreditation of academic studies is essential because it provides a link between the provider of architectural technology education, practitioners and the consumers of these services.
- Courses should be validated at not less than three year intervals.

3.5.4. Practical Training / Experience

- The Institute supports a minimum period of practical experience of at least two years approved or accredited post-diploma experience.
- The Institute takes the view that the employers of architectural technicians undergoing their period of practical experience have an educational responsibility towards those employees. Employers should provide reasonable opportunities for trainees to gain adequate experience in each training area, review trainee progress regularly and encourage the trainees to participate in seminars and other supplementary educational experiences.

3.6 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing professional development can be defined as:

" The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life".

3.6.1. Policy

- The responsibility of a member of the RIAI to maintain the skills appropriate to his or her career path is incorporated in the RIAI Code of Professional Conduct. The policy applies to all members of the RIAI, except those who are no longer professionally active.
- The policy of the Institute is as follows:
 - A member of the RIAI shall take all reasonable steps to maintain an appropriate level of professional skills.
 - Where a member of the RIAI is responsible for the employment of other members, he/she shall encourage them to meet their CPD obligations and shall develop and maintain a CPD policy within the employing organisation.
 - The Institute will make recommendations as to how members may fulfil their CPD obligations.
 - The Institute will provide structure and services to support members in meeting their CPD obligations.

3.6.2 Duration and Content

- The Institute takes the view that it is the responsibility of each member to judge the amount and type of CPD activity necessary to maintain the professional skills appropriate to his or her chosen career path. However, the Institute will make recommendations as to minimum levels of CPD involvement, and advises each member to develop a personal CPD strategy, keep a record of his or her CPD activities, and at least once a year review progress and draw up an outline plan of action for the months ahead. (Ref. RIAI Member's Guide to CPD. 1998.)

3.6.3. Validation/Accreditation

- The Institute will denote which of its own events and publications qualify for CPD purposes. While the Institute will endeavour, as far as is practicable, to provide guidance/evaluation on materials and programmes from other sources, it is the member's own responsibility to make a judgement about the suitability of events promoted by other organisations.
- In evaluating events, materials or organisations for RIAI CPD Accreditation the following criteria shall apply:
 1. The provider shall incorporate research and needs assessments into the design and delivery of the course/event/material.
 2. The emphasis of learning should be placed on the learner and on the knowledge gained.
 3. The number of credits assigned will be determined on the basis of hours spent in the activity, the quality of the activity and the degree of interaction demanded of the learner. Learning activities which increase interaction between the participant and the provider will be assigned more credits for time spent than those given for non-interactive programs
 4. More credits will be assigned to programmes which include mechanisms to assess the actual learning that occurs during a program
 5. Programmes should incorporate feedback to users and course evaluations to monitor effectiveness.

3.7 **Monitoring Changing Requirements for Architectural Education and Training**

The Institute recognises that education and training in architecture and architectural technology must undergo continuous review if they are to keep pace with technological developments and the changing nature of practice. Consequently the Institute will, from time to time, indicate issues which it considers merit particular attention in the prevailing circumstances.

This section lists the issues which the Institute considers merit such attention in the period beginning January 1999.

Notwithstanding the intervals for review stated in Clause 4.3, this Section will be subject to continuing review at the discretion of Council.

3.7.1 Initiatives at Undergraduate Level

The Institute will support initiatives at undergraduate level which are aimed at:

- Improving interpersonal and communication skills
- Improving understanding of the balance between design and pragmatic commercial issues.

- Encouraging participation of visiting lecturers from Industry to inform third level academic staff and students of current practices in the construction industry.
- Encouraging the restructuring of third level courses to allow students to gain practical experience in the industry prior to graduation, as distinct from the experience required by professional bodies.
- Improving understanding of health and safety issues before students first take up architectural or construction industry employment.
- Improving interdisciplinary communication. To this end, the Institute supports the concept of interdisciplinary exercises, provided that the extent and integration of such courses remains at the discretion of the third level Institutions involved.
- Improving understanding of environmental sustainability. The Institute recognises the need to ensure that development which benefits the present generation does not prejudice the right of future generations to a clean and healthy environment. Students should have an unequivocal understanding of the issues involved in waste reduction, recycling, energy reduction, use of renewable natural materials and life-cycle costing.
- Improving understanding of the factors involved in design for universal access, and for health and safety.
- Improving skills in multi-media communications.

3.7.2. Initiatives at Post-Graduate Level

- The Institute supports and endorses post-graduate training in recognised third level Institutions leading to qualifications in allied disciplines such as, but not limited to, Project Management, Urban Renewal and Conservation, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Town Planning and Law.
- The Institute supports and endorses post-graduate architectural research, and initiatives which facilitate access to research training for the industry and for academic staff at third level Institutions.

