

Recognition agreement between ARB, AACA and NZRAB

The UK, Australia and New Zealand are global leaders in architecture and our architects collaborate on a substantial scale.

Our registers of architects exist so that anyone using the services of an architect can be confident that they are suitably qualified and are fit to practise. We want this registration process to be as simple as possible, while still ensuring new registrants have what is necessary for safe and effective practice. We have started developing a mutual recognition agreement so that architects with eligible qualifications could benefit from a more straightforward process to register across the three countries.

This mutual agreement could be transformational in helping architects to share their skills, knowledge and innovative insights across the globe, whilst protecting the public by supporting and upholding professional standards in each country.

Discussions are at an advanced stage but changes to UK legislation are needed before ARB is able to enter into an agreement. We are pleased that this legislation is progressing and we hope it is implemented quickly.

We will provide further updates as these discussions develop.

Background

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the Professional Qualifications Bill, which was introduced to Parliament in May 2021, would give ARB the ability to pursue opportunities for UK architects to register more easily internationally.

Both the AACA and the NZRAB are ready to sign the recognition agreement, pursuant to the UK legislation being passed.

When it is in place the ARB, AACA and NZRAB will be able to recognise certain qualifications from other countries so that architects with those qualifications can join their respective Registers.

Our aim is to support and uphold standards, including by increasing our understanding of each other's regulatory systems, while also facilitating and supporting the architectural profession's ability to trade and work internationally.

FAQ

What has changed?

The process through which architects can apply to join the registers has not yet changed. At this stage, we're sharing an update on this work.

When would an agreement and new registration process be in place?

ARB requires new legislation to be in place before this can happen. This will be in several parts: the Professional Qualifications Bill and the secondary legislation that follows it.

Whilst the passage of legislation through the UK Parliament is outside of our control, ARB, AACA and NZRAB have begun discussions in anticipation of the UK Bill successfully becoming an Act of Parliament.

If I want to register now, what should I do?

Individuals wishing to apply for registration in each country can find further information here:

- Australia - <https://www.aaca.org.au/registration-as-an-architect/>
- New Zealand - <https://www.nzrab.nz/c/Initial-Registration>
- UK - <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/applying-for-registration-for-the-first-time/i-hold-overseas-non-recognised-uk-qualifications/>

Who would be eligible to benefit from a recognition agreement?

These details are part of our ongoing discussions but we expect eligibility to be based on an individual's qualification. This would mean that an agreement would apply to an architect with specific Australian, New Zealand or UK qualifications, which will be referred to in the agreement. We do not expect architects to have an automatic right to registration in one country solely on the basis of their registration status in another.

How would this agreement be affected by free trade agreements between the UK, Australian and New Zealand governments?

The UK and Australian Governments, and the UK and NZ Governments, have signed Free Trade Agreements in December 2021 and February 2022 respectively. These FTAs set out a series of measures that will provide opportunities for a range of professions and services – including architecture. Those opportunities include the exchange of skills, expertise, collaboration and employment opportunities between the respective countries.

The signing of mutual recognition agreement between ARB, AACA and NZRAB is not dependent on these free trade agreements.

What would this mean for existing arrangements for architects between Australia and New Zealand?

Australian and New Zealand registered architects are already entitled to registration and to practise in those respective countries, under the NZ-Australia Closer Economic Relations agreement and the associated Trade in Services Protocol and the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement. The MRA

under development with the United Kingdom would support recognition and registration of architects between Australia and New Zealand and the United Kingdom (and vice versa).

Contact

If you would like further information, contact details for each regulator are below:

- AACA – mail@aaca.org.au
- ARB - communications@arb.org.uk
- NZRAB – info@nzrab.org.nz