



Subject **Update on ARB's Operational Activities**
Purpose **For Note**
From **ARB's Staff Team**

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Karen Holmes at karenh@arb.org.uk or on 020 7580 5861

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

The Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety was announced by government in July 2017 following the Grenfell Tower tragedy and was led by Dame Judith Hackitt. Its purpose was to make recommendations that will ensure a sufficiently robust regulatory system for the future. One of those recommendations was that there should be a competence framework specifically for those involved in the design, construction and maintenance of Higher-Risk Residential Buildings.

ARB is a member of the working group that is considering the competencies that should be required for architects and building designers involved in Higher-Risk Residential Buildings. The substantive work of that Group has now finished, and since the last Board meeting in May ARB representatives have continued to attend the Competency Steering Group, which is creating a report covering the whole of the construction industry in respect of the *Hackitt* recommendations. That report is now expected to be published for consultation by the end of July 2019.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education (HE) wherever it is delivered around the world. Their main areas of work include reviewing HE, Access to HE, the UK Quality Code and providing advice and guidance.

We reported in May that the QAA was in the process of establishing an expert review team to review the Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement. The Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement includes the ARB/RIBA Criteria at Parts 1 and 2, and the shared Criteria at Part 3 is appended to the current Statement. The intention is to retain this structure and to include any revised output which results from the business as usual review of the Criteria within the Statement as is currently the case. The expert review team will therefore be focussing its attention on reviewing the text around the Criteria.

The membership of the expert review group has now been finalised and the first phase of the review is currently underway. In line with the process for reviewing Subject Benchmark Statements, ARB's input to the review of the Statement will be sought in early August once the initial drafting has been undertaken. The review team is scheduled to hold an editing meeting, which will review that work that has been undertaken throughout the Summer, in late September 2019.

We will continue to keep the Board up to date as this review continues; we will also ensure that the QAA is kept informed in relation to developments regarding the business as usual review of the Criteria.

Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture (SCHOSA)

Each Head of every UK Recognised School of Architecture is a member of SCHOSA. They also have a number of associate members of schools. It provides a forum for debate and exchange of ideas between Heads trying to achieve similar goals in different institutions.

We met with representatives of SCHOSA Council as part of our series of regular liaison meetings in late June 2019. We provided SCHOSA Council members with updates on the progress of our business as usual reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications. Other key issues that were discussed included updates on the review of QAA's Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement; the Executive also asked SCHOSA members to strongly encourage institutions to contact the Qualifications Team if they were seeking to establish qualifications that would sit within the apprenticeships frameworks so that the Team could advise them appropriately in relation to ARB's requirements in this area.

Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) - 2019 Symposium

CTSI represents trading standards professionals in the UK and overseas. The Symposium is an annual professional development event. The Symposium is an excellent opportunity to learn from, exchange information with and develop relationships with a range of organisations working in public protection.

This year we attended a plenary on regulatory issue and consumer protection with speakers from Office for Product Safety and Standards and Food Standards Agency. We shared information and insights with a range of consumer protection bodies and service providers,

most notably the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) and National Trading Standards (NTS). Having spoken with these organisations we are exploring areas of collaboration. First, we will be providing a 'briefing note' on ARB that CACS and NTS staff can source when handling relevant enquiries/cases. In addition, we are exploring what intelligence we may be able to share between organisations to enhance our public protection activities.

Joint Regulators Web Group

ARB is part of a group of 'Register regulator' Communications professionals. The meetings are quarterly and an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and insight with those facing similar challenges.

At the groups last meeting in June, managing industry feedback and monitoring competence was discussed alongside approaches to website accessibility. Website structures were also discussed as were the internal Comms structures of each organisation.

Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

Is the self (non-broadcast) and co-regulator (broadcast) for advertising in the UK. The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) is the sister organisation of the ASA and is responsible for writing the Advertising Codes which the ASA enforce. Although the nature of their regulator activities differs to ARB, some of their systems and process are comparable.

