

# Board Paper

for Open Session

Subject:

Establishment of the Education Transition Reference  
Group

Board meeting:

6 September 2023

Agenda item:

7e

Action:

- For noting
- For discussion
- For decision

## Purpose

To agree the establishment of the Education Transition Reference Group which will provide feedback to the ARB executive on the implementation of reforms to the initial education and training of architects.

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## Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- i. Notes the proposal for the establishment of this group; and
  - ii. Agrees that the focus and operation will support the transition process to the new framework and outcomes proposed in the strategy.
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## Annexes

None

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## Author/Key Contact

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# 1. Open Session

- 1.1. This paper is being taken in Open Session.
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## 2. Background and Key points

- 2.1. The Board is being asked to approve the use of new academic and practice outcomes from September 2023, and standards for providers of qualifications from January 2024. These will form the measures that the Accreditation process will assess, and the basis on which the Accreditation Committee will recognise qualifications that lead to UK registration.
- 2.2. We will support the introduction of the standards and outcomes with online guidance, in the form of a handbook for providers.
- 2.3. Our consultation and engagement exercises during the development processes have highlighted the desire from stakeholders for further detailed guidance on the details of the transition period, as some providers develop new qualifications, and some make changes to existing ones, in order to meet the new outcomes and standards.
- 2.4. Whilst the process of accreditation is new, there is inevitably a period of time where providers will be managing existing qualifications, whilst developing new ones.
- 2.5. Providers are also subject to requirements from other regulatory or oversight bodies, and requirements can vary within the UK. This includes definition of frequency of data collection, or ways of demonstrating outcomes through visits or other assessment approaches.
- 2.6. Some providers have expressed concerns about duplication, timelines or the impact on their resources and systems of providing different sets of data.
- 2.7. Whilst we need to be sure that our processes request the right types of information and engagement, in order to demonstrate the outcomes and standards, we also want to ensure that the purpose of the data requirements are clear and understandable. Our aims are that the impact on providers is minimised and that consistency across providers is assured, strengthening ARB's accreditation decisions.
- 2.8. Additionally, we want to ensure that we support the development of the new Accreditation Committee, and provide assurance to the Board that we are applying any relevant and transferable lessons from the previous Prescription process, whilst not constraining it by previous approaches.

### *How the group would operate*

- 2.9. We propose a fixed-term reference group that can operate over approximately 18 to 24 months, covering the first cycle of new applications for qualifications under

the new outcomes, and also the first review cycle of existing providers using the new standards.

- 2.10. The sessions may take the form of a meeting with questions about a topic, or the form of a Q+A session with the Executive. We may ask questions in advance, or ask for topics from the participants.
- 2.11. The Reference Group would be administered by the Executive, and Chaired by the Director of Registration and Accreditation, with support from others in ARB as required and appropriate. We propose that the two Board Members who were Prescription Committee Members are also involved, for continuity and assurance and oversight at Board level.
- 2.12. The reference group would provide feedback on our approach and our guidance. It would not be a decision-making group; rather it would help us test and refine any guidance we have, or identify areas where we need to focus in the future. The group could also help us test out any assumptions we have on what constitutes good or best practice, that we may wish to highlight to others in the sector. We would build any feedback into future iterations of the guidance handbook.
- 2.13. There would be no quoracy or fixed membership. We propose that meetings would focus on a single topic or area, and we would invite those with an interest or expertise. Possible attendees can self-select on the basis of interest.
- 2.14. We propose that the group would meet no more often than every other month. It would meet more frequently in the first year when the new standards and outcomes are first introduced.
- 2.15. Meetings would be online in order to increase attendance from across the UK, minimise impact on attendees' other responsibilities, and allow some of the discussions to be easily recorded for the purposes of collecting the detail, subject to participants' agreement. This would also reduce costs and allow more topics to be considered.

*Which stakeholders are likely to be approached?*

- 2.16. We think the following groups are likely to be interested, or have already expressed an interest:-
  - Heads of Schools, or those involved in new or existing qualifications
  - Groups such as SCOSA and APSA, with overview of higher education
  - Other regulators in the UK, or those with responsibility for funding or policy decisions that may impact on accreditation work
  - Employers
  - Representatives of groups who are impacted by regulatory matters, or who have a role in professional or EDI issues
  - Students

2.17. Areas for feedback from the Education Transition Reference Group may include, but not be limited to:-

- ARB guidance and its clarity or areas for further development
- Dataset definitions and the process of collection, and how it compares to other requirements from other regulators
- The process of preparing for, conducting and following up an Accreditation Visit
- The experience of submitting a new or revised qualification, or the results of a review.
- Timelines for the transition from Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 to the new masters level and diploma qualifications, and insight into student numbers and experience.

2.18. Subject to approval by the Board, we will develop a timetable and Terms of Reference to manage the activity. We would propose to start the group in Q4 2023.

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### 3. Resource Implications

3.1. The reference group is not remunerated, and the operational resources are included in the 2023 budget, and the proposed 2024 budget. The group has a finite lifespan and will cease to meet when it has engaged on each of the topics relating to transition to the new framework.

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### 4. Risk Implications

4.1. The Initial Education and Training work is a complex and interconnected programme, and changes long established reporting systems in education providers.

4.2. Our consultation has indicated that stakeholders require more information about how the change may impact on them, and ARB's expectations of how providers would demonstrate compliance with the new standards and outcomes.

4.3. They have also told us that they want to understand the interaction between ARB's requirements, and other statutory and membership bodies within the education sector. Failing to engage relevant stakeholders risks non-compliance, or inconsistent compliance, and reputational damage to ARB.

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## 5. Equality and Diversity implications

- 5.1. A key part of this group's role will be to consider the way our processes impacts on different groups, including those currently underrepresented in the profession, to help improve inclusion. It will also help to identify any trends or ways of measuring and recognising good practice regarding EDI, including how to demonstrate performance against the new standards that address EDI.
- 5.2. Specifically, we want to get feedback on how stakeholders collect information, and use it to develop their services, to ensure that we can make meaningful judgements that are consistent across all providers.
- 5.3. We want to ensure our approach is proportionate and sustainable for providers.

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## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Board:
  - i. Notes the proposal for the establishment of this group; and
  - ii. Agrees that the focus and operation will support the transition process to the new framework and outcomes proposed in the strategy