

Architects Registration Board

8 Weymouth Street  
London W1W 5BU

Telephone	020 7580 5861
Fax	020 7436 5269
e-mail	<a href="mailto:info@arb.org.uk">info@arb.org.uk</a>
website	<a href="http://www.arb.org.uk">www.arb.org.uk</a>

## **Qualifications Department**

---

### **Annual Report**

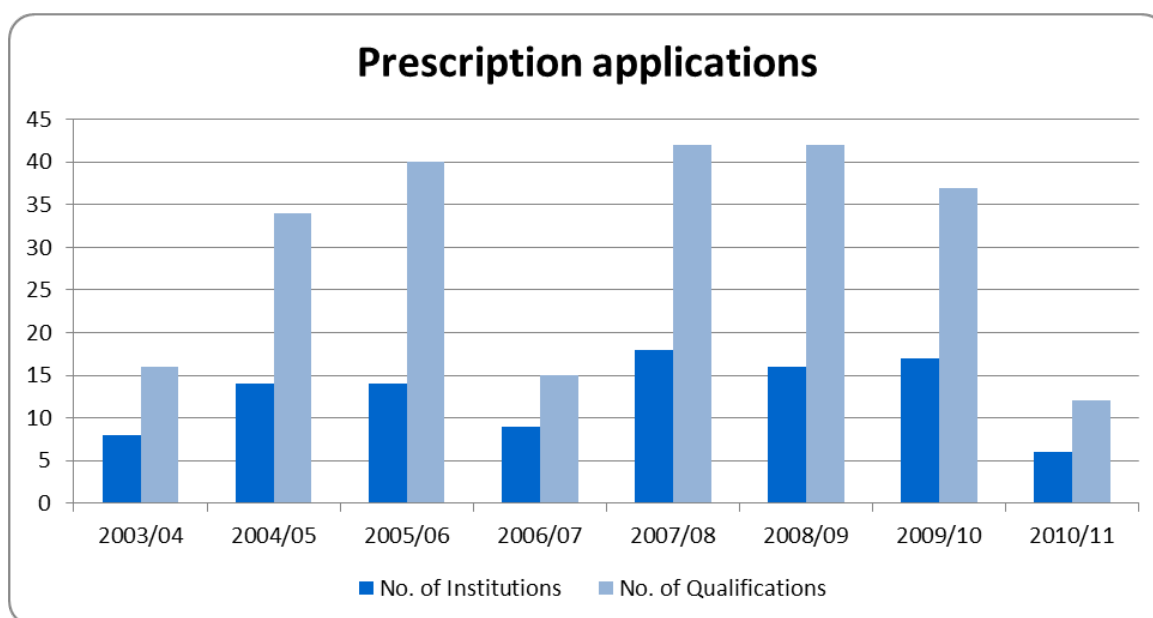
**September 2010 - September 2011**

## Maintaining the qualifications of architects

### 1. Prescription of Qualifications

