

Board Meeting

Minutes of Board Meeting held on 18 May 2022

Location	Present	In Attendance
Hallam Street Conference Centre	Alan Kershaw (Chair) Mark Bottomley Emeritus Professor ADH Crook Will Freeman Professor Elena Marco Derek Bray Dr Teri Okoro Cindy Leslie Liz Male Stephen McCusker	Hugh Simpson (CEO and Registrar) Emma Matthews Simon Howard Brian James Rebecca Roberts-Hughes Marc Stoner Irene Moisis (DLUHC Observer) Hayley Tucker (Minutes) Alice Pun (Observer) Jodie James (Observer) Kate Burnett (Observer) Richard Beet (Observer)

OPEN SESSION

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. Teri Okoro joined the meeting online during item 7. The Chair confirmed the Board was quorate.

The Chair welcomed Irene Moisis, Policy Lead, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Debora Brobbey, Senior Policy Adviser, would be attending the confidential meeting for the discussion on the Draft Statutory Items.

The Chair introduced new staff member, Kate Burnett, Communications Officer in the Policy and Communications Team. Richard Beet, Education Policy Manager, who would be helping to deliver the review and modernisation of ARB's Initial Education and Training requirements, was also present.

2. Members' Interests

There were no interests to declare.

STANDING ITEMS:

3. **Chair's Update**

The Chair reported that he had recently been interviewed for the permanent ARB Chair role. The interview panel had made a recommendation to the Minister for his decision. There were contingency measures in place if the outcome was not known before 10 June 2022 when his tenure, as temporary Chair, would end.

The Chair and CEO & Registrar had met recently with Simon Allford, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and Jack Pringle, Chair of the RIBA Board, which had been a useful discussion. There were regular meetings between the CEOs of ARB and RIBA and the Directors often met with their counterparts. In response to a question, the Director of Policy and Communications confirmed that the permanent RIBA Director of Education's role had now been advertised.

The Chair had been involved in meetings with stakeholders on Initial Education and Training (IET) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The Chair had embarked on a series of visits to meet with individuals in the Education sector whose support ARB might engage when promoting ideas for change. It was essential to keep stakeholders informed of ARB's plans and to make new contacts in different places. The Chair and CEO & Registrar had recently visited the Bartlett School, where there had been a very positive discussion. There was significant support for ARB's direction of travel and its determination to make positive changes in IET and CPD. The Chair had also visited institutions in Dublin and Belfast over the past two days and the CEO & Registrar had joined him in Dublin. The Chair would be visiting Cardiff at the end of June and further schools, in Scotland and elsewhere, in Autumn 2022.

The Chair explained that CPD and IET plans would be discussed again later in the meeting. He asked Board members to let him know if they had suggestions for future visits. One member suggested visiting some of the new and emerging institutions that did not have a history of architecture.

4. **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022

Tony Crook referred to item 6 of the minutes under the Matters Arising Report and noted that he was not employed at the University but was a non-stipendiary member.

Subject to that amendment, the Board approved the open session minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022.

Write Round Decision on 22 April 2022

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) confirmed that she was content with the decision; and Board members endorsed the write round decision made on 22 April 2022, agreeing to the appointment of Donall Curtin as the new independent external Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Member, with effect from 3 May 2022.

5. Matters Arising Report

The Board noted the report on matters arising.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

6. Publication of Professional Conduct Committee Disciplinary Sanctions

The Director of Standards asked the Board to consider the period for which disciplinary orders issued by the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) should be recorded against an architect's entry on the Register of Architects. He recommended that the Board consult on the proposed rule being included in the ARB General Rules.

A member asked if the current process was manual or automated and if it exposed ARB to potential risk. The Director of Standards confirmed it was currently a manual process with limited risk. It would hopefully become an automated process under the IT Transformation Programme. He noted that the proposals were in effect a formalisation of the *status quo* as ARB already published these decisions on its website for the periods of time recommended, but it would mean that ARB would now be able to link them to an individual's registration, rather than the determination report.

One member stated that as a regulator, ARB must be fair. If information was published on the Register and there was a link to the findings, then some aspects may need to be redacted if, for example, it contained sensitive or confidential information. The Director of Standards confirmed this already happened and would continue to do so at the discretion of the PCC.

