

## Guidance Note for Employment Mentors

### 1. Introduction

This Guidance Note has been prepared to provide information and advice to Employment Mentors involved in the APEAS Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice and Management.

The role of the Employment Mentor in the APEAS Part 3 Examination process is very important and certainly not one that should be taken lightly. As a Mentor you will have a number of important duties and responsibilities to perform as outlined in Section 3. However, perhaps the most important of all your responsibilities is the professional and moral one you have towards your candidate to ensure that he/she has access to a wide range of high quality professional experience opportunities. For an Employment Mentor there can be little more worthwhile than to see his/her candidate grow and develop in architectural practice to the point where the candidate is ready and confident to sit the Part 3 Examination and, if successful, to register as an architect.

Before reviewing the role of the Employment Mentor in more detail, it is helpful to provide a brief explanation of the way in which the APEAS Part 3 Examination process operates.

### 2. The APEAS Part 3 Examination

The APEAS Part 3 Examination consists of the following three components:

- Experience
- Case Study
- Practice Paper

The written material submitted by candidates for all three components is commonly called the documentary submission. Candidates **must** pass all three components in order to be awarded the Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice and Management

The Experience component comprises of the following two parts:

### **Record of Experience**

Candidates must complete a signed, log of a minimum of 24 months of professional experience in a PEDR - Professional Experience and Development Record (for further information see [www.pedr.co.uk](http://www.pedr.co.uk)) or an ASSA Record of Experience. A minimum of 12 months of this professional experience must be post-Part 2.

### **Evaluation of Experience**

Candidates must complete a written Evaluation of Experience offering a critical evaluation of all periods of professional experience. This Evaluation should be written in terms of the four headings in the ARB/RIBA Part 3 criteria and should be no more than 2000 words in length. The Evaluation should be prefaced by a brief "Professional CV" (one A4 side only).

The Record of Experience and Evaluation of Experience are assessed together and a single grade is awarded for the Experience component. Combining the Record of Experience and Evaluation of Experience in this way provides examiners with greater scope to assess if a candidate's overall professional experience is sufficient in terms of breadth, depth and quality to allow him/her to practice as a registered architect.

### **Case Study**

Candidates are required to undertake a study of an appropriate building project or of a suitable aspect of architectural practice and prepare a report of no more than 6000 words.

### **Practice Paper (Written Examination)**

Candidates undertake a two-day, in-office examination covering many aspects of the ARB/RIBA Part 3 criteria. The paper comprises of a series of situation-based questions connected with a written scenario.

### **Oral Examination**

In addition to submitting their documentary submissions to APEAS candidates also undertake an Oral Examination. The Oral Examination is conducted by the two practice examiners who initially assessed and graded the candidate's documentary submission. The Oral Examination allows examiners to:

- check if the work contained in the candidate's documentary submission is genuinely his/her own work and not simply the result of collusion with others or plagiarism

- cover areas of the ARB/RIBA Part 3 criteria that are not directly covered in the candidate's documentary submission but may arise as a result of further discussions relating to the candidate's documentary submission
- explore the candidate's judgement in different professional situations
- confirm, or otherwise, their view that the candidate is ready and safe to practice as a registered architect

As a result of the Oral Examination examiners can moderate the grades they initially awarded to candidates either upwards or downwards. Thus, it is possible for a candidate, who on initial assessment is deemed to have failed the Part 3 Examination to pass it as a result of oral examination and vice versa.

### 3. **The Responsibilities of the Employment Mentor**

The responsibilities of Employment Mentors are set out clearly on the PEDR website (see PEDR website – Duties and Responsibilities of the Employer). Some of these responsibilities are summarised as follows:

- (1) Establish and maintain an organisational framework within the office which ensures that the candidate has access to high quality professional experience.
- (2) Oversee the educational and professional development of the candidate, supervising his/her daily work, and reviewing the candidate's performance at 3-monthly intervals using a Record of Experience such as the PEDR.
- (3) Ensure that a candidate is not given as a matter of routine tasks that are of little or no educational or developmental value to him/her.
- (4) Ensure that the candidate is not unduly challenged by a task inappropriate to his/her current level of experience.
- (5) Provide opportunities for organised professional training which covers both general procedures and tasks and some aspects of architect which are of a specialist nature.

In addition, depending on how the office is structured the Employment Mentor may be responsible for ensuring the following:

- (1) That the candidate has a contract of employment and a detailed job description which sets out, among other matters, hours of work and the time allotted for study in connection with educational and professional development.
- (2) Appropriate levels of candidate supervision while in the office, out on site and in any other environment in which the candidate is working for the office.
- (3) Inducted into, and updated on, appropriate Health and Safety legislation, procedures and practices in the office, on-site and in any other environment where the candidate is working for the office.

#### **4. The Role of the Employment Mentor in a Candidate's Professional Development**

The challenge for all Employment Mentors is to find an appropriate balance of input into their candidate's professional development. An Employment Mentor should reasonably expect his/her candidate to be taking a constructive and proactive interest in their own professional experience. Mentors should not have to 'spoon feed' their candidate but rather should concentrate on creating an atmosphere in which the candidate is positively encouraged to explore, examine, question and reflect on a range of issues in architectural practice. Candidates should be allowed to challenge in sensitive but constructive ways current ideas, views and attitudes on, for example, office systems, procedures and practices. Candidates should also be encouraged to express opinions and make judgements about practice issues although such opinions and judgements should be supported by evidence and/or well developed arguments. For example, the candidate may be given a task to assess the benefits versus risks to the office of taking on a particular project and based on reasoned analysis, provide a judgement as to whether the office should undertake the project or not.

Employment Mentors should also actively encourage candidates to learn the importance of accepting constructive advice and criticism about their work, judgements and opinions as this will become part of their professional life when they are a registered architect.

## 5. **The Role of the Professional Studies Advisor**

It is important to note that your candidate can also obtain information, advice and support from his/her PSA (Professional Studies Advisor). The PSA is normally a member of staff in a school of architecture who has responsibilities for supporting and advising Part 3 candidates. Among their duties PSA have responsibility for commenting on and counter-signing candidates three monthly PEDR/ASSA Records of Experience sheets once you have commented and signed them. Candidates can also seek their PSA advice on the appropriateness of their Case Study title and synopsis.

## 6. **Candidates with Special Circumstances**

At every examination diet candidates register for the Part 3 Examination who have particular circumstances that may affect their performance in the Examination. Candidates may have one or more of the following special circumstances:

- English is not their first language (alternatively referred to as English being an additional language)
- Some form of physical disability/medical problem
- Some form of Specific Learning Difficulty such as dyslexia

In examining candidates with any special circumstances APEAS works on the principle that such candidates should be assessed on 'the same level playing field' as candidates without such circumstances. To this end APEAS is willing to put in place arrangements that ensure that this principle is abided by. For fuller details of the support APEAS provides to candidates with special circumstances please see the APEAS Guide for Examiners, Chapter 5 which can be obtained from APEAS on request. APEAS is also happy to provide information and advice to Employment Mentors who are mentoring candidates with any special circumstances.

## 7. **Resources of Help to Fulfil your Role as an Employment Mentor**

There are a range of resources available to support you in your role as an Employment Mentor. These resources include the following:

### **Guide for Employment Mentors (still to be published)**

The Guide for Employment Mentors will provide you with detailed information on the APEAS Part 3 Examination process and the role of the Employment Mentor in this process. It is the intention of APEAS to update the Guide for Employment Mentors annually to reflect comments received from Employment Mentors on ways to improve the Guide.

## **Guide for Candidates**

This Guide is designed to provide candidates with all the necessary information they require to undertake the Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice and Management. The Guide for Candidates is updated annually to reflect comments from candidates, examiners and external examiners on ways to improve the Guide. A copy of the Guide can also be found in the Candidate section of the APEAS website.

## **RIBA Professional Education and Development Resource (PEDR)** **([www.pedr.co.uk](http://www.pedr.co.uk))**

This is a very helpful Internet based resource which contains a wide variety of information on how both employers and students can best arrange a broad range of high quality professional experience. The resource can be configured as one of the following 3 Guides:

- Guide for Students
- Guide for Employers
- Guide for PSA

Under the Guide for Employers you will find information on such subjects as:

- Employing students including the duties and responsibilities of the employer and model contracts for Stage 1 and Stage 2 students
- Education and Part 3 Courses
- Certificate of Professional Experience

## **Further Information**

If you would like any further information on any aspect of the work of APEAS please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Peter Kahan, CEO on 01324-484652 or [info@apeas.org.uk](mailto:info@apeas.org.uk).