



Subject	Update on ARB's Operational Activities		
Status	Open Session		
Purpose	For Note		
From	The Interim Registrar		
History	Parent Committee	First Submitted	Revision Number
	N/A	14 May 2015	N/A

1. Purpose

To update the Board on ARB's operational activities since the last Board meeting.

For Note

2. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

Protect the users and potential users of architects' services, and support architects through Regulation. ARB's Operational Activities Report keeps the Board informed of activities which ensure that ARB meets its purpose and objectives and delivers against the Business Plan 2014.

3. Risk Implications

ARB's Operational Activities Report provides the Board with an update on business activities, progress against the Business Plan, as well as highlighting any emerging risks which may impact on delivery.

4. Key points

Discussions with Stakeholders

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The Communications Coordinator attended the DCLG Non Departmental Bodies (NDPB) communications group meeting where guidance on communications during purdah was discussed. Essentially the advice was that day to day communications could continue as normal but comments on information which could be perceived as relating to a future government's policy or decision should be avoided. This guidance information was shared with the staff team and an escalation process for questions was communicated.

We have been working closely with the DCLG team in order to gain an understanding of some of the revisions which have been made to the Professional Qualifications Directive. Once we have sufficient clarity regarding the interpretation of the revisions we will disseminate the information to our stakeholders.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

We have contributed to and participated in an exercise BIS has undertaken in order to gather feedback from architects regarding their mobility across Europe. We assisted with the organisation of a discussion forum and the dissemination of a call for information. We also attended and co-hosted the forum with BIS and the RIBA in late April 2015.

We are also continuing to work with BIS in relation to the transparency exercise which is being undertaken by the European Commission. The European Commission is seeking to map the regulation of all professions, including architects, across Member States. Following extensive work last year, we are now providing some additional, follow up information about how architects are regulated in the UK. We anticipate that the Commission will provide the UK with feedback and the outcomes of its exercise later in 2015.

RIBA Review of Architectural Education

The Head of Qualifications and Interim Registrar attended an event on 24 March 2015 as observers, which saw the RIBA's stakeholders' debate and discuss the findings of its Review of Architectural Education. Further information setting out the results of the event can be found at the following link:

<http://www.architecture.co./Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/Education/2015/RIBAEducationReviewApril2015update.pdf>

We will take this information, along with the outcomes of other similar reviews and subject to the outcomes of the Periodic Review, into account as part of our review of the routes to registration project in due course.

Quality Assurance Agency/UK Inter-Professional Group Forum (QAA/UKIPG Forum)

We attended the most recent QAA/UKIPG Forum, which focussed on Reducing Regulation and the Future of Quality Assessment. A review is currently being undertaken in relation to the future of higher education regulation, and the forum provides ARB and other PSRBs the opportunity to contribute to the debate in this area. The Head of Qualifications will also be joining the QAA Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body Steering Group which will oversee the work of this forum, as well as others, from May 2015 onwards.

Association of Professional Studies Advisers in Architecture (APSAA)

We attended APSAA's Spring Forum in late April 2015. Discussions at the forum focussed on the outcomes of the RIBA's Review of Architectural Education as well as the DCLG's on-going Periodic Review of the regulation of architects. We were able to provide factual information relating to each subject and found it helpful to hear the Professional Studies Advisers current views on these subjects. These will help inform our Routes to Registration Review in due course.

Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture (SCHOSA)

The Team met with representatives of SCHOSA's Council in late February 2015. Given that the previous meeting had been held in the Autumn 2014, the meeting enabled the Team to

provide SCHOSA with updates regarding the Qualifications Directive, ARB's review of its routes to registration; and the re-opening of the transitional arrangements for the Prescribed Examinations. SCHOSA raised an issue regarding the examination process which individuals holding prescribed Part 2 level qualifications, but seeking Part 1 equivalence through the Prescribed Examinations, have to undertake, and suggested that a shortened form of the Examination might be developed for such individuals. It was agreed that SCHOSA should write formally to ARB regarding this matter, and ARB would then consider the issues involved and respond accordingly. [Note: this letter has now been received and has been noted by the Prescription Committee. The Committee has asked the Staff Team to look into the pros and cons of the matters raised and their relationship with ARB's plans to review its routes to registration.] We also attended part of SCHOSA's Spring meeting at which Heads of Schools were beginning to discuss the outcomes of the RIBA's debate regarding the future of architectural education.

Students aiming to apply for Prescribed Examination – Bartlett/UCL seminar

We attended one of the Bartlett's periodic seminar evenings covering the Prescribed Examination process in late April. The seminar sessions are organised independently and include academic and student presentations. We generally attend so as to ensure that any students with more complicated technical questions on the process are able to receive clear directions. The evening went smoothly, and it is expected that individuals attending the seminar will make contact with us to request specific guidance as to their circumstances.

Consumer and client stakeholders

ARB continues to make steady progress in this area. Meetings took place with TrustMark and Houzz to discuss possible areas of joint working with the focus on strengthening the information provided publicly to enable consumers to make informed choices. Further contact with these stakeholders is planned over coming months.

We continue our work to increase the number of articles about or mentioning ARB in the architectural, construction and consumer press. A number of articles about the ARB have been published in Future Constructor and Architect Magazine and Construction Forum Magazine and the ARB has also been mentioned in House Beautiful magazine and the Evening Standard.

Other regulators

The sharing of communications best practice with other regulators continues with meetings taking place with the UK Inter Professional Group (UKIPG and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.)

The Interim Registrar met with colleagues at the Osteopaths Council to discuss regulatory issues.

In late April the Interim Registrar attended a seminar hosted by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority on Disproportionality in Regulation. The session explored issues surrounding Equality and Diversity in regulation.

