



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 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, its statement of priorities and delivers against the Business Plan.

4. Stakeholder Relations

Hackitt Review

We have continued to regularly attend meetings of the Steering Group on competencies for working on higher risk residential buildings. ARB is leading the working group which will look at the required competencies for architects and other building designers who work on higher risk residential buildings. We are in the process of establishing the membership of the working group and it will meet for the first time in early September. An oral update will be provided to the Board at its meeting.

Office for Students/Quality Assurance Agency

The Qualifications Team has been undertaking some initial research into the new regulatory function of the Office for Students (OfS), its Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), and the revised UK Quality Code developed by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on behalf of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA), in consultation with the higher education sector.

The above entities and their new functions/codes will alter the regulatory framework that higher education providers are operating under. The expectation to register with the OfS appears to be the most far reaching with institutions requiring registration if they wish to:

- access public grant funding (such as funding to support teaching), and/or student support funding (such as enabling students at a provider to access student finance)
- apply to the Home Office for a Tier 4 licence to recruit international students, or to maintain an existing licence
- apply for degree awarding powers (DAPs) in order to award their own degrees, and/or university title (UT)

To learn more about the specific policies and guidelines in relation to professional awards, the Qualifications Team have arranged meetings with both the OfS and the QAA. The aim of this contact is to get a better understanding of the changing landscape and how new arrangements can inform the review of our Procedures, and the redrafting of the Good Practice Handbook.

EU exit planning meetings

We continue to liaise with comparable bodies to ensure that our planning for the potential impact is in line with best practice. We met with the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) on 13 August 2018 to share what we are each doing to plan for Brexit and in particular, a 'No Deal' scenario.

We have a further meeting with the General Medical Council in September and will be attending the September meeting of the Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe (AURE) to learn more about what the healthcare regulators are doing to prepare as a collective. The healthcare regulators are also competent authorities impacted by the future of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (MRPQD).

Stakeholder Research

Our Request for Proposal was issued on 1 August 2018. To date we have received six expressions of interest and queries from seven agencies. Agencies have until 31 August 2018 to submit queries and all proposals must be submitted by 14 September 2018.

Association of Consultant Architects (ACA)

Prompted by our Annual Report stakeholder email, an invitation was extended by ACA for an ARB representative to attend the ACA CPD Zone at London Build on 23 October 2018. The ARB Chair and Registrar will be attending the event.

RIBA

ARB responded to a request to help promote RIBA's International Architects Survey (closing date 31 August). We are also exploring opportunities to engage with the student members of RIBA council with a view to further developing links with architecture students.

Consumer Codes Approval Scheme (CCAS) – Code Sponsors

Through our collaborative working with the CCAS, we have made contact with some of their Code Sponsors and begun early discussions to explore the possibility of collaborative communications around consumer protection issues.

5. Apprenticeships

In June 2018, the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) approved the architectural assistant and architect standards and end point assessment documents. These have been published on the Institute for Apprenticeships website and can now be utilised by practice/institutions seeking to develop apprenticeship schemes. Our Frequent Asked Questions for institutions have been posted on our website and emailed to all schools of architecture offering prescribed qualifications. Staff have updated the map of prescribed qualifications on the ARB website to add the functionality to filter by an apprenticeship mode. This will be useful for potential apprentices and practices when searching for prescribed apprenticeship provision.

6. Meeting with Delegation from South Korea

We hosted a meeting with a delegation from South Korea, which included representatives from the following Korean architectural authorities: the Korea Architectural Accrediting Board (KAAB) and the Korea Institute of Registered Architects (KIRA) in early September. At the time of preparing this report, we have planned to centre our discussions on the features of our respective prescription and registration processes. We will provide further updates at the Board meeting on 11 September 2018. We are aware KIRA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Architects Council of Europe with a view to establishing a mutual recognition agreement between the EU and Korea.

7. Business as Usual Reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications

Procedures Task and Finish Group

The Staff have continued to work on the revised Procedures over the Summer period. The team are awaiting further clarification regarding the structure and content of the revised Criteria before finalising the working draft. Once a working draft has been finalised the Procedures Task and Finish Group and the Criteria Task and Finish Group will be brought together to discuss whether the relevant elements of the Procedures will continue to be operable in line with the Board's objectives for this business as usual review.