The Chair added that PCC members needed to be mindful of how the decision was conveyed as it was public information; any decisions should be written in a way that avoided redaction where possible.

In response to a query about when the guidance on public interest would be available, the Director of Standards confirmed that ARB had already published guidance on public interest as part of the investigation process.

The Board agreed to the recommendation to consult on the rule set out in the paper being included in the ARB General Rules.

MATTERS FOR NOTE

7. Performance Monitoring Report

The CEO & Registrar set out the operational performance in the key departmental areas around Professional Standards, Registration and Policy & Communications. The Director of Policy & Communications was working on developing metrics as the current report was more activity based.

It was noted that the communications activity had improved a great deal over the last year. The Director of Policy & Communications confirmed that previous reports had been narrative heavy; in future the team would be looking at graphs and visuals to improve presentation.

Members congratulated the registration team for the significant improvement in performance, reflected in the data presented to the Board.

In relation to the Prescribed Examination and the numbers joining the Register, members asked if more data would be available on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). It would be helpful to know if those failing the examinations or leaving the Register were from particular backgrounds. The CEO & Registrar agreed to review the report to see if better EDI data could be included. A number of meetings had taken place with internationally qualified architects who had come through the Prescribed Examination route. ARB's willingness to listen and engage with different groups had produced positive feedback. The Director of Policy & Communications explained that ARB intended to run an EDI survey to look at issues, next steps and identify what more data needed to be collected.

Members were pleased to see the information in the report and were interested in the information showing how many students went into parts 1,2 and 3. The gap between parts 2 and 3 was of interest and was an area of challenge and risk.

Teri Okoro joined the meeting online at this stage.

Members referred to the prescription diagrams on page 31 of the Board pack and highlighted the enormous volume of work being carried out by the Accreditation team. They made reference to the work that would need to be carried out in anticipation of IET. The Chair confirmed that decisions on the transition and how long to accredit courses would be agreed once new IET processes were confirmed. The Director of Registration & Accreditation agreed there was complexity around the risks involved. Options being explored were around bringing forward and pushing back some courses and deciding how to support annual monitoring. He was clear on what ARB needed to do but the IET element was about timing the transition. One Board member advised caution on the annual monitoring processes due to numerous pressures on universities at present.

Members referred to the 34,000 followers on LinkedIn. The Director of Policy & Communications confirmed there were 34,000 followers on LinkedIn who had chosen to hear from ARB in their feeds. LinkedIn had always had high engagement and this had increased over the years. It was noted that the video clips were very popular and the Director of Policy & Communications confirmed that the Year in Review would include professional video clips and one event would be filmed.

The Chair noted that EU applications had increased. The Director of Registration and Accreditation confirmed that this was being monitored closely as there had been a spike in applications in 2021. Numbers for this year were currently low but on the increase.

The Board noted the report and thanked staff for their input.

8. **Chief Executive's Report**

The CEO & Registrar explained that he had structured the report around the Strategic Plan and its key priorities.

A member referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report and the use of the 'long summer break' in reference to those working in academia: academics were on campus and doing research during the summer break. The CEO & Registrar explained that the team had received a strong steer from academics not to hold events in the summer as there would be limited availability.

In reference to a query around the return to the office for public sector staff, the CEO & Registrar confirmed that a policy on hybrid working had been developed following consultation and shared with staff. ARB was not affected by the public sector arrangements as

it was an arm's length body. There was 30% occupancy most days in the office and there was a diversity of view as some staff wanted to be in the office more and others less so as they had long commutes or found they were more productive working from home. It was essential to support managers to manage their staff remotely and base output on deliverables. He wanted to ensure that staff were looked after and not feeling isolated and managers were monitoring mental health issues. The policy would be reviewed in six months.

The Chair felt that the Executive had a reasoned approach and the important element was not to silo staff and ensure they felt part of the larger organisation.

Members were pleased to see the hybrid working policy. The support to management was very important and they felt assured that the Executive had this in hand. The CEO & Registrar confirmed that developments with the hybrid working policy would be monitored and discussed at the Remuneration and Appointments Committee (RaAC) who provided good support for the Executive.

