



PUBLIC PRACTICE

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

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WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE?

To apply for an Associate position, you must:

- Have a minimum of three years' experience working in the built environment or relevant related field, there is no upper limit.
- Be available to participate in the programme for either 12 or 18 months from the start date listed on the website.
- Be willing to consider a full-time equivalent salary of between £30,000 - £70,000 (pro-rata).
- Be willing to consider a placement with an Authority or another public-sector body within London, the South East or the East of England.
- Be eligible to work in the UK.

DO I NEED TO HAVE PUBLIC SECTOR EXPERIENCE TO APPLY?

No, there is no requirement for Applicants to have previous experience of working in the public sector. Applicants without public sector experience will not be at a disadvantage to Applicants with public sector experience.

AM I ELIGIBLE IF I HAVE ALREADY WORKED IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

Yes, applications are welcomed from practitioners with experience of working in the public sector. Applicants with public sector experience will be expected to demonstrate the additional value of taking up a role through Public Practice over their existing role, or how it would enable them to make a step change in their career.

DO I NEED A PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION OR ACCREDITATION TO APPLY?

No, there are no requirements around professional qualifications or accreditations to apply for the programme. You must simply have a minimum of three years' work experience. A small number of placements may require Associates to have a professional qualification or accreditation, however, this is the exception, not the norm.

DO I NEED TO BE IN CURRENT EMPLOYMENT TO APPLY?

Applicants do not need to be employed to apply for, or take up, Associate positions. We welcome applications from applicants who are self-employed, have taken a career break, currently unemployed or currently in employment. Your employment status will not affect how your application is assessed, but you will be expected to take up employment with your host Authority should you be offered an Associate position.

WHAT IF I NEED A VISA TO REMAIN AND WORK IN THE UK AFTER BREXIT?

Public Practice and the Authorities who host are not at present able to assist with visa applications and do not hold sponsorship licence. If you are not eligible to live and work in the UK, we cannot accept your application at this time.

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS

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WHAT TYPES OF ROLES ARE ASSOCIATES PLACED IN?

We offer roles that go beyond standard job descriptions. They might range from starting-up a housebuilding programme to trialling co-design with tenants; from reshaping the masterplan for a garden town to rethinking an Authority's approach to small sites; or from transforming last-mile logistics to helping a high streets adapt post-Covid.

For further information on the types of placement roles that we offer in, see the "Disciplines" page on [our website](#).

WHO MIGHT I BE WORKING FOR AS AN ASSOCIATE?

Public Practice places Associates in public organisations: local or city government, combined authorities, development corporations, publicly-led delivery vehicles, or groups of more than one Authority sharing a role. Currently Public Practice places Associates in public organisations in London, the South East and East of England. Take a look at the "Associates" page on [our website](#) to see where our current cohort of Associates are placed.

ARE ALL THE PLACEMENTS HOSTED WITHIN PLANNING DEPARTMENTS?

No, our placements range across and between multiple departments, from Planning, to Housing, to Regeneration and Economic development, and Assets.

BEING EMPLOYED AS AN ASSOCIATE

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HOW ARE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYED?

Associates are employed either directly by their host Authority, on fixed-term contracts, or through secondment agreements with their current employer. You will have the opportunity to state your preference over how you are employed during the application process.

HOW DOES BEING AN ASSOCIATE WORK WITH EXISTING EMPLOYMENT?

To take up a placement, you will either negotiate a secondment with your current employer, take a sabbatical or leave your current job. The large majority of Associates leave their current jobs to become Public Practice Associates.

CAN I START THE PLACEMENT LATE?

All Associates will start their placements on the same date as the rest of their cohort. Late starters will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO JOIN THE PROGRAMME ON A PART-TIME BASIS?

Yes, a number of our Associates teach, run their own companies or pursue other projects or courses alongside becoming a Public Practice Associate. However, any part-time placements do require a minimum placement commitment of 3 days per week. Applicants will have the opportunity to state their preference for part-time or full-time working arrangements in the online application form. This preference will inform matching to placements.

ARE FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AVAILABLE?

Whether an Associate is able to work on a compressed hours contract or have flexible working arrangements is wholly up to the Authority they are matched with. Flexible working arrangements should be discussed directly with the Authority once a match has been made.

WILL I NEED TO RELOCATE TO TAKE UP A PLACEMENT?

Commute times are taken into consideration when matching Associates to placements, and Public Practice endeavours to offer Associates placements within reasonable commutes from their homes. Applicants have the opportunity to state whether they are willing to consider relocating to take up a placement during the application process. Willingness to relocate will inform matching to placements.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE WHEN IN PLACEMENT?

Throughout the programme, you will be directly employed by your host Authority, or by your current employer through a secondment agreement. You will be entitled to all statutory rights afforded to employees. If your personal circumstances change, such as becoming ill or having a child, you will be entitled to all benefits set out by your statutory rights as an employee, for example sick leave or maternity / paternity pay.

THE R&D PROGRAMME

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WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE R&D PROGRAMME?

By becoming a Public Practice Associate you will benefit from joining the R&D programme. 10% of your working time within with host Authorities is designated for participating in the programme. This is equivalent to spending every other Friday away from your desk, getting together with the rest of your cohort in a variety of locations across your local region, or online via Zoom.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED OUTPUTS WHILST ON THE PROGRAMME?

We ask for Associates to produce or add to one of our existing resources (be that a tool-kit, template, or shareable working document). Associates are also required to report at the beginning, middle and end of the year on their placement to support Public Practice's impact monitoring. To see the range of resources produced by our previous Associates, visit the "Resources" page of [our website](#).

WILL I BE EXPECTED TO DO THE ANY WORK IN MY OWN TIME?

Time is made for Associates to produce their resources during R&D days. Though we endeavour to limit the amount of your own spent on the programme, you may have to give some of your own time in preparing for and producing deliverables for seminars on R&D days.

WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS?

Sessions introduce Associates to the technical knowledge and soft skills required to be a successful public planner. Development sessions are also an opportunity to explore and share your experiences on placement, and support others to tackle live challenges faced by Authorities.

AM I REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE R&D PROGRAMME?

Yes, all Associates are expected to attend 80% of the R&D days as a minimum. Minimum R&D attendance rates are proportionate to the number of days you are working with your Authority. Failure to meet the minimum attendance rate may result in the termination of your position as an Associate.

BEYOND THE PLACEMENT

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WILL I BE EMPLOYED BY MY HOST AUTHORITY AFTER THE PLACEMENT ENDS?

The decision to employ Associates beyond the duration of the programme is made by the host Authority alone and is subject to their own internal HR policies. Public Practice offers employment support to all Associates towards the end of the programme but cannot guarantee that all Associates will be offered employment with their host Authorities beyond the placement.

WILL I BE ABLE TO EXTEND MY PLACEMENT?

Many host Authorities and Associates extend their employment contract beyond the initial period of the placement. This is something that is negotiated directly between the Authority and Associate with Public Practice offering support throughout.

WILL I STAY CONNECTED WITH PUBLIC PRACTICE AFTER THE PROGRAMME ENDS?

At the end of the 12-month programme, you will join our Alumni network. We encourage Alumni to remain active in the working groups, attend our networking events and contribute to the running of our programme.

APPLICATION PROCESS

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CAN I SUBMIT MY INITIAL (ONLINE) APPLICATION IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT?

If, for accessibility reasons, you are unable to submit the initial application using the online form, we are happy for you to submit your application in an alternative format. Please email info@publicpractice.org.uk or call 020 3858 7447 to discuss your requirements.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY CURRENT AND MINIMUM SALARY?

We ask for you to provide both your current salary (annual gross, full time equivalent) and the minimum salary (annual gross, full time equivalent) you will be willing to consider from your placement as we appreciate these figures may differ. This information helps us to better understand your situation and assists with shortlisting.

WHAT IF I AM UNABLE TO ATTEND THE PLACEMENT WORKSHOP?

You will be offered one of a range of placement workshop dates, initially. If you cannot make the date you are offered, we will try to accommodate you at another placement workshop. Placement workshops are the best way for Public Practice to gain a clear understanding of your experience and personal qualities. Placement workshops are carried out online, via Zoom, using a number of digital assessment techniques. If there are any extenuating circumstances, please contact Public Practice and we may offer you a substitute format for the placement workshop.

IS THE VENUE FOR THE PLACEMENT WORKSHOP ACCESSIBLE?

Yes, the placement workshop is carried out online via Zoom. You will have the opportunity to inform us of any additional requirements you have around the placement workshop once your application is shortlisted. Please feel free to email info@publicpractice.org.uk or call 020 3858 7447 us if you would like to discuss any of your requirements in advance.

WHO ARE THE ASSESSORS?

The assessment of Applicants at the online application stage is supported by a group of around 70+ expert assessors. Our expert assessors are experienced public sector planning and placemaking practitioners. At placement workshops, officers from host Authorities will participate in the days as Assessors.

HOW DOES MATCHING WORK?

Public Practice takes the skills, experience, personal qualities and preferences of Applicants into account when matching to placements. Following the placement workshops, Public Practice will recommend a match to the placement most suitable for the Applicant. Once matched, Applicants receive a Placement Pack outlining the placement role and have the opportunity to meet officers from the host Authority. Associates have the opportunity to decline matches that they do not feel are suitable. Where matches are declined, Public Practice will endeavour to rematch Applicants with an alternative placement, however, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in all cases.

IF SELECTED WHEN WOULD I NEED TO TELL MY CURRENT EMPLOYER?

Selected Applicants must inform their current employers in time to serve their notice period before the start of the programme. There is an opportunity for you to inform us of the length of your notice period in the online application form. Host Authorities will be informed of your notice period when a match is made. Once a formal job offer is made,

the host Authorities will generally seek to collect a reference from your current employer before offering an employment contract.

IS THERE A FEE FOR TAKING PART IN THE PROGRAMME?

No, there is no cost to Associates for taking part in the programme. Your host Authority will pay you a salary of between £30,000 - £70,000 on your placement. Public Practice, its Partners and your host Authority covers the cost of your training on the R&D programme.

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HOW DO I KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH PUBLIC PRACTICE EVENTS AND NEWS?

Follow Public Practice on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Vimeo](#), or sign up to our regular [newsletter](#).

HOW CAN I CONTACT PUBLIC PRACTICE WITH ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?

Please email info@publicpractice.org.uk with any further questions.