
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA visiting board
to the Architects' Professional
Examinations Authority in Scotland
(APEAS) Ltd**

- 1 Details of institution hosting course/s**
Architects' Professional Examinations Authority in Scotland (APEAS) Ltd
APEAS, Room 17
Grangemouth Enterprise Centre
Falkirk Road
Grangemouth
Scotland FK3 8XS
- 2 Chief Executive Officer**
Dr Peter Kahan
- 3 Award offered for validation**
The Examination in Professional Practice and Management (Part 3)
- 4 Awarding body**
APEAS
- 5 The visiting board**
Professor Kevin Singh, Chair
John Ashton, Vice Chair
Tina Frost
Holly Rose Doron
Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk – validation manager – in attendance.
- 6 Procedures and criteria for the visit**
The visiting board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for UK and international courses and examinations in architecture* (published July 2011, and effective from September 2011); this document is available at www.architecture.com.
- 7 Proposals of the visiting board**
At its meeting on 13 February 2019, the RIBA Education Committee confirmed unconditional revalidation of:

The Examination in Professional Practice and Management (Part 3)

The next full visiting board will take place in 2023.
- 8 Standard requirements for continued recognition**
Continued RIBA recognition of all courses and qualifications is dependent upon:
 - i external examiners being appointed for the course
 - ii any significant changes to the courses and qualifications being submitted to the RIBA
 - iii any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being notified to the RIBA so that its recognition may formally be transferred to the new title
 - iv submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses and qualifications listed

- v In the UK, standard requirements of validation include the completion by the institution of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

9 Academic position statement (written by APEAS)

The Architects' Professional Examination Authority in Scotland Ltd is now a well-established and highly respected examination body delivering a high quality Part 3 Examination. This success has been achieved as a result of a strong partnership between Scottish higher education and architectural practice and the hard work and dedication of many architects, educationists and others.

APEAS is currently in a secure financial position. The APEAS Board is committed to sustaining this position so that APEAS can continue to maintain its independence and offer its highly respected Part 3 Examination throughout the United Kingdom and abroad.

APEAS has recently recruited a new CEO to replace the outgoing CEO who is retiring. The Board have put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure a smooth transition between the outgoing CEO and the new one.

As APEAS moves forward the APEAS Board is determined that complacency does not set in. This will mean addressing the following issues:

Maintaining the strength of the Academic/Practice Partnership

As noted above this is the cornerstone of APEAS's success and it will be important to maintain this strong partnership in the years ahead by attracting both academics and practitioners committed to this partnership to work as members of the APEAS Board. Such a partnership may result in many benefits including, for example, the effective delivery of the practice management part of any future 7 year integrated degree programmes and the introduction of degree based apprenticeships.

Being responsive to change

APEAS has a fine track record of responding to change: specifically with regards to changes in the ARB/RIBA Part 3 criteria and the professional experience eligibility criteria, and more generally to changes in architectural education and practice. The APEAS Board is determined that APEAS maintains a proactive and responsive approach when it comes to changes in architectural education and practice.

Attracting new business

As part of its desire to maintain the long term financial stability of APEAS the Board is keen to attract new business as long as this new business aligns closely with the three strategic objectives originally set for APEAS. Such new business might include attracting more candidates from all parts of the United Kingdom and

internationally, and developing on-line learning resources for candidates, examiners and mentors.

Recruitment of new professional examiners

The APEAS practice examiner team has changed over the years as some examiners have left the team due to retirement or for professional/personal reasons. These examiners have been replaced by new examiners who have frequently brought fresh ideas and perspectives on the examination process. APEAS has in place a rigorous procedure for recruiting new examiners which involves the Convenor of the Examination Committee and the Senior Examiner of the Practice Examiners Committee interviewing applicants to ensure they have the breadth and depth of architectural practice experience to examine and a strong commitment to the Part 3 Examination process. The APEAS Examination Committee will ensure that this procedure is continued and will explore ways in which it can attract more women architects and architects from ethnic minority groups to the examination team.

APEAS has been very fortunate to have as its external examiners people who have had a wealth of experience in both architectural practice and the Part 3 examination process. These people are highly respected by their peers. The APEAS Board is committed to attracting external examiners of the highest calibre and independence of mind as such persons are critical to the successful operation of the APEAS quality assurance system.

