

Version

- ☐ Internal Draft for Approval
- ☐ Chair's Draft for Approval
- ☒ Chair's Approved Draft
- ☐ Confirmed

BOARD MEETING: MINUTES

Minutes of Board Meeting held on Tuesday, 16 October 2025

Location: Online via Video Conferencing

Present

Alan Kershaw (Chair)
Mark Bottomley
Will Freeman
Professor Elena Marco
Dr Teri Okoro
Liz Male
Stephen McCusker
Tom McDermott
Cindy Leslie
Caroline Turnbull-Hall
Jon Prichard
Francesca Bonnicci (Boardroom Apprentice)

In attendance

Hugh Simpson (CEO & Registrar)
Emma Matthews (Director of Governance & International)
Simon Howard (Director of Standards)
Brian James (Director of Registration & Accreditation)
Rebecca Roberts-Hughes (Director of Policy & Communications)
Charlotte Gellatly (Director of Performance & Planning)
Alice Pun (Governance Manager)
Mandy Kaur (Governance Officer/Minutes)

Private Meeting of the Board

The Board met in private at the beginning of the meeting. No staff members were present.

Open Session

ARB staff members joined the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for the meeting.

Additional members of staff and a representative of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government joined the Open Session to observe the meeting.

Elena Marco stepped out of the meeting at 11:00am until 11:25am, however the quorum of the Board remained unaffected.

2. Members' Interests

All Board members had been asked to declare conflicts of interest in any of the agenda items prior to the meeting. The Register of Interests was noted.

Alan Kershaw, Teri Okoro and Liz Male declared an interest in *Item 4.2 - Write Round Resolution*, in that they were the members appointed to the recruitment panel. As the item was being noted solely for transparency and the record, it was agreed that all three should remain in the room for this item.

All Architect Board members declared an interest in *Item 7 – Response to consultation on three guidance documents which support the Code of Conduct*, given that they would need to comply with the Code and supporting guidance.

Will Freeman declared an interest in *Item 8 - Routes to Registration Changes for Consultation*, on the basis that his own consultancy was developing two digital tools (a CPD recording app and a learning platform app), which were both designed to help architects meet the ARB's CPD requirements. Whilst this was noted, the decision was made that Mr Freeman should remain in the room but should contribute last to any discussions.

STANDING ITEMS

3. Update from the Chair

The Chair reported that he was part way through Board members' annual reviews for this year. A brief overview of the themes and trends emerging from the reviews would be provided at the December 2025 Board meeting. The Chair's own annual review had also been scheduled for late October 2025.

The Chair had attended the inauguration of the new RIBA President, Chris Williamson. This proved to be a positive networking event with some interesting discussions around the work of ARB.

4. Minutes

The Board unanimously approved the open session minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2025.

Board Members noted the record of the recent decisions made via write round regarding the recruitment process and the membership of the recruitment panel. The Board noted the following resolution which had been agreed via write around on 29 September 2025:

- i. To agree to undertake a selection process in order to appoint two temporary Architect Board members to replace Mark Bottomley and Stephen McCusker once they step down from the Board on 28 February 2026, and
 - ii. To agree the appointment process and selection panel as set out in section 2 of the paper.
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5. Report on Actions following the Previous Meetings

Board Members noted a report on actions resulting from the previous meetings.

6. Updates since the Board papers were issued

There were no matters to update on since the Board papers had been issued.

ACTION: The Chair suggested that, as part of the Governance team's review of the structure of future Board agendas, items 5 and 6 of the standing items could be combined.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

7. Response to consultation on three guidance documents which support the Code of Conduct

This was the second tranche of three guidance documents.

The Director of Standards explained that due to an oversight, there were some unaccepted tracked changes within the consultation report. There were also some intentional tracked changes that would be adopted within the final draft of the three documents, as well as some minor grammatical amendments that would also be incorporated in the final draft.

The Board considered the guidance document on *'Managing Finances Appropriately'*. It was noted that architects were increasingly being given roles with grey areas of responsibility, where some clients expected them to lead and manage projects involving significant sums of money to be dispersed to third parties. Although it was a rare occurrence, some architects were carrying out this activity, so appropriate guidance was required to ensure compliance with regulatory expectations. It was confirmed that the guidance would also be supported with case studies and worked examples, which would set out some of the risks which would need to be mitigated. It was also noted by the Board that some financial management activities would require FCA registration.

The Board noted that, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), whistleblowers were protected; this should be explicitly referenced within the guidance.

The Board expressed concerns around the contractual duties of confidentiality for an employee when considering the statement within the guidance on *'Raising concerns guidance'*, where it indicated that ***'Architects were not required to raise the issue internally if it required immediate action, or believe it will not be taken seriously or lead to reprisals'***. It was agreed that the text would be redrafted to reflect that some matters, such as serious or criminal issues, should not be dealt with internally but referred directly to the appropriate authorities.

The Board queried the low number of consultation responses (11 responses received). The

executive fed back that this was broadly in line with expectations given the technical nature of the consultations.

It was noted that further guidance would be developed on culture, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Building Safety, and Sustainability.

ACTION: The guidance should be revisited emphasising the tone of the Board’s discussion to ensure that providing detailed guidance on how to handle client money.

