



Subject Update on ARB's Operational Activities
Purpose For Note
From ARB's Staff Team

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1. Summary

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

2. Open/Confidential Session

Open session. Any confidential matters will be discussed in a separate report in the confidential session.

3. 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 2017-2018.

4. Key Points

Stakeholder Relations

Professions Together – Professional Qualifications/the UK's Departure from the European Union

We attended a meeting which was organised by Professions Together (formerly the United Kingdom Inter-professional Group) which focussed on discussions about the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive and the UK's departure from the EU. A wide range of Statutory Regulatory Bodies/Professional Body representatives attended and shared the most up to date information about the work that they were undertaking and how they were preparing for the UK's departure from the EU. Representatives from relevant Government Departments fed into the discussions. This provided us with a useful update on how other similar organisations are preparing for 2019. We have since established an internal staff working group to carry out further scenario planning, to look at the likely impacts that those scenarios could have on ARB and its work, prepare Brexit-specific risk register and to develop plans to take ARB through the departure process as it unfolds.

Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture

We met with SCHOSA Council members where we sought information regarding the number of institutions which were looking to develop qualifications in architecture which would fit within the apprenticeship framework. We also updated SCHOSA representatives on the position regarding the review of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications. Further to our meeting with the RIBA, we notified SCHOSA representatives that ARB and RIBA would be forming a joint working group and would be working together to try and develop a common set of Criteria that could be used by both organisations for the purposes of prescription and validation. SCHOSA expressed the strong view that they would also welcome the opportunity to be represented on the joint ARB/RIBA working group. We explained and confirmed that we would liaise with SCHOSA, who we regard as an important stakeholder, as well as other stakeholders through separate face to face meetings and via email during the drafting process to seek their views as the draft Criteria were developed.

Magistrates Association

We met with the Chief Executive of the Magistrates Association to find out more about the work of the organisation as well as opportunities for joint working. We spoke about our work in regulating the use of the title 'architect' and prosecuting individuals for using the title when they are not registered. It was agreed that we will provide an informative piece explaining the Protected Title of Architect for publication in the April edition of the Magistrates Association's bi-monthly magazine, which is disseminated to over 16,000 magistrates in England and Wales. We have also agreed to share with the Association, any future press releases in relation to the prosecution of individuals who misuse the title.

Apprenticeships

We met with representatives of the Trailblazer Group in mid-January for an update on the approval of the architectural assistant (level 6) and architect (level 7) apprenticeship standards and the architectural assistant End Point Assessment (EPA) and to provide feedback on the draft architect apprenticeship EPA. The Group confirmed that the level 6 and level 7 apprenticeship standards have been approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) with only a short list of minor conditions. It also confirmed that the level 6 EPA had been given the green light to proceed for full approval and it expects to have an update from the IfA by the end of January 2018 in relation to this. The IfA was reviewing the funding bands for each apprenticeship.

We provided feedback on a draft level 7 EPA emphasising the need for clarity on where the Part 2 and Part 3 qualifications are awarded, clarity on where the Part 3 teaching and assessment is carried out and where reference to the practical training requirements sit within the document. As with the level 6 EPA submission, the Registrar and Chief Executive provided a letter of support in principle for the architect apprenticeship but highlighted that the Board will want to see the final documentation before stating its position. The level 7 EPA was submitted to the IfA on 17 January 2018.

Regular contact with the Trailblazer Group and review of draft EPA documents will assist with ensuring that any potential apprenticeship provision will satisfy the Board's requirements for prescription.

5. Reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications

Since the last Board meeting:

- Both Task and Finish groups have each met at least three times;
- Each group has discussed the outcomes of the Board's decisions, agreed a working methodology and is now progressing with its work;
- We have contacted stakeholders and updated them in relation to the position;
- We have updated our dedicated website page to reflect the most recent decisions made by the Board; and
- The Audit Committee has reviewed the specific Project Risk Registers and risk of ARB and RIBA developing separate Criteria.

In addition, the Registrar, Head of Qualifications and Governance and Chair of the Prescription Committee met with Adrian Dobson (Executive Director Members) and Alan Jones (Vice President, Education) on 11 January 2018. At that meeting it was agreed that both ARB and the RIBA would form a joint working group in order to work together to try and develop a revised set of Criteria at all three levels, i.e., Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3, that both organisations could continue to hold in common and that meet the respective objectives of each organisation. The joint group will include up to three members of ARB's Criteria Task and Finish Group, plus a member of the ARB Executive and up to three members of the RIBA's Education Committee, plus a member of the RIBA Executive. We hope to hold the first meeting in February, using ARB's initial drafts as a basis for discussion. Our Criteria Task and Finish Group will continue to operate as needed to provide advice and support as the Criteria continue to be developed by the ARB/RIBA group. We anticipate that we should be in a position to bring a revised draft of the Criteria to the Board for discussion in May 2018, and if the Board agrees, issue these for consultation following that meeting. Both ARB and the RIBA will aim to align their respective approval processes so that the Criteria receives the relevant approvals and sign offs at similar times.