Examiner Training and Development

APEAS continues to run its half day seminar for practice examiners shortly before the Part 3 Examination process commences. This seminar programme received a commendation from the RIBA Visiting Board in September 2013. Since 2013 the seminar programme has dealt with such subjects as assessing candidates with dyslexia, unconscious bias and assessing candidate work on-line.

Whilst maintaining the annual seminar the APEAS Examination Committee intends to explore alternative ways of delivering training to practice examiners including webinars, videos on the APEAS website and online training courses.

Mentor Training and Development

APEAS has a separate section on its website for employment mentors which includes a Q & A which addresses many of the questions mentors have raised about the Part 3 Examination. However, the APEAS Board are determined to introduce training and development for mentors which may include short seminars at different locations, webinars and videos on the APEAS website.

On-Line Delivery of the Part 3 Examination

APEAS successfully delivered on-line registration, payment and uploading of candidate documents in its 2017/18 examination diet. As a priority the Board wants to ensure that on-line delivery of the Part 3 Examination becomes an entirely safe and secure process. The Examination Committee are keen that practice examiners are introduced to all the benefits of using the Turnitin similarity software.

Developing stronger links with other Part 3 institutions

As advised by RIBA, APEAS will endeavour to develop stronger links with other Part 3 institutions. Such improved links may include the sharing of examiners, training and development materials, learning resources and best examination practices.

Brexit

Along with many other organisations the APEAS Board is anxious to know what the long term impact of Brexit will be on the registration requirements for United Kingdom architects. At the time of writing this position statement this is very much a watching brief.

Second Scottish independence referendum

At the time of writing this statement there also exists the possibility of a second Scottish independence referendum. Should such a vote lead to Scottish independence the APEAS Board would have to assess what the consequences of this are for APEAS's role in Scottish architectural education.

10. Commendations

- 10.1 The Board commends the strong network between APEAS, the Schools of Architecture and Professional Examiners which comes together to support candidates throughout the examination process.
- 10.2 The Board commends the innovation of the Thematic Experience Based Analysis which offers flexibility to candidates and addresses the changing nature of architectural practice and graduate experience.

11. Conditions

There are no conditions.

12. Action points

The visiting board proposes the following action points. The RIBA expects the organisation to report on how it will address these action points. The organisation is referred to the RIBA's criteria and procedures for validation for details of mid-term monitoring processes. Failure by the organisation to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

- 12.1 To support APEAS' desire to develop a more diverse examining team, including those with experience of Part 3 courses elsewhere,

undertake a review of systems and procedures to ensure that these facilitate the appointment of a diverse team.

- 12.2 In the spirit of best practice, undertake a review of the processes, robustness, consistency, and moderation of marking given the extent of the examining pool.
- 12.3 Undertake a comprehensive review of the Practice Paper, for example, reducing the number of total questions, and increasing the variety of response types to encourage candidates to be more succinct, thus promoting a professional approach and healthy working habits.

13. Advice

The visiting board offers the following advice to APEAS on desirable, but not essential improvements, which, it is felt, would assist course development and raise standards.

- 13.1 Develop strategic links with other Part 3 providers to provide a reference point for best practice.
- 13.2 Continue to develop the guidance given to and the relationships with office mentors to improve the consistency in candidate support.
- 13.3 Continue to develop the website, including upload and TurnItIn facilities to improve navigation and user experience.
- 13.4 Continue with plans and financial support for succession planning with the proposed six month staff overlap.

14 Review of work against professional criteria

It should be noted that where the visiting board considered a criterion to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or a criterion clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a criterion was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

- 14.1 The Board was content that all Part 3 professional criteria were met. The Board made no further comments.

15 Other information

15.1 Candidate numbers

119 presented for examination in 2017/2018

15.2 Documentation provided

APEAS provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation.

16. Notes of meetings

On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings: **These notes will not form part of the**

published report but will be made available on request. The full set of notes will be issued to the mid-term panel and the next full visiting board.

- Meeting with CEO and Convenor of Examination Committee
- Meeting with candidates
- Meeting with External and Professional Examiners
- Meeting with PSAs
- Meeting with Chair of APEAS