A preliminary meeting has been held with representatives from CAP/ASA to discuss data capture, quality and processing to determine if there are any learnings for ARB in how we ensure accuracy and process caseloads. Further meetings have been arranged.

Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS)

The CCS is a non-profit-making, independent organisation founded in 1997 by the construction industry to improve its image. Construction companies and suppliers can voluntarily register with the Scheme and agree to abide by the Code of Considerate Practice, designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements. Professional Registration allows any organisation supplying professional services to the construction industry to join the Scheme and enjoy the benefits of registration.

Professional Registration is a relatively new initiative for CCS. It is applicable to architects and therefore, as part of our commitment to supporting architects through regulation we approached CCS to find out more. We are in the process of exploring whether there are appropriate opportunities for collaboration between ARB and CCS.

6. EU Exit

Since the last Board meeting, we have reviewed our communications regularly to ensure that the information provided on our website remains up to date. We are also in the process of undertaking a rethink of the risks associated with Brexit to ensure that our approach to managing Brexit related risks remains appropriate and that we have accounted for all foreseeable and significant events and impacts.

We are also in contact with the largest Part 3 providers to find out when their cohorts will be graduating to ensure that we are ready to manage a potential influx of applications and requests for the certification required to register in Europe prior to Exit Day, currently

scheduled for 31 October 2019.

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

The Board will be discussing the business as usual reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications as part of its confidential session. The outcomes of the Board's discussions will be communicated to stakeholders following the meeting.

8. Mutual Recognition Agreements

In 2017 we were approached by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) with a view to exploring the potential development of a mutual recognition agreement. High level discussions between the AACA, NZRAB and the ARB have continued since that point. We have been undertaking separate reviews of one another's registration and prescription requirements to determine the levels of alignment and differences between them. We spoke to the Chief Executives of both organisations collectively in early July 2019 in order to discuss the reviews we had been undertaking. We have determined that we are in a position to continue to drill down into our respective requirements and are now taking steps to move that forward. We have also ensured that both the MHCLG and the Department for International Trade were aware of our discussions and debriefed them following our recent call with the AACA and NZRAB. We are actively engaged in discussions with both departments as to how ARB could further discussions about the establishment of agreements with international partners.

8. Communicating ARB's work

Publications

Earned media (content not directly created by ARB but by others without payment) is a highly trusted source of information. Earned press coverage enables us to inform and raise awareness of ARB and our regulatory activities with a range of stakeholders. In addition significant earned coverage in a national newspaper that will be seen by a large readership would cost thousands if the equivalent space was bought as advertising.

Since the last Board meeting in May, we have been referenced in a least 19 articles, published 5 news release and responded to 10 press enquiries.

We also reached out to The Times and the Guardian in order to coordinate the correction of factual errors in their content. The Times was asked to amend a reference to an unregistered individual as an 'architect'. The Guardian was asked, primarily, to amend an article which implied a qualification from a course provider validated by RIBA was required to become an architect, instead of qualifications prescribed by ARB.

eBulletin

Our eBulletins remind the profession of their responsibilities and provide updates on decisions made by the Board as well as other information of interest and relevance to architects. Issues are published after Board meetings, which are usually held around five times a year.

The last eBulletin email, published 23 May 2019, was delivered to 40,964 recipients and

opened by 15,001 in the first week following publication. The May eBulletin microsite received 3,033 page views.

The May edition was the third most engaged with email and sixth most engaged with microsite since records began in 2015.

To help ensure the Register is kept up to date, the eBulletin email prominently features recipient contact details together with a click through option to update. We received approximately 545 contact detail updates in the week immediately after the eBulletin was sent out compared to 78 in the previous week, an increase of approximately seven fold.

Online

In our last report we mentioned that it has been over two years since the arb.org.uk website was redesigned and that work had begun on a website audit in order to confirm and review the structure and performance. The work has now been complete and we are in the process of reviewing the findings, which we use to help improve user journeys and the effectiveness of the website in supporting our statutory duties.

Correspondence

In June, we alerted the profession to a phishing email purporting to be from ARB. We produced an email and news release advising of the scam and how to stay safe online.

9. Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency

Numbers on Register

On 31 December 2018, the Register stood at 41,170. As of 28 June 2019, there were 42,034 architects on the Register. Of these, 9,097 are EU nationals (not including UK). 7,781 of these individuals have registered addresses in the UK. This compares with 8,108 EU nationals (not including UK) at the start of 2018, with 6,943 based in the UK. This demonstrates that the Register is still growing and that the number of EU nationals on the Register and with addresses in the UK is still increasing.

On 4 January 2019, we removed 1,090 architects for non-payment of the retention fee. This was down from 1,204 in 2018. We consider that the reduction in the number removed is down to a combination of enhanced communications around the fee deadline and better general awareness of the deadline for payment. 591 (54%) of those removed have since been reinstated. Each year, we audit the list of individuals struck off from the Register to ensure that those still using the title 'architect' are aware of their registration status and apply for reinstatement, or stop using the title. We have concluded 158 preliminary cases since the start of the year from this audit.

Email data

The email management system used to track email traffic coming into the main generic information account (monitored by Registration), indicates that in 2018, the Registration team sent a total of 16,553 email responses to queries, with an average response rate of one day. Between 1 January and 30 June 2018, we had sent 6,763 emails.

So far in 2019 (as of 28 June 2019), we have sent 9,742 emails (an increase of 44% on 2018) with the most popular topics being requests for certificates to register in the EU (673),

prescribed examination (576), making an application from the EU (432), Brexit (389), and changing an address (389). As previously noted at April's Board meeting, we experienced a spike in email activity with 1,880 emails being sent between 8 March 2019 (when an email was sent out to all registrants encouraging them to make contact soon if they were concerned) and 29 March 2019 (original EU exit day). We had sent 716 emails in the same period during 2018. Brexit related queries have slowed since the May Board meeting, with only three queries being labelled as Brexit related since the figures were last gathered.

Work remains underway to build an end to end application processing system in Registration which will link the front end systems we have already built to host online applications, with back end office management systems. We are working on a specification to go out to tender for the work. It is anticipated that building an end to end system will create efficiencies, result in quicker processing times, reduce paper use in the office and create better audit trails for record keeping.

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 at a faster pace than in 2018 with 422 joining the Register in the first quarter of 2019 and 227 in the second quarter, against 232 and 181 in 2018. The second quarter figure of 227 for 2019 is marginally lower than in 2017 (237) and 42% lower than in 2016 (389).

Overall, for the year to date, in 2019, 649 architects have joined the Register via the EU routes compared with 413 in the same period in 2018, 568 in 2017 and 722 in 2016.

Finally, the number of certificates we have issued (which would potentially enable a UK architect to register in Europe) has increased exponentially in 2019, with 427 being issued in the first half of the year. This is already 91% higher than the entire annual total for 2018, when 223 were processed across the year. In 2016, the year the referendum on whether the UK should remain in or leave the EU, 105 certificates were issued in the whole year.

Prescribed Examination Review

As was reported in 2018, and in line with the agreed 2018 Business Plan, we have undertaken the initial stages 'business as usual' review of the Procedures for the Prescribed Examination ('the Exam'). We await progress with the Criteria and Procedures review before moving further forward with this review.

10. Committee Meetings held since May Board Meeting

Prescription Committee – 30 May 2019

Professional Conduct Committee – 10 to 13 June 2019

Professional Conduct Committee – 17 to 19 June 2019

Prescription Committee – 4 July 2019

11. Future Meetings and Events

Board meeting – 29 July 2019

Professional Conduct Committee – 6 to 8 August

Professional Conduct Committee – 2 to 5 September

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.

We continue to manage the risks associated with Brexit as far as we are able to despite uncertainty and are updating arrangements for the UK leaving the EU on 31 October 2019 with no deal in place.

Risks also remain with regards the review of the Criteria, Procedures and Prescribed Examination which are outlined in the body of the paper, and subject to individual risk registers for each project.

Further detail of specific risks to the organisation and in relation to operations will be provided in the confidential Registrar's report.

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.