Members agreed that having a hybrid working policy was essential for recruitment as retention levels could drop without a flexible policy in place. They asked if the talent pool would widen as it would no longer need to be London-centric. The CEO & Registrar noted that the staff's workplace address was still Weymouth Street, which might limit some applications, but the recruiting teams were being far more flexible in their approach. There had been more applications from longer commuting distances and it was helpful that staff did not need to be in the office five days a week. The Executive had received some requests from staff to work from other countries or were thinking of relocating. The Executive were still working through some aspects, including tax implications, and there was more to be developed.

One member reported that universities were also adapting to flexible working and none were reverting to full time on campus. Members reported seeing a significant rise in mental health cases within universities and emphasised the need to get the balance right between online and in person interactions.

Board members asked to see exit interview data. The CEO & Registrar confirmed exit interview data was reviewed by the RaAC but no obvious trends had been identified so far due to the size of the organisation. There would be more of a picture over time.

Members asked if the increased performance highlighted in the report was as a direct result of hybrid working. The CEO & Registrar felt that, from a management perspective, it seemed to be working well and improving team morale. The key was now to support managers and encourage team working outside the office environment. The Director of Registration & Accreditation confirmed that he had made a number of temporary staff permanent and that had led to a more stable team.

The Chair felt a balance had been found and this was reflected in the performance report. In some of his visits to the universities, there was a sense of relief that life was getting back to a new normal for teaching and lectures. He emphasised that the Board's role was more to note and monitor how the Executive ran or managed the operations.

One member had read praise for the universities on how they handled the pandemic and the student survey reflected that. Students felt they were being looked after and it was credit to the universities. A member added that in his experience, a number of institutions were insisting on students going back to site permanently and achieving the right balance was fundamental.

Under Annex A of the report, which related to the terms used to define the types of groups that were being used across the organisation for various projects, it was asked if there was a page on the ARB website where members of the public could find details on Board and Committee membership. The CEO & Registrar confirmed that the formal governance groups for Board and Committee meetings were on the website but not details of the assurance and engagement groups as they were internal and fed into the Board. The Chair suggested adding a statement on the website that referenced the internal groups.

9. Management Accounts

The Director of Resources explained that there were two reports, the first being the outturn report for 2021 and the second relating to 2022 and its forecast outturn.

Members noted that the performance for 2021 had been better than expected and the performance of investments had done very well considering the challenging market.

A member asked about the impact on the closure fund during times of high inflation. The Director of Resources reported that ARB had agreed with the DLUHC that the closure fund would be kept at around £3.6million each year. The Board asked ARB to carefully manage the communications about the reserves due to the recent fee increase.

In response to a query about the large budget variance for the last financial year, the Director of Resources explained that ARB had been awarded a Government grant of £700k over two years to support work on the development of new international routes to registration and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), which ARB was notified of in January 2021 after the original budget and fees were agreed. The grant agreement had been signed on 31 March 2021. This meant that funds previously set aside for this work could be released into general reserves, totalling a further £321k saving. The Board noted that the number of Registrants that would pay the fee was estimated each year and that caused a level of uncertainty at budget setting time.

The CEO & Registrar added that the payments for the Transformation Programme had also impacted on the phasing and it was likely the cost of transformation would be delayed into the second quarter of this year.

The DLUHC Policy lead reported that there was no further update about the grant at this stage.

The Board noted the Year End Outturn 2021 and the Management Accounts for 2022.

10. Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report

The Board noted the ARAC Annual Report from April 2021 to April 2022.

The Chair took this opportunity to formally thank Chris Wood, independent member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, whose last meeting had been on 20 April 2022. He had always challenged the Committee in a positive way and the Board recorded their thanks and wished him well.

11. Any Other Business

No other items of business had been notified.

12. Dates of Future Board Meetings

The Chair asked members to check the future dates to ensure they were in their diaries. The next meeting was the Prescription Matters meeting on 25 May 2022.

25 May 2022- Prescription Matters Meeting

14 June 2022- Board Workshop



- 20 July 2022- Board Meeting
- 27 July 2022- Prescription Matters Meeting
- 20 September 2022- Additional Board Workshop
- 21 September 2022- Board Workshop
- 19 October 2022- Board Meeting
- 24 October 2022- Prescription Matters Meeting
- 23 November 2022- Board Workshop
- 7 December 2022- Board Meeting
- 15 December 2022- Prescription Matters Meeting