# Introduction

At SRA Architects we are committed to benefiting society through our architectural work. We believe design and creativity can play an invaluable role in making people’s lives more fulfilling, enjoyable and inspirational.

To achieve these aims in our work, we need to ensure our people are fully supported in a creative working environment that is motivating and engaging. We understand the efforts our people put in to their work and wish to provide an enhanced benefits package that offers them flexibility, security, a good work-life balance and the support to enable their career to flourish.

Our benefits include: *(click to find out more)*

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# Induction Programme

We have a comprehensive induction process to welcome and integrate new starters into the practice as quickly and easily as possible. The induction process covers the systems and procedures we have in place.

It is also a time for new members of staff to be introduced to other staff; get to know the office environment; find out about who does what; and learn more about what projects they will be working on.

# Training and Development

Investing in staff is a cornerstone of the practice philosophy. There is no limit to progression for those who are keen to grow and can demonstrate the highest level of skills and abilities. There is a structured self review system in place which gives members of staff the opportunity to discuss with the Partners how things are going and their aspirations and plans, and helps to set objectives and identify training needs. Partners also have reviews and on-going skills development. For the architectural staff, there is a varied and interesting CPD programme which helps develop everyone’s skills and knowledge. This also helps Architects to meet the CPD requirements set by the RIBA. The support staffs are offered training as appropriate to develop their skills.

# Study Support

We offer mentoring to support and develop placement students and all who are studying towards qualifying as Architects and Chartered Technologists. At the Partners’ discretion there is also the opportunity to study part-time and/or receive financial and mentoring support towards study for Part 2 and Part 3, study towards chartership, or development of skills for support staff.

# Flexible Working

SRA Architects recognise that all who work here need to achieve an acceptable work-life balance, and have been very flexible with various members of staff, not just parents, by changing their working days to enable them to balance their work and personal commitments. This is a very inclusive approach, which is in line with the practice values.

# Core Hours

On a day to day basis there is flexibility through working core hours. All members of staff work a standard length day, but each can choose to start up to two hours before the start of core hours or finish up to two hours after the end of them to fit in with outside commitments or preferences, subject to liaison with colleagues. Core hours are 10.00am to 4.30pm.

# Discretionary Bonus

Back in 2011 the post-recession business climate was still very uncertain and growth was shaky. Making any profit at all was an aspiration rather than a reality. In the light of this, the Partners did not feel able to commit to raising salaries but instead decided that, in quarters where there was a profit, a proportion of this would be paid as a bonus to staff.

Fast forward to now and thankfully we are currently in a much stronger position and able to offer salary increases. While the original reason for bonuses is no longer valid, the Partners recognise just how hard everyone works, and rather than trying to calculate overtime payments or other ways of showing their appreciation for this, the Partners continue to pay bonuses on a discretionary basis. Although these still come out of the profits they are now known as discretionary bonuses, not profit-share bonuses. Discretionary bonuses will be paid the month following the end of the quarter to which they relate.

# Holiday

SRA Architects’ annual holiday entitlement varies according to job title and length of service, but members of staff are encouraged to use all their holiday entitlement, as time off is beneficial to well-being and contributes to a healthy work-life balance.

In addition to their paid leave entitlement all full-time staff, irrespective of length of service, can book up to 5 days unpaid leave per leave year. This is pro rata for part-time staff.

# Childcare Vouchers

We have a Childcare Voucher scheme in place to help members of staff who are working parents with childcare costs. This is a salary sacrifice initiative supported by the government.

Childcare Vouchers can be used as full or part payment for a range of childcare options. They can normally be used to pay for a variety of forms of childcare provided that the organisation or individual is registered.

If you are interested in joining the scheme, please see Finance to collect a salary sacrifice form which will enable you to start purchasing vouchers.

# Company Pension

It is important to plan for your retirement. Contributing regularly to a pension scheme is one way to ensure that you are comfortably provided for when you retire.

We have set up an auto-enrolment pension through the RIBA. Finance will give you details in writing of the pension arrangements applicable to you when you join the practice. Please speak to the Financial Controller if you need further details of the pension arrangements.

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# Eyesight Testing

As a VDU user at SRA Architects, you are entitled to an eyesight test by a qualified optician. The cost of this will be reimbursed by the company. We will also provide a contribution towards the cost of corrective spectacles if they are specifically required for VDU use for the Practice.

# Workplace Environment

SRA Architects consider our work environment to be important and, within physical constraints, endeavour to make the office a good place to be with facilities and procedures which promote a healthy working environment.

# Culture

We seek to express our company values of trust, interdependence, integrity, honesty, openness, collaboration and the sharing of ideas through the way we work.

The layout of our space facilitates group working, which is essential to building internal staff relationships and is reflected in the inspirational quality of our work. We encourage staff to communicate and relate to each other, and to exchange thoughts and views. Our values determine the way we work together and are the driving force that helps us achieve our aspirations as a practice.

# Social Activities

Regular activities include: Christmas and summer parties; cake off on Mondays; badminton, convivial celebrations of birthdays, arrivals, departures, achievements, etc.

We encourage all staff to get involved in the social life of the office. The Social Secretary finds out which activities members of staff wish to participate in and organises and encourages participation in them. The Brand and Communications Manager looks out for social events, architectural trips and ways of improving communication and general well-being in the office, and publicises them through the staff webpage.

# Cycle Scheme

We have adopted a cycle scheme which enables members of staff to obtain bicycles at low cost, through a government backed initiative. We use a company called Cyclescheme Ltd to administer the scheme for us.

If you are interested in joining the scheme, please see Finance for details.

# Computer Purchase Scheme

We have a scheme with Farpoint to allow members of staff to purchase computers and pay for them on a monthly basis. This is a salary sacrifice scheme.

If you are interested in joining the scheme, please see Finance for details.

# Conclusion

We very much value the relationships that we have with our staff, and take an interest in helping their careers develop over time. We enjoy the diversity of personalities which enter the practice and want everyone to feel happy, challenged, and engaged in their work.

Our ethos is to be open and to encourage individuals to be themselves. We welcome feedback and debate about all practice issues.

We trust you enjoy your time at SRA Architects and that it becomes a valuable experience in your life.