We will continue to engage with our key stakeholders throughout the development of the Criteria and Procedures as agreed by the Board in November and will have taken their views/feedback into account when the revised drafts are presented to the Board in May. We will do this during the Spring through face-to-face meetings and email correspondence so that we can ensure we are developing documents that are workable and well-informed. All stakeholders, including our key stakeholders, will have an opportunity to provide feedback through the Board's consultation over the late Spring/early Summer in addition to this.

Whilst there is a little slippage in terms of our original and proposed timeframes, we are still on track to deliver revised Criteria and Procedures by September 2018 for implementation in September 2019.

6. Mutual Recognition Agreements

Department for International Trade

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has recently established a Built Environment Group, to which we have become observers. The aim of the Group is to gather the sector's

views on trade policy so that the Government can take these views into account as the policies are developed and implemented. The Group will meet every three to four months and is seeking to engage as wide a breadth of the construction industry as possible. We attended the first meeting of the group in early December and will continue to attend, providing factual and statistical information as appropriate.

Architects Accreditation Council of Australian (AACA) and New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB)

We held a useful telephone conversation with representatives of the AACA/NZRAB late January 2018 to continue our discussions and explore the development of a potential mutual recognition agreement (MRA). A representative from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government was also present for the telephone call. AACA/NZRAB confirmed that they would ideally like an MRA to be agreed and up and running as soon as possible. We will, with our Government Sponsor Lead will be preparing a timeline setting out the necessary steps that need to be undertaken in terms of agreeing an MRA and the timeframes the necessary legislative changes can take place. We have agreed that we will bring a paper forward to the Board in May 2018, asking the Board to discuss and agree its strategy regarding the development of an MRA countries outside of the EU. If the Board agrees, we will then continue and deepen our discussions with AACA/NZRAB, working towards the drafting of an MRA which we will bring back to the Board in late 2018/2019.

7. Europe

Architects Council of Europe (ACE)

The Registrar attended part of the ACE General Assembly meeting held in late November 2017. The meeting included an update on all the work strands being undertaken by ACE, including the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Directive workgroup and the ongoing discussions with Canada about a European wide mutual recognition agreement.

8. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

We continue to prepare for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2017. The Head of Professional Standards has been appointed as ARB's Data Protection Officer and we have been providing MCHLG with the assurances they require of all of their arms-length bodies. The Audit Committee will continue to monitor ARB's progression towards compliance and an audit will take place later in the year.

9. Communicating ARB's work

As always we continue to use a range of communications tools to disseminate messages to our different stakeholders.

Tone of Voice

In 2017 we undertook a review of our tone of voice in our written communications. An advisory group was established, it included representatives from the General Medical Council, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the Architects Benevolent Society and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Members of the group met and shared learnings from similar initiatives undertaken by their organisations, and an anonymised sample of ARB correspondence was shared with the advisory group who gave feedback and

offered suggestions for redrafting.

The ARB project team reviewed the feedback received with many of the suggested amendments being implemented. Changes have been made web pages, and to standard letters and a range of standard emails developed. The project team is in the process of finalising our house style guide document with a view to rolling out across the organisation. We will be writing to the professional bodies shortly to inform them of the outcomes.

Social media

We reported last year that we had undertaken work to update our image across all our social media channels so that the branding we use on social media reflects that on our redesigned website. We continue to monitor the impact of our social media posts and responses to them and anticipate considering our approach in 2018 once the new Communications Lead is in post.

Welcome pack for registrants

The welcome pack for those joining the Register for the first time has now been launched. This takes the form of a user-friendly microsite with sections covering a range of relevant matters including; guidance on registrants' responsibilities, the Code of Conduct, information about how registrants can update their details as well as links to other organisations such as professional bodies and schools of architecture. Another objective of the new pack is to increase the understanding of the role of ARB and the regulatory landscape, for those who did not qualify in the UK and may not be as aware of the UK context. We communicated with a range of professional bodies in developing this tool. We will be seeking feedback from those using it over the course of 2018 and comments received will feed into ongoing improvements.

10. Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency

Numbers on Register

On 31 December 2017, the Register stood at 39,988. This was before 1201 architects were removed from the Register for non-payment. The Register as of 31 January 2018 stands at 39,501.

Systems improvements

We are now using an enhanced email management system and have data from our first quarter indicating that 2,532 substantive email conversations were managed during the period. The new system enables us to track emails, set and generate data according to subject matter, measure speed of response, and send out standardised responses to routine queries. The five most popular subjects were categorized as 'Change of address' (417), 'Retention fee' (278), 'Resignations (212), 'Prescribed Exam' (203) and EU applications (172). The average time for responses to emails across the team was one working day.

Work is underway to implement software developed to store and process passlists electronically. We are in the process of uploading legacy data from existing passlists to make the system operational. We anticipate that the process will be fully operational later in 2018.

A huge amount of work has gone into uploading legacy data, including the conversion of 1580 passlists dating back to 2005 into a data manageable format. Over 1000 of these have

now been uploaded into the passlist software.

Update on Removals from the Register for Non-Payment 2017

Following the removal of 1201 architects for non-payment on 4 January 2018, as of 31 January 2018, 491 architects had been re-entered on the Register (41%). A retention fee 'wash up' session is due to take place in February 2018, to discuss the successes and areas for improvement for next year. Feedback received during the retention fee period will be considered.

In 2017, it was reported that work is also underway to identify those former registrants who were removed for non-payment in 2016 and 2017, to establish whether they are still using the title 'architect' in business or practice. This work remains ongoing and at present, the Professional Standards team identified 220 potential cases where there was a high risk of title misuse. As of 19 January 2018, 2 cases remain open as investigations continue.

A discussion paper will be brought to the May Board meeting so that ARB's policy on regulating the title 'architect' can be properly ventilated.

Section 11 Process

Section 11 of the Architects Act 1997 states that architects must provide us with a correct address for registration. To ensure the Register is accurate we attempt to contact architects with incorrect addresses and if unsuccessful, will ultimately remove them from the Register under Section 11 (for failing to provide correct contact information).

On 18 January 2018, we emailed 361 architects (355 in 2016) whose retention fee invoice was returned as the addressee was no longer at the address. On 24 January 2018 we wrote to 200 architects who still had not updated their contact details to begin formal proceedings, indicating that 161 architects took action in less than a week following receipt of our email. The rationale for writing now is that anyone who has not updated their details after the statutory nine months will be removed before the retention fee invoice for 2019 is sent out.

This same letter was sent to 204 architects in 2017 with 14 eventually being removed on 24 October 2017.

EU architects

We are monitoring the number of architects with EU nationality or qualifications entering and leaving the Register. The number of architects registering through the EU route was approximately 23% lower in 2017 than in 2016 (1232 in 2016 to 945 in 2017).

There was also a marginal increase in EU qualified architects resigning from the Register in 2017. In 2016, 28% of resigning architects were of EU nationality (other than UK) against 33% in 2017.

In 2017, 32% of architects removed from the Register for non-payment were of EU nationality (other than UK) against 30% in 2016.

11. Committee Meetings held since the November Board Meeting

Professional Conduct Committee – 4-8 December 2017

Remuneration Committee – 29 November 2017

Prescription Committee – 11 January 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 11-12 January 2018

Audit Committee – 17 January 2018

Prescription Committee – 31 January 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 6-8 February 2018

Investigations Oversight Committee – 13 February 2018

12. Future Meetings and Events

Prescription Committee - 1 March 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 7-8 March 2018

Audit Committee – 14 March 2018

Prescription Committee - 28 March 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 26-29 March 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 5-6 April 2018

Professional Conduct Committee – 23-26 April 2018

We will be attending the next European Network for Architects Competent Authorities (ENACA) meeting in late February 2017. The meeting will be focussing on how competent authorities deal with registration queries in each European Member State and the development of guidance to underpin the scrutiny of notifications relating to architecture qualifications.

13. Resource Implications

Only as identified in the paper.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. Equality and Diversity Implications

In relation to the Criteria and Procedures reviews outlined above, we have undertaken an initial Equality Impact Assessment and will carry out a further impact assessment once the revised documents have been drafted. The development of the architect assistant and architect apprenticeship standards and end point assessments should facilitate the development of new and more diverse ways of studying architecture and training to become an architect.

Our work around tone of voice, whilst not directly related to equality and diversity, is geared towards ensuring accessibility of our messages and web pages. We have also worked to ensure our messages to architects are appropriate in their tone and take account of the impact that the message may have on the recipient.

We have worked to ensure our new web pages, including the Welcome Pack, are accessible to everyone who might need to use them and will be drawing on the feedback we receive to measure our success and inform our improvements.

Our new email management system gives us the ability to measure the number of queries according to topic and therefore analyse certain types of query where necessary. We have started recording the number of email queries where reduced fees are requested. These types of query often relates to issues such as disability, illness, maternity/paternity leave or retired status. We will look to introduce a more refined system of categorisation in the first quarter of 2018 to help us understand where our fees and requirements may prove to be a potential barrier to those with protected characteristics accessing or remaining on the Register.

In accordance with our proposed E&D Framework if approved, we will be looking at how accessible all of our information and services are when just provided online.

17. Further Actions

These are referred to within the key points set out above.