ACTION: The suggestions made within the Board’s discussion be incorporated into the drafting changes to the guidance documents, including a reference to whistleblower protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

ACTION: The Director of Professional Standards to revise the wording on page 45 to distinguish between internal reporting expectations and when external escalation was appropriate. Any significant changes would be approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board to ensure it reflected the Board’s discussions and feedback.

The Board noted the consultation report and **unanimously agreed** to approve the Code of Conduct guidance notes (subject to the above actions) on:

- i. Managing finances appropriately
- ii. Managing conflicts of interest
- iii. Raising concerns and whistleblowing

iii.

8. Routes to Registration Changes for Consultation

At its May 2025 meeting the Board had discussed ARB’s comprehensive overhaul of international routes to registration, which aimed to align our international routes with the new approach to UK initial education and training, and improve access to the UK Register for those who could demonstrate competence.

The Board agreed that ARB should develop a new, proportionate route for those with partial qualifications, specifically, accredited Part 2 and Part 3 qualifications but no accredited Part 1. In addition, the Board agreed that ARB should review and remodel the Competency Standards Group.

It was noted that two of the three registration routes applied to qualified architects. The process must remain clear, objective, and free from unnecessary subjectivity. Therefore, it was necessary to propose changes to two additional routes to registration or reregistration, to ensure that there was a consistent approach to all applicants, and to maintain consistent

standards of competence on the Register. The changes would improve efficiency, by simplifying processes.

It was proposed that additional guidance would be provided for applicants on the process. The guidance was expected help to support objectivity and reduce opportunities for bias.

The table within paragraph 3.10 of the Board paper summarised the updated routes.

A further amendment was required to Rule 7.1, the final line currently read “... ***or training as prescribed by ARB in the rule***”. This wording should use “and” rather than “or”.

The Board considered the proposed Routes to registration in the paper and the evidence that applicants would need to provide. The Board noted the option to develop a short course or qualification to further support applicants in transition, but this would need to be explored further as part of the consultation.

The Board supported the proposal to take forward the consultation and noted that the routes should ensure that minority groups were not unfairly penalised.

The Board asked for consistent use of ‘accreditation’ or ‘prescribed’ throughout the document.

It was noted that where an individual had left the Register either voluntarily or due to non-compliance with CPD requirements, and later returned two years later, Route R would apply if the individual had been off the Register for more than two years. The individual would be required to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and undertake CPD in that year.

Route P had been designed specifically for those without Part 1. If individuals fell into that category once the route was closed, they would be rerouted appropriately.

ACTION: All relevant documentation should be reviewed to ensure the consistent use of terminology.

ACTION: Governance team to review the Declaration of Interest Policy to ensure that the correct terminology was used.

The Board **unanimously agreed** that ARB:

- i. consult on the creation of a new Registration Assurance Process to provide consistent and efficient routes onto the Register for the following three groups:
 - *RAA Route R* for qualified architects wanting to *re-register* after being off for more than two years, or who delayed registering for more than two years after qualifying (developing from the Competency Standards Group route).
 - *RAA Route P* for *partially qualified* professionals with accredited Part 2 and 3 qualifications but no Part 1 (an entirely new route);

- *RAA Route C* for architects removed from the Register for *CPD* non-compliance
 - ii. consult on Rule changes to implement the changes above (in the paper at **Annexe A**).
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ITEMS FOR NOTE

9. Performance Monitoring Updates for Q3

The Board paper provided an overview of the operational performance of ARB for Q3, 2025, as set out in the annexes to the paper.

In response to a query regarding the nature of the service complaint received about ARB fees, it was clarified that it was a general complaint about the perceived high level of fees, value for money and ARB's accountability.

The Board asked about the lower than anticipated figures for the UK Adaptation Assessments (UKAA) and queried the impact of this gap between the projected and actual uptake. It was explained that there was usually a trend following the launch of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), where there was an initial spike in demand which levelled off. Additionally, there were some administrative hurdles, particularly with the USA, which were contributing factors. Work was already underway to reform the UKAA process to make it more cost-effective. The website had been reviewed and updated to provide clearer information about the UKAA. It was noted that as outlined in section 2.11 of the paper, the number of architects that had joined the Register through MRA/MOU routes was healthy, even though uptake through the UKAA remained lower. While this impacted UKAA specific numbers, it did help to keep processing costs lower due to reduced administrative demands.

The Board highlighted the importance of setting challenging KPIs. One specific KPI relating to the time taken to process standard registration applications was currently 15 days, however the average processing time was only taking four to five days. It was suggested that this target may no longer be sufficiently challenging and should be reviewed. It was noted that a new series of KPIs would be developed as part of the new performance monitoring framework which would be in place by the end of Q1 2026.

The Board noted the management accounts for 2025, as set out within the Board paper.

10. Chief Executive's Report

The Board noted a report from the Chief Executive & Registrar on matters relating to the running of the Board's business, including a summary of recent Workshop discussions.

In response to a query regarding recent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, it was explained that FOI requests generally fell into two categories. Commercial requests, which related to contracts, providers, and other procurement matters; and requests from interest groups posing the same questions to multiple organisations; these were primarily focused on data collection and benchmarking.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Dates of Future Board Meetings

The next Board meeting would take place on Wednesday, 10 December 2025. The meeting would be held in person at the *ARB Office, 70 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8NH*.