3.7.3 Initiatives in Continuing Professional Development

The Institute acknowledges that in recent years the architect's traditional role as design team leader has been significantly eroded. It is the view of the Institute that, of all the professions in the construction industry, the architect is best placed to occupy the role of Project Manager.

To address this situation, the Institute will support initiatives aimed at improving:

- Management, interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills.
- Knowledge of finance, accounting, property law and development economics.
- Skills in life-cycle cost analysis, cost planning and control, quality control.

- Such other skills as appear to be relevant.

3.8 The Advancement of Architecture in Society

In formulating policy on the promotion within society of awareness and appreciation of architecture, the Institute takes the view that architecture is an integral part of the social, cultural and economic life of the community, in that it both reflects and influences the perceptions and values of its time. The advancement of architecture is seen as the proper concern of society as a whole, and the particular responsibility of architects, expressed both through the practice of their profession and through the participation of the Institute in public life. The role of the Institute in this regard is to promote both the widest dissemination of knowledge about architecture and the debate of issues concerning the built environment.

The development within society of awareness and appreciation of architecture will be promoted through:

- Stimulation by the Institute of public debate on architectural issues;
- Production by the Institute of educational material for use by schools and by the the general public;
- Adoption of measures to increase public understanding of the work of architects;
- Encouragement of informed state and corporate patronage.
- Promotion of architectural competitions.
- Recognition and publicising of excellence in architecture and architectural technology both at undergraduate and professional levels by means of medals,scholarships and other awards.

4. THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

4.1. Status within the RIAI

The Board of Architectural Education is a Committee of the Council of the RIAI. The Board is established by direction of Council and is appointed annually. Its officers consist of a Chairman and a Secretary, appointed by the Council. Council also appoints the ordinary members, with the exception of student members from the recognised Schools of Architecture and the representative of technician members of the Institute. These exceptions are appointed by the bodies they represent. The Board meets monthly and reports to Council.

4.2. The Work of the Board

The Board of Architectural Education is concerned with educational standards with respect to the architectural profession in Ireland, and with procedures governing membership of the RIAI. The Board is also concerned with furthering the policy of the RIAI with regard to public education.

Therefore the tasks of the Board are as follows:

- To advise and assist Council in the formulation of the Education Policy of the Institute.
- To establish criteria for membership of the RIAI, and to administer such measures, including examinations, as Council may direct.
- To make recommendations regarding recognition and accreditation of courses consistent with RIAI Education Policy.
- To provide a postgraduate syllabus and course of examinations in Professional Practice so as to prepare candidates for membership.
- To provide a programme of continuing professional development for RIAI members.
- To act on other matters as determined by RIAI Council.

4.3. Scope of the Board in Education and Training

4.3.1 Formulation and Review of Education Policy

The changing circumstances of architectural practice and education require that the Statement of Policy be reviewed from time to time. The functions of the Board in this regard are to monitor developments in this country, in the European Community and within the UIA (International Union of Architects), and to recommend to Council such amendments as may be deemed necessary from time to time.

The intervals for review should remain flexible, but under no circumstances should exceed ten years.

4.3.2 Membership of the RIAI

The functions of the Board in this respect are as follows:

- The review of applications for membership in accordance with the regulations for entry to the Institute and the submission to Council of recommendations for admission.
- The administration of procedures, including examinations, established under the regulations for entry to the Institute.
- Periodic review of the regulations for membership.

4.3.3 Recognition and Accreditation of Courses

The functions of the Board in respect of the recognition and accreditation of courses are as follows:

- Liaison with educational institutions participating in the education and training of architects and architectural technicians.
- Establishment and review of procedures governing the recognition and accreditation of courses, and the submission to Council of reports and recommendations in this regard. These procedures include the establishment and remit of Visiting Boards.
- The establishment and maintenance of relations with students of architecture. Included under this heading are procedures governing the holding of competitions and the awarding of scholarships and prizes by the Council and the Institute.
- Liaison with international bodies in matters of education and training.

4.3.4 Conduct of RIAI Courses and Examinations

The functions of the Board in this respect are as follows:

- The establishment of the Syllabus and periodic review of course content and methods.
- The conduct of courses within the Syllabus.
- The organisation of examination boards and the conduct of examinations.

4.3.5 Programme of Continuing Professional Development

The functions of the Board in this respect are as follows:

- The review of the changing needs of the profession and the establishment of a programme of Continuing Professional Development.

- The periodic review of established courses and methods.
- The establishment of means of certification with regard to these courses.

4.3.6 Public Education

The Board of Architectural Education shares with other committees of the Institute responsibility for furthering public awareness of architectural and environmental issues. The Board has particular responsibility for reviewing the contribution of the RIAI to education in this regard.