

Open session

Board meeting: 19 October 2022

Agenda item: 14

Subject: Chief Executive's Report

Action: To Note

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on the operational activities of the Executive team.

Annexes

None

Author/Key Contact

Hugh Simpson, Chief Executive and Registrar (Hughs@arb.org.uk)

1. Open/Confidential Session

This item will be noted in the open session of the Board meeting.

2. Background and Key points

This paper updates the Board on key operational developments including progress to delivery our key strategic priorities.

Update on Strategic Priorities

Modernisation of Initial Education and Training

- 2.1. Following the Symposium and Board workshop that took place in September, work continues on the drafting of the competencies and outcomes that must be attained by students at the end of their initial education and training, and the standards that learning providers must meet in order to have their qualifications accredited. These documents will underpin the new outcomes based regulatory framework we are proposing for the education and training of architects.
- 2.2. We will be engaging further with subject matter experts on all of these areas.
- 2.3. This work remains on target for consideration by the Board at its December meeting, and to be consulted on early in the new year.
- 2.4. We are also developing terms of reference and rules for the establishment of an Accreditation Committee and a new accreditation scheme, to come into force in 2023.
- 2.5. This is a complex piece of work and as we move from policy development to operational delivery, we will need to keep the Board informed of progress and ensure we are providing assurance at the right points. In particular detailed work has begun on planning for an updated accreditation model and exploring the transition modelling. We are discussing these points regularly with SCOSA and in particular how we will approach applications from new institutions and/or new course applications.
- 2.6. The Chief Executive will be presenting and hosting a Q and A session at the SCOSA meeting in Manchester at the end of October where further feedback will be sought.



Continuing Professional Development

- 2.7. On Friday 23 September we launched the public consultation on our proposals for our CPD scheme. An email was sent to all Registrants, with further supporting communications to stakeholders, the media, and across all ARB channels. A short summary of the launch is included in the Policy and Communications performance monitoring report. Further communications activities are planned, including an online event to explain our proposals to architects.
- 2.8. The consultation will close on Tuesday 3 January 2023. The consultation dates are aligned with our business plan and CPD development is therefore on track. A verbal update will be provided to the Board on responses and our engagement work.

Continuous Improvement Development

- 2.9. Registration application processing times and volumes continue to fall within, or outperform the 15 working day KPI, following changes to the manual logging, triaging and escalation processes introduced in the last quarter.
- 2.10. UK applications have outperformed the KPI target of 90% in 7 of the last 9 months, and the year-to-date performance is 93%, up from 90% last year. The improvement in EU applications is greater, with 8 out of 9 months exceeding the target, and the year-to-date performance increasing from 59% in 2021 to 93% in the year to date.
- 2.11. We are confident that this performance level is sustainable, though we have probably reached the extent of incremental improvement whilst using manual processing.
- 2.12. Our accuracy of registration records remains high, and our programme of quality assurance audit found only 2 minor data issues (postcode and surname misspelling) in the 157 new UK applications in Q3, and none in the 77 new EU applications. Both data issues have been rectified and used as learning examples for the team.
- 2.13. Volumes of architects re-joining the Register in 2022 are 170% of those in the same period in 2021. We are seeing a trend in those returning after some time (more than a year away) We intend to carry out a survey in due course to explore the reasons for this and enable to better track future trends.
- 2.14. Prescribed examination activity remains high. We have now filled all of our booked exam slots for 2022 and are starting to book into 2023. Details of the numbers and nationalities of applicants in 2022 year to date, versus 2021 are included in a separate paper on the Board agenda. Exam pass rates remain



similar to last year. There has been 1 appeal this year, compared with 3 last year. No appeals have been upheld.

2.15. Accreditation activity has been geared to completing the work in progress under the current prescription processes, in anticipation of transitioning to the new IET outcomes approach.

2.16. In the year to date (6 meetings), we have processed applications from 6 institutions for new qualifications, 13 institutions who are renewing prescription, and 57 annual reviews or changes to existing qualifications. The re-profiling of the annual monitoring process means that we have now reviewed all of the institutions in this cycle, and have a better understanding of the current risks and issues, which will inform the move to the new accreditation approach.

2.17. There are currently 95 Part 1 qualifications (at 58 institutions), 73 Part 2 qualifications (at 51 institutions), and 42 Part 3 qualifications (at 42 institutions). Overall, 44 qualifications are due to expire before the end of 2023, and we are gearing our remaining Prescription Committee slots to accommodate these. We are also writing to existing Schools to elicit any new applications or major changes by the end of November 2022, in order to run out these reviews.

