

**ACE General Assembly meeting – 3 May 2019**

**AOB – Unpaid professional traineeship and internship**

***Call on members to reaffirm commitment to ending the practice of unpaid professional traineeships and internship in the architecture sector***

By professional traineeship, we mean the period of pre-qualification professional practice designed to allow those with the requisite academic training to meet the minimum practical training requirements of article 46 of the EU Professional Qualifications Directive.

Professional traineeships play an important role in the architecture sector. They allow trainees to develop their skills to support their future employment options and they provide practices with new skills and knowledge

Members of the General Assembly will be aware of the [ACE's Code of Conduct for Traineeships](#), which advises that practices in member sections provide quality traineeships and that trainees receive the entitlements recommended by the European Quality Charter on internships and apprenticeships and the EU Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships – including 'pay at a level above the poverty threshold or minimum wage'

At the RIBA we require our Chartered Practices that employ students who are undertaking practical training as an element of their education, to pay them the National Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.

We recognise that practices may offer very short-term (a few weeks) unpaid work experience to school/A level students.

However, the RIBA does not recognise or endorse the concept of "internships" in architecture, that are common in many professional sectors, i.e. graduate type level students undertaking extended periods of unpaid work in professional contexts to gain "experience".

We know that despite the ACE Code of Conduct and the actions of member sections in their own countries – unpaid professional traineeships and internships continue to be a problem in our sector and that students who take unpaid professional traineeships or internships can feel unable to speak out, fearing the impact on their future career prospects.

Unpaid professional traineeships and internships also work against social mobility by restricting access since only those who have the means to support themselves without pay can take up the opportunity.

**Our request is that members of the General Assembly call on their institutes to reaffirm their commitment to ending unpaid professional traineeships and internships in the architecture sector – including encouraging people to report any practice that flouts the ACE Code of Conduct.**

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