5. Communicating ARB's work

Website

The number of visitors to our website is steadily increasing and our social media audiences are also growing. We are committed to ensuring that the information provided via these channels is of high quality and easy to locate. We are also mindful of the changes which have been introduced by Google to make searches on mobile devices boost results for mobile compatible sites.

Consequently, in October 2014 we conducted a focus group and a series of in-depth interviews in order to gain insights from architects, students and consumers about our website and use of social media. The key findings from this exercise were that the website was at times difficult to navigate and the information would benefit from reorganising and re-labelling. In terms of our social media usage the feedback was that our posts should be more engaging including elements such as surveys and question and answer sessions.

A further internal exercise is now planned to work with the staff team to reflect on what changes could be made to refresh the website to make information easier to locate. This will involve drawing on staff knowledge on the type and number of enquiries received and how best to name and structure the resources. This project will also incorporate the rearrangement of information for compatibility with mobile devices as Google have recently introduced a new algorithm to favour websites that work well on mobile devices, leading to our sites becoming less visible.

Home Building and Renovating Show Speaking Slot

ARB's attendance at the Home Building and Renovating Show was a great success; we had over 1000 visitors to our stand and handed out over 500 'Meeting your architect forms'. This brings the total number of these forms distributed, since we launched them in October 2014, to nearly 2000. The exhibition organisers also gave us a free speaking opportunity to present a Master class to visitors to the show. This was well attended and resulted in questions from the public and subsequent visits to the stand.

Registration Route Finder

In October 2014, an interactive self-serve tool was launched so as to provide a 24 hour facility for inquirers wishing to understand how they might qualify for UK registration. A link was added to the homepage of the ARB website so as to promote the tool and it was also promoted through ARB's social media channels.

Since the beginning of 2015, the route finder has had over 2,000 visits. ARB's regular questionnaire for new entrants will be expanded to include feedback on this point and more information will be brought back to the Board in due course.

Prescribed Examination – Independent Examiners' Annual Review day

At the beginning of April, ARB's team of Independent Examiners met for their annual review day. They heard, a general update on matters relating to the Prescribed Exam, Directive 2005/36/EC and registration requirements. A round table discussion on how to build on best

practice for Examiners provided a number of suggestions that staff will use to enhance application documents and the Examination process. Current statistics, feedback and transitional arrangements also formed part of the agenda.

6. European Issues

European Network of Architects' Competent Authorities (ENACA)

We hosted the most recent ENACA meeting in mid-March 2015, which was very well attended, with 18 countries in attendance. Discussions centred on how Competent Authorities were beginning to interpret the revised Directive and the revised processes for notifying qualifications to the European Commission. Attendees also discussed registration scenarios, how these are dealt with in Member States and where problems arose. We will be continuing to work with ENACA colleagues to draft guidance on notifying qualifications for listing under Annex V and to develop good practice under the revised Directive.

Architects Council of Europe (ACE)

We were represented at the ACE General Assembly in mid April 2015. As well as dealing with its usual business, the Assembly included a special session on the internationalisation of the profession and the impact on this on all areas of ACE's work. We are also continuing to contribute to relevant ACE working groups as we develop our understanding of the revisions which have been made to the Directive. We will be attending the next round of meetings in late May 2015. This will be a useful opportunity to share information and understand how other Member States are interpreting key parts of the revisions which have been made to the Directive.

7. Administration of the Register

Accuracy of the Register

The accuracy of the Register project continues. Staff from across the organisation are continuing to check each record and ensure that all information is correct and in a standardised format. During the course of the day any records that are viewed by the team are also amended and updated accordingly.

Update on Removals from the Register for Non Payment 2014

2014 Retention Fee Collection

In 2014, 2043 architects were taken off the Register for non-payment of the annual retention fee. As of 14 April 2015, 1442 are now back on the Register (71%).

2015 Retention Fee Collection

In 2015, 1824 architects were taken off the Register for non-payment of the annual retention fee (145 were struck off in 2014 and 2015). As of 14 April 2015, 1158 are now back on the Register (63%).

Planning work has commenced for the 2016 retention fee collection.

8. Committee Meetings

Investigations Oversight Committee	-	12 February 2015
Prescription Committee	-	26 February 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	26 & 27 February 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	6 March 2015
Audit Committee Meeting	-	26 March 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	30 March 2015
Prescription Committee	-	2 April 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	15 & 16 April 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	20-24 April 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	30 April 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	12 & 13 May 2015

9. Future Meetings and Events

Professional Conduct Committee	-	18 May 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	21 May 2015
Prescription Committee	-	21 May 2015
Remuneration Committee	-	21 May 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	1 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	2 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	5 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	9 & 10 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	23 & 24 June 2015
Investigation Oversight Committee	-	4 June 2015
Prescription Committee	-	18 June 2015
Audit Committee	-	2 July 2015

Architects Council of Europe Working Group Meetings – 20/21 May 2015

European Commission Architecture Sub-Group Meeting – 19 May 2015 (tbc)

ARB/SCHOSA Liaison Meeting – 26 June 2015

10. Anticipated dates for future Board reports on particular projects within the Business Plan July 2015

- Routes to Registration Update

11. Resource Implications

Staff resources continue to be stretched to capacity, as we continue to carry vacancies across the organisation. Due to the interim arrangements in place, Team members have taken on additional tasks and responsibilities in order to ensure that we continue to deliver. The Board

will be discussing current resource risks at the meeting.

12. Communication

The update on ARB's operational activities, updates the Board on ARB's work and any risks which may prevent the delivery of ARB's operations.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

ARB takes equality implications into account in all areas of its work and where appropriate, specific impact assessments are undertaken.