

Version

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

BOARD MEETING: MINUTES

Minutes of Board Meeting held on Wednesday, 10 December 2025
Location: ARB Office, 70 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8NH

Present

Alan Kershaw (Chair)
Mark Bottomley
Will Freeman
Professor Elena Marco
Dr Teri Okoro
Liz Male
Stephen McCusker
Tom McDermott
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)
Eleri Jones (Head of People)
Mandy Kaur (Governance Officer), Minutes
James Farrar, (Item 10 -PPE Changes)

Private Meeting of the Board

The meeting started with a confidential meeting of the Board members.
No staff members were present for this item.

ARB staff members joined the meeting.

Open Session

1. Apologies for absence

Cindy Leslie had provided her apologies for the first part of the meeting and would join at 1:30pm. The quorum was not impacted.

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

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.

All Board Members declared an interest in Item 7 – Update on recommendations and actions following the Board and Committee Effectiveness Review 2024 on the basis that it applied to each of them, but it was agreed they could all remain in the room.

Elena Marco and Stephen McCusker declared an interest in Item 10 – Changes to ARB's Professional Practical Experience Requirements, in that they each had a connection to an education provider. It was agreed that, whilst Professor Marco and Mr McCusker would remain in the room, they would speak last in the discussion.

Teri Okoro also declared an interest in Item 10 – Changes to ARB's Professional Practical Experience Requirements, on the basis that the practice that she ran employed a trainee on placement. It was agreed that whilst Dr. Okoro could remain in the room, she would speak last in the discussion.

STANDING ITEMS

3. Update from the Chair

The Chair reported on a recent discussion with Chris Williamson, President of RIBA, regarding collaboration and positive feedback on the ARB's work. Mr. Williamson had noted a recurring point raised with him, concerning whether it remained necessary to mandate subjects for continuing professional development (CPD).

The Chair along with the Chief Executive & Registrar had met with Samantha Dixon, Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy. The Minister was briefed on ARB reforms, including education and training as well as the success of our work to develop and agree Mutual Recognition Agreements. They had also discussed regulatory reform with the Minister particularly the issues of culture, accountability and competence across the built environment.

The Chair had been invited to attend a commemoration at the Institute of Civil Engineers, marking 10 years of the "Getting It Right First Time" initiative.

The Chair had also recently attended the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) presentation for the *Best Building in Scotland* award. The event had provided valuable opportunities for engagement with other architects.

The Board received an update on the most up to date CPD figures. Over a third of registrants had completed payment and made their CPD declarations. The number of renewals was in line with expectations at this stage. There were a small number of deferrals. In response to feedback more modern payments options had been introduced. More than 20% of payments were now being made via Apple Pay and Google Pay, indicating a strong uptake. More payments had been made than at the same point in 2024.

Departure of the Director of Policy and Communications

Appreciation was formally extended to Rebecca Roberts-Hughes, Director of Policy & Communications, for their work in developing the communications operation from inception to a thriving function, noting it would be a hard act to follow.

Direct feedback from architect members noted that ARB was now significantly more communicative and consultative, which was received as extremely positive feedback.

4. Minutes

The Board **unanimously agreed** to approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2025, subject to the removal of the term 'two years later' under *Item 8 - Routes*

to Registration Changes for Consultation.

5. Report on Actions following the Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

Board Members noted a report on actions resulting from the previous meeting. There were no matters arising.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

6. Chief Executive's Report

It was noted that, although there were no equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) implications arising from the paper, the review being undertaken by Hallow Consulting was intended to assess how equity and inclusion were currently operating within ARB. The review captured and considered relevant EDI related matters within its scope.

The Board provided feedback that the risk and management session, held at the recent Board Workshop, was very effective; and requested some follow up in due course with a deeper dive into risk. This would be considered by the Executive, following approval of the new Corporate Strategy.

The remainder of the report was noted.

7. Update on recommendations and actions following the Board and Committees Effectiveness Review 2024

The Board noted updates on the recommendations and actions arising from the 2024 Board and Committee Effectiveness Review.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

8. Corporate Strategy 2026 – 2030

As requested by the Board, the Executive had developed a draft strategy that was ambitious in scope, focusing on consolidation of the reforms of the last five years.

The Board provided the following suggestions for the draft Corporate Strategy:

- Use of the word “*promote*” rather than “*maintain*” within the subheading of the draft strategy.
- Clarification that evaluation work had been commissioned to consider the impact of the education framework.
- Clarification on the CPD section, noting that three separate sentences were being used to convey the same point.
- Replacement of the term “*cost reduction*” with “*efficiency review*” or a similar term as the focus was not solely on saving costs but also involved safety aspects.