Criteria Task and Finish Group

At an informal meeting between the Board and the Criteria Task and Finish Group in late July, the Board members present confirmed that they were pleased with the direction of travel in relation to the draft Criteria and that the draft Criteria were developing into something which was an improvement on what is currently in place. The Board members did, however, have some further queries on some aspects of the draft Criteria and asked the Task and Finish Group to undertake further work. Once the Board is satisfied with the draft Criteria, we will be seeking to re-engage with stakeholders in order to obtain their input and views on the revised Criteria.

8. Communicating ARB's work

As always we continue to use a range of communications tools to support the functions of ARB.

Publications

We have received three press enquiries and put out two new releases since the last Board

meeting in July and have been referenced in at least six publications. ARB has been invited to contribute to three publications since July, these articles are in development and more information will be available once the final arrangements have been confirmed.

Ebulletin

The latest Ebulletin was published on 26 July 2018. We actively track performance in the first week following publication. The email was sent to 38784 architects, 0.5% more than the last edition in May 2018. Subsequent visits to the microsite and page views were lower than in May 2018 although higher than the same month last year. Figures suggest July is typically a quieter month, potential due to holidays. The most popular article was the *Degree Apprenticeships* piece.

In addition to serving as a point of contact to our registrants the Ebulletin is a cost effective way to help ensure the Register is kept up to date. The Ebulletin email prominently features the recipient's contact details at the top of the message together with a click through option to update this information. We received approximately 400 contact detail updates in the week immediately after the July Ebulletin was sent out compared to around 100 in the previous week.

Website

In late July we reviewed and refreshed the Contact Us page of the ARB website, to ensure the information was up to date and effective as possible in directing users to the appropriate source of information. The review was a collaborative effort across all teams.

Retention Fee Communications

Further cross-team working has taken place to review and suggest revisions for retention fee related to communications to both large practices as well as architects. A new email has been developed to engage with large companies and ensure their list of employees is up to date ahead of the retention fee period. Work considering the content of retention fee reminders, advice and invoices is ongoing, and hope to ensure these communications are as effective as possible in supporting architects through this regulatory requirement.

Brexit Communications

Our internal Brexit working group has had a number of meetings to consider and lay out a schedule of work that will help us prepare for the range of possible scenarios and operational issues that could arise from the UK's departure from the EU. Most recently this included a meeting to identify key communication needs and begin developing a dedicated communications plan to ensure our stakeholder engagement is timely and effective.

9. Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency

Numbers on Register

On 31 December 2017, the Register stood at 39,988. The Register as of 27 August 2018 stood at 40,824 Of these, 8388 are EU nationals (not including UK). 7192 of these individuals have registered addresses in the UK. This compares with 8108 EU nationals (not including UK) at

the start of 2018, with 6943 based in the UK.

Prescribed Examination Review

As was reported in May and July, and in line with the agreed 2018 Business Plan, we are in the process of a 'business as usual' review of the Procedures for the Prescribed Examination ('the exam'). We established the scope of the review as:

- Explore whether the procedures remain fit for purpose following completion of the Criteria/Procedure reviews
- Explore whether the eligibility requirements remain fit for purpose
- Explore whether the process is efficient and robust in offering assurance that those who pass the exam have equivalent competence to an architect undertaking an ARB prescribed qualification at the appropriate level

Any revised or updated procedures for 'the exam' should enable the Board to:

- Continue to discharge its functions under Section 4(1)(a) and 4(1)(b) of the Architects Act 1997 ('the Act'); and
- Ensure that 'the exam' process supports the admission of competent individuals to the Register, in that individuals given 'equivalence' to Part 1 or Part 2 through 'the exam' have demonstrated that they are competent against all of the Criteria and to the required level.

One of our further objectives is to ensure that processes are streamlined insofar as is possible, but that achieving this does not come at the expense of ARB discharging its functions under Section 4(1)(a) and 4(1)(b).

We have concluded the first stages of our pre-consultation process and have compiled the preliminary views of the stakeholders who responded. We have also undertaken two further roundtable events, one with existing examiners and one open event with examiners, former candidates and architects from academia attending. We are creating a further compilation of the views obtained.

We will continue to explore the views and ideas that have emerged from the pre-consultation, but will put any final decision on how to proceed on hold until further progress has been made on the Criteria review. The form the new Criteria takes will influence any final guidance and procedures we develop, so we will consider these once they are finalised.

