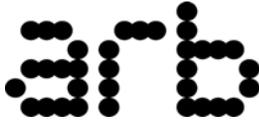


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# Architects Registration Board Business Plan 2008



## **Architects Registration Board Business Plan 2008**

### **Executive Summary**

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) has developed its Corporate Plan for the period 2008-2011. This includes our corporate aims and priorities for the next three years. The 2008 Business Plan sets out the work programme for the year in line with these corporate aims and priorities.

During 2008, much work will be undertaken by ARB in connection with two new European Directives. These are the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) ('the Qualifications Directive') and the Services in the Internal Markets Directive (2006/123/EC) ('the Services Directive'). The Qualifications Directive will have been incorporated into UK legislation in 2007 and ARB will need to ensure that changes to the operating systems required by the Directive are functioning effectively. ARB must also consider and prepare for changes which will be brought about by the implementation of the Services Directive in 2009.

ARB's work on regulating the use of the title "architect" will continue in 2008. Initial work was undertaken in 2007 to identify incorrect entries in the UK's main business directories, and these cases will need to be taken forward in 2008. In addition, ARB will be extending this printed directory audit to cover web-based directories. This area of our work will help the public to have confidence that, in selecting an architect from this source, they will be using someone who is properly trained, qualified and registered with the ARB.

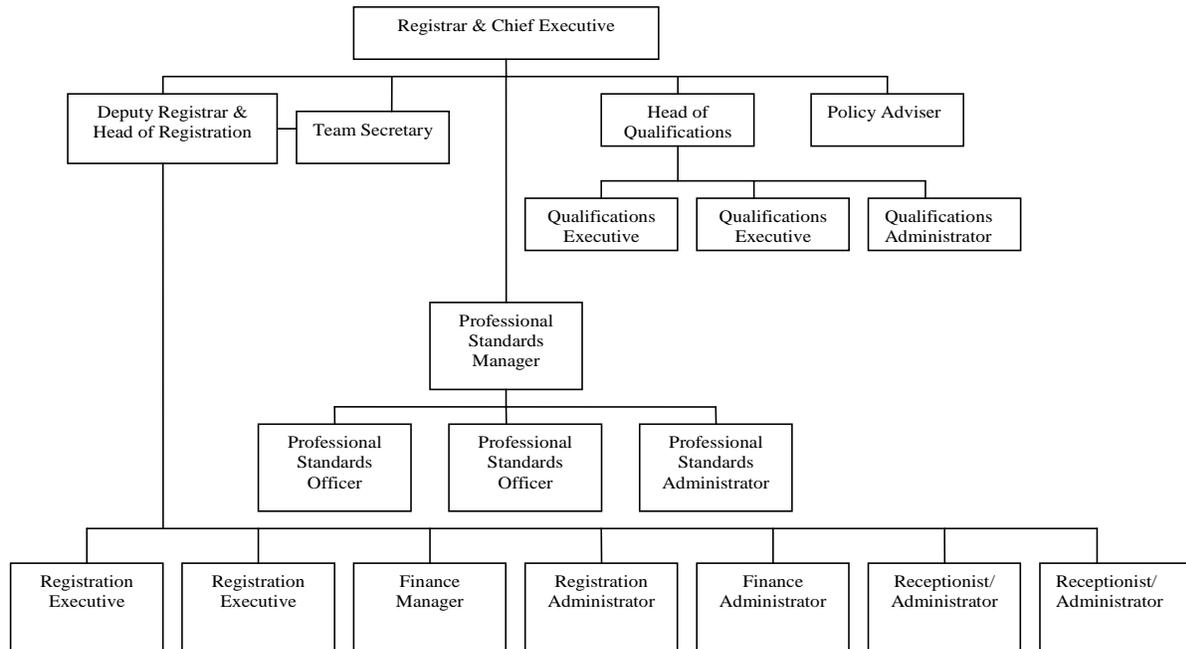
ARB will be concluding its work on the review of the Architects Code Standards of Conduct and Practice. The revised Code will be published and circulated to architects and other stakeholders.

An important area of the Board's work is to prescribe - or "recognise" - qualifications which individuals need to register as an architect. ARB is expecting an unprecedented number of applications for the prescription of qualifications in the latter part of 2007. This will create an increased workload during the early part of 2008, which must be effectively managed by the Board. Also in 2008, ARB will reflect on the operation of its procedures for prescribing qualifications, which were implemented in 2003. It will review these procedures and make any appropriate adjustments. In addition, the Board will complete its review of the criteria for the prescription of qualifications.

In 2007, the Board agreed to introduce a procedure for an independent third party review of certain of ARB's processes, where the legislation does not specify that an appeal must be made to the Courts. The review of the specified processes will be undertaken at the request of any individual who is dissatisfied with the way in which ARB followed that process. Consultation on the third party review will conclude in early 2008, following which the new arrangements will be implemented.

**Our Operations**

The staffing of the organisation is structured to deliver effectively the Board’s obligations under the Architects Act 1997 and the Board’s policies.



**Operational Plans**

The Board’s work is divided between a number of departments as shown below. The work to be undertaken within each department during 2008 has been divided into developmental issues, which represent project-based work and operational issues, representing the core activities of each department.

**Qualifications Department**

**Developmental Issues**

1. Consider the implementation of a risk-based scheme to monitor the competence of architects in business or practice.
2. Work with the Registration Department to ensure the effective implementation of the Qualifications Directive and the Services Directive.

**Operational Issues**

1. Support the work of the Prescription Committee and the Board to ensure that the unprecedented number of applications for prescription expected in 2007 are dealt with during the early part of 2008.
2. Ensure that the applications for prescription in December 2008 and the annual monitoring submissions due in 2008 are dealt with in the appropriate way.
3. Ensure that ARB's commitments under the Higher Education Regulation Review Groups Concordat on data collection and quality assurance are met.
4. Following the first five years of operation, conduct a review of the procedures for the prescription of qualifications to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.
5. Agree and publish any revised criteria for the prescription of qualifications, ensuring all key stakeholders are appropriately briefed on the implementation programme.

**Regulation Department**

**Developmental Issues**

1. Continue to manage complaints relating to the misuse of the title “architect”, additionally carrying forward potentially in excess of 2,000 cases for case management, which have resulted from an audit of three paper-based directories. Continue to review the three main directories to identify any cases of repeated title misuse and commence an audit on a number of web-based directories.
2. Review the Board's current policy and the monitoring regime with regard to professional indemnity insurance.
3. Consider the results of the consultation exercise on amendments to the Architects Code, publish revisions to the Code and oversee its implementation and promotion.
4. Review the constitution/membership of the Professional Conduct Committee.
5. Ensure the proper implementation of third party review of process regime as and when agreed by the Board.
6. Undertake recruitment to the Inquiry panel under the terms of Rule 5 of the Investigations Rules
7. Work with the Qualifications and Registration Departments in preparing for the implementation of the Services Directive in 2009.

**Operational Issues**

1. Support the work of the Investigations Committee, the Professional Conduct Committee, the Code Review Working Group, the Professional Indemnity Insurance Review Group and the Title Regulation Working Group.
2. Embed and develop further the new Operational System for dealing with complaints, providing an improved service to architects and consumers in investigating complaints and referring them through to the Investigations and Professional Conduct Committees as appropriate.

**Registration Department**

**Developmental Issues**

1. Implement new systems to deal with applications for registration under the Qualifications

Directive.

2. Work with the Qualifications and Regulations Department in preparing for the implementation of the Services Directive in 2009.
3. Prepare and introduce electronic processes which allow for exchange of information between the EU's Competent Authorities in relation to applications for registration, including an online registration process as required by the Services Directive.
4. Explore the viability of becoming one of the Single Points of Contact under the Services Directive.
5. Dependent on the outcome of the Prescribed Examination outsourcing project:-
  - Manage the economic delivery of the outsourcing contract implementation.
  - If the outsourcing is not successful, undertake recruitment and training (if appropriate) of examiners and independent examiners.

**Operational Issues**

1. Continue to maintain the Register and the various processes for registration, including collection of the annual fee.
2. Ensure that ARB fulfils its obligations in terms of registration under the Qualifications Directive, including the role of the Competent Authority.

**Finance**

**Developmental Issues**

1. Introduce three-year forecasts of ARB's finances to improve the business planning and budgeting process.

**Operational Issues**

1. Support the work of the Finance and Establishment Committee.
2. Provide robust cost assessments for all proposed activities.
3. Continue to manage ARB's finances prudently and to provide timely management information.

**Corporate**

**Developmental Issues**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Finalise the development of and implement a Diversity Scheme to comply with legislation for equality, race, gender and age, taking into account sexual orientation and religious beliefs.               | Resource-intensive                        |
| 2. Review the electoral policy with a view to considering the introduction of on-line voting.  | Staff time and may require IT development |
| 3. Implement a "Green" plan for the organisation to make ARB's environment and processes more sustainable, energy efficient and designed to help preserve the environment.                                 | Staff resources                           |
| 4. Review the process of appointment and election to the Board to ensure that it is fit for purpose, and identify whether an alternative model may be more effective in delivering ARB's responsibilities. | Staff resources                           |
| 5. Deliver an enhanced Communications Plan.  | Staff resources                           |

**Operational Issues**

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Manage, in tandem with the Board's advisers, the refurbishment and extension project of Weymouth Street.             | Staff resources          |
| 2. Plan the return to Weymouth Street for early 2009.   | Staff resources          |
| 3. Review the General Rules in relation to the election of the Chair and Vice Chair.                                    |                          |
| 4. Undertake an accessibility and usability audit of the Board's website to ensure compliance with current legislation. |                          |
| 5. Undertake (through external experts) Board member appraisals.  | External resource needed |

**Matters to be carried forward**

The Board has identified the following priorities which it may wish to consider as particular projects within the 2009 Business Plan. The Board will review these in 2008 to assess how they may be taken forward in future years.

1. Whether ARB should explore seeking amendments to the Architects Act 1997 to include the regulation of architectural consultants and other possible definitions. The Board may also wish to explore whether the Act could be expanded to include an offence where an individual or firm holds themselves out as an architect by implication.
2. The Regulation Department and other departments may explore whether to develop and introduce appropriate service standards and reporting on service delivery.
3. The Investigations Rules and Professional Conduct Committee Rules may be reviewed to provide a wider range of options to the Investigations Committee and also to amend the Rules to address any problems which have been identified.
4. The Board may wish to seek amendments to the Architects Act 1997 to reflect areas where consumers would benefit from a strengthening of the legislation or where amendments to the legislation could lighten the Board's approach without any consumer detriment.
5. The Board may wish to explore the question of consumer redress.
6. The Board may wish to review whether architects should display their registered status on their notepaper.