2.18. We have reviewed the volumes of documents associated with Board Prescription application papers, and determined that it takes nearly one working day to upload them to Diligent. We are considering a more proportionate approach, ahead of the Accreditation Committee move, and IT transformation, to upload the Board paper and Briefing note only to Diligent, subject to Board Member feedback. If we were to move to this approach, Board members could request – by return – any of the background materials referenced in these papers.

EU Exit/International Routes

2.19. Following the relevant decisions at the Board's meeting in July, we issued the draft UK Adaptation Assessment Procedures for consultation in late July. The consultation closed on 9 September. The consultation responses, the Executive's report in relation to those consultation responses and a final version of the draft Procedures are on the Board's agenda for consideration. Subject to the Board's approval of the consultation report and the draft Procedures, we will continue to develop the Adaptation Assessment process and pilot it later this Autumn, so that we are ready to launch the new international routes as soon as the final legislative changes, which will enable us to enter and sign Mutual Recognition Agreements have been passed by Parliament.

2.20. Work in relation to the MRAs/memoranda of understanding (MOU) we are developing with our counterparts in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, the EU and Hong Kong is continuing to progress smoothly.



Strategic Transformation

- 2.21. We continue to make steady progress across each of the 'Eos' Transformation Programme workstreams. The discovery phase is almost complete although there is outstanding work to map finance and HR processes and systems. The technical workstream has prioritised the EUC/laptop project with this workstream about two weeks behind schedule.
- 2.22. A detailed business case has been developed for the procurement of the new CRM system and delivery partner. We hope to sign this off in the coming days and our ITPP will begin the next phase in the procurement process by issuing an RFP.
- 2.23. Our move to 'cloud-by-default' continues and we have successfully migrated our outlook mail services to Exchange online.
- 2.24. Intergence, our ITPP, have completed roll-out of the new service desk for desktop IT support for ARB staff.
- 2.25. We will provide a verbal update to the Board on the establishment of the Web Application Firewall which we expect to be operational imminently.

Investing in our people

- 2.26. We have continued momentum in relation to our People Strategy. In particular we have been able to:
- Sign-off and launch the new values and behaviour framework for staff
 - Established a new Equality and Diversity Staff Forum
 - Rolled out a new induction process for staff
 - Commissioned training for managers (including training in relation to the new performance management framework)
- 2.27. We are grateful to the feedback from the Remuneration and Appointments Committee who have fed into a number of these initiatives. While we don't have any firm data to establish causation (as opposed to correlation) the performance monitoring report does highlight some very significant improvements in retention and sickness absence.

3. Board Apprentice Programme

- 3.1. We have recently expressed an interest in and are in the process of applying to become a host Board as part of the Boardroom Apprentices Programme. The



Programme is being supported by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Boardroom Apprentice Programme is a twelve-month board learning and placement programme. Its vision is to move the board member role from aspiration to reality and its aim is to deliver the following:

- To create a diverse pool of capable board ready Board Members
- To provide a sustainable pool of capable board ready Board Members
- To enable practical boardroom experience for aspiring Board Members
- To provide the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience for aspiring Board Members
- To increase the knowledge and awareness of the role of Board Members.

3.2. The programme is built on three key pillars which include:

- Experience: A 12 month practical hands on placement
- Knowledge and Understanding: Transfer of knowledge and understanding through learning
- Support: Support through a dedicated board buddy from within the host Board.

3.3. Boardroom apprentices are expected to be provided with access to all Board, Committee and Workshop sessions as well as the relevant agendas, papers and associated documents. ARB will not be directly involved in the recruitment of the apprentice, however, equality, diversity and inclusion will be central to the recruitment and matching of apprentices to their host Boards. Apprentices will be required to sign confidentiality agreements and a memorandum of understanding with the Department.

3.4. Board apprentices will need to attend 8 learning days in total in 2023, led by the Department. These learning days will cover aspects such as: understanding Finance, Management accounts, Governance issues, leadership, Strategy and development, what are the next steps for apprentices including support with writing CV/cover letters and where to look for board vacancies. Case studies will also look at examples of governance issues faced by organisations in the past and they will be required to present their learnings to a panel.

3.5. Should ARB be successfully selected as a host Board, the apprentice programme will commence in January 2023. Board members are asked to note the information and to raise any queries they may have about our participation in the Programme.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. There are no specific resource implications arising from this paper. The budget sets out how we are financing the delivery of the Business Plan 2022.

5. Risk implications

5.1. There are no additional or specific risks to report. Each of the major projects set out in the corporate strategy for 2022-26 will have a project risk register. These will feed into the strategic risk register agreed by Board and reporting through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

6. Communication

There are no specific communications issues arising from this paper.

7. Equality and Diversity implication

There are no specific EDI implications specifically arising from this paper although a number of the policy updates include work to improve the way in which we address EDI as both a regulator and employer.

8. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper
