

Before you get Started Fact Sheet No.4 What is an Architect and what do all the other professionals do?

1. The Architect

The architect has generally undertaken a minimum of 7 years training (5 years academic education and 2 years supervised practical experience) and in Ireland needs to be registered with the RIAI in order to legally call themselves an architect.(www.riai.ie/consumer)

The architect is ideally trained to create an 'architectural design' that satisfies both aesthetic and technical requirements.

An architect's education also includes:

- Architectural history/theory and the related arts, technologies and human sciences
- Urban Design, planning and the planning process
- The relationship of people to a building and the importance of human scale
- The legal issues of contracts and working with builders and banks
- Understanding the importance of the brief and good communication with the client
- An understanding of structural, building and mechanical/electrical design.
- Working to a budget

2. A Structural Engineer

A structural engineer is responsible for the design and evaluation of any structural components in your project.

Alongside the architect the structural engineer will specify the type, depth and size of foundations for example; he'll work with the architect to produce a cost effective structural solution for your project and then produce calculations, details and drawings to support the structural design.

The architect and structural engineer work together and it is rare for either profession to perform both duties (unless they are fully qualified in both disciplines)

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3. The Quantity Surveyor

Essentially a Quantity Surveyor (QS) is your accountant during the design and construction process.

The QS can calculate what your project is going to cost, both at an early design stage and through to construction. A full list of materials and labour is called a Bill of Quantities and can be the basis of how a contractor will price the cost to build.

The QS is also useful at construction stage in valuing any variations to the building due to any changes made by you, the architect or the contractor.

Other professions in summary

Architectural Technologist or Technician

Generally the Architectural Technologist or Technician would be more biased towards the science of the architecture and the technology of building design/construction as opposed to the architect whose training and expertise covers in addition the areas described opposite.

Architects Assistant

Generally someone gaining their practical experience prior to taking their final architects' exams.

Consulting Engineer

A consulting engineer would be an engineer specialising in civil, mechanical, electrical, chemical, mining etc...) as well as structural (described opposite). It is therefore essential to ensure your Structural engineer is qualified in this specific area.

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