A brief paragraph should be included in the strategy to clarify what was meant by the term ‘culture’, highlighting that the safety of people was within the remit of all architects. It was noted that the term ‘culture’ was already defined in the research and, given this this was a short document, it was important not to risk omitting other important aspects by being overly specific.

The Board recommended the Executive look at whether ARB should align with, or seek accreditation or kitemarking from, third party providers as part of our operational improvement strategy.

The Board **unanimously agreed** that ARB adopt and publish the proposed new Corporate Strategy for 2026-2030, subject to consideration to the suggestions made above.

The Board agreed to delegate authority to the Chair for approval of the final version of the Corporate Strategy before publication.

9. Business Plan 2026

The draft 2026 Business Plan incorporated proposed commitments that were definable and measurable. These would be integrated with the new performance monitoring framework.

A point of repetition was highlighted regarding the stakeholder reflections research, on page 52 and elsewhere. This would be reviewed.

The Board **unanimously agreed** to approve the proposed Business Plan for 2026.

10. Changes to ARB's Professional Practical Experience Requirements

Earlier in the year, the Board had agreed to implement the majority of the Professional Practical Experience (PPE) Commission's recommendations, setting out ARB's proposed changes to the PPE requirements. These changes included creating a coordinating role for learning providers and introducing a standardised Record of Competency.

Engagement with learning providers throughout the year had included:

- Meetings with over 20 learning providers.
- A survey conducted to reach more providers which received 65 responses.
- Engagement with other relevant representative bodies regarding the process.
- A final focus group held specifically on the proposed co-ordinator role.
- Establishment of a stakeholder group to focus on the proposed Record of Competency.

The work was progressing well, with a focus on improving the quality of education and training recognising the present, concerning variability in PPE. A balance had been struck between proportionality and effective oversight and support.

The Board received an overview of the four areas of improvement.

The Board considered those areas where learning providers had expressed some concerns. These included feedback on the co-ordinator role and concerns about resource and cost implications. Feedback from some stakeholders indicated that the requirements were more manageable than initially expected; but for others, for example where some providers delivered up to eight courses at the same level, this created additional pressures. A potential communication gap was highlighted and therefore learning providers would need to receive key factual information. It was suggested that increased engagement may be needed to address misunderstandings. Further collaboration to discuss and clarify regulatory impact more thoroughly, before moving to consultation, was encouraged.

A concern was expressed about the readiness of the proposals to proceed to consultation given some of the stakeholder feedback.

A discussion took place around the move from a time-based approach to an outcomes-based model, including the removal of the two-year experience requirement. The Board emphasised the need to mitigate risks and ensure the competency outcomes are still met and that the accreditation model must reflect this.

Minimum periods of UK-based experience were discussed. Advice to learning providers emphasised that significant UK experience would still be important to understand UK legislation and practices. International experience was valuable, but candidates would need to have acquired sufficient understanding of the UK context. The Board noted that some

guidance might be needed as UK experience could be achieved abroad: many practices were internationally focused.

Concerns were raised around whether some trainees might wrongly assume their learning providers would be under an obligation to find and secure placements for them, as well as situations where practices were not providing appropriate learning experiences. ARB's guidance clearly stated that finding a placement was not the learning providers' role, but the trainees'. The Executive agreed to review draft documentation to ensure this was clear.

The Board acknowledged that some negativity was inevitable, as some learning providers may not yet be ready for certain responsibilities; any changes would have resource implications for providers. However, there was an urgent need to reform the system as it was not currently working. The Board also asked that the workplace culture guidance be prioritised and more specific.

ACTION: The Board to receive an email in advance of the consultation setting out in detail the changes that had been actioned to provide assurance that feedback provided had been included.

The Board **agreed by majority** to consult on the proposals to change ARB's Professional Practical Experience (PPE) requirements including:

- i. draft changes to ARB's Standards for learning providers, to introduce a coordinating role and the use of an ARB-approved Trainee Record of Experience
- ii. draft guidance for practices employing trainees and for trainees on placements
- iii. draft minimum requirements for a new Trainee Record of Experience and topics for supplementary advice
- iv. draft changes to ARB's Registration Rules to implement the new PPE requirements, including a new position on the recency of experience gained.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

11. Development of new Performance Monitoring Framework

The Board received a paper setting out the proposed approach for the new Performance Monitoring Framework. Key performance indicators (KPIs) would be aligned with ARB's strategic goals, business plan, operational delivery and regulatory outcomes.

The Board emphasised the need for consistency of language to avoid confusion when using KPIs and understanding different tiers.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Dates of Future Board Meetings

The Chair noted that next year, a new pattern for Board meetings would be introduced, combining formal Board meetings with Workshop days. There would be a combination of online and in person meetings.

The next Board meeting would take place on the morning of Wednesday, 21 January 2026, followed by a Board Workshop. This meeting would be held online.