Systems improvements

We reported at the February 2018 Board meeting that we had introduced a new email management system and reported in July that since the start of 2018, 7762 email conversations were logged in the general inbox, with a total of 13,006 emails sent by Registration team members.

As of 9 August 2018, we logged 9115 email conversations and 15,319 emails sent by Registration team members.

Across the course of the year, the five most popular topics have been Change of Address

(627), Prescribed Examination (529), General Queries (426), Reinstatement (402) and EU applications (393). In terms of the origin of queries relating to the Prescribed Examination, India (35), the USA (34) and Australia (23) are the most common countries we receive enquiries from.

We continue to work on software we have developed to store and process pass lists electronically. We have completed a successful pilot of the system, receiving excellent feedback from school users and internal users alike. We are now working on making system changes following recommendations from a penetration testing exercise undertaken in June.

We believe the benefits will be faster processing times, greater control of the title of prescribed awards being handed out to students, and the ability to structure the data and link specific qualifications to an individual's registration record. We also hope that as the system is further developed, the conversion of the paper files into structured data which we have already undertaken, and the continued collection of pass lists as structured data, will give us greater insight into the number of architects we anticipate registering with us year on year.

Registration EU matters

As reported above, we are tracking the number of architects with EU nationality (other than UK) entering and leaving the Register. We note that the number of EU nationals on the Register is still increasing though at a slower pace than in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

At February's Board meeting we reported that 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).

We also reported that there was 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. We also reported that in 2017, 32% of architects removed from the Register for non-payment were of EU nationality (other than UK) against 30% in 2016.

Only 19 architects have resigned from the Register between 1 January and 9 August 2018 in total, meaning there is no meaningful data to assess whether a trend is developing.

The number registering from the EU continues to be lower than in 2016 and 2017, and we have only processed 485 applications via the EU route up until the end of July 2018, against 846 and 636 in 2016 and 2017 respectively. This is a 24 per cent drop from 2017 to 2018 and a 42 per cent drop from 2016.

The number of certificates we have issued (which would potentially enable a UK architect to register in Europe) has increased since 2017, with 114 being issued from January to July 2018 of 2018, against 98 in the same period of 2017 (16 per cent increase). This is up from 56 in the same period in July 2016 (a 104 per cent increase).

We have factored the drop in EU applications into our forecasts for 2019, and will continue to

monitor the terms of the agreement around the UK's exit from the European Union and how this is likely to affect the Register.

10. Committee Meetings held since the July Board Meeting

16 August 2018 – Prescription Committee
16 August 2018 – Professional Conduct Committee
17 August 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee

11. Future Meetings and Events

20 September 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
21 September 2018 – Investigation Oversight Committee
27 September to 2 October 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
3 and 4 October 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
11 October 2018 – Prescription Committee
18 October 2018 – Audit Committee
17 to 19 October 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
23 October 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
30 October to 1 November 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
13 to 16 November 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
20 to 22 November 2018 - Professional Conduct Committee
6 December 2018 – Prescription Committee

Meeting with a Delegation from China

We are due to meet with a delegation representing design companies from within the Zhejiang Province of China in late September. The delegation has indicated that they wish to discuss how ARB's prescription, registration and professional standards processes operate in the UK.

Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture

We are planning to hold one of our regular liaison meetings with representatives of SCHOSA Council in mid-October and attend SCHOSA's Autumn meeting to provide updates about the business as usual reviews of the Criteria and Procedures, as well as to discuss other areas of mutual interest.

Association for Professional Studies in Architecture

We have been invited to attend APSA's Autumn meeting which is being held in late November. We will provide further information regarding the reviews of the Criteria and Procedures as well as other relevant updates as appropriate.

12. Resource Implications

Only as identified in the paper.

13. 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.

As our discussions about the any potential development of mutual recognition agreements progress it is important that we continue to engage and work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure we are appropriately aligned with the UK's approach in this area.

As we approach the October and December EU Summits, it is important that we have a considered and resourced Brexit Communication plan in place to ensure our stakeholders are informed of relevant information in a timely and effective manner.

14. Communication

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

15. Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and Diversity considerations will be central to the review of the prescribed examination with comments drawn from the pre-consultation response being factored into the direction of travel. An Equality Assessment will be carried out once the shape of any changes has been formulated.

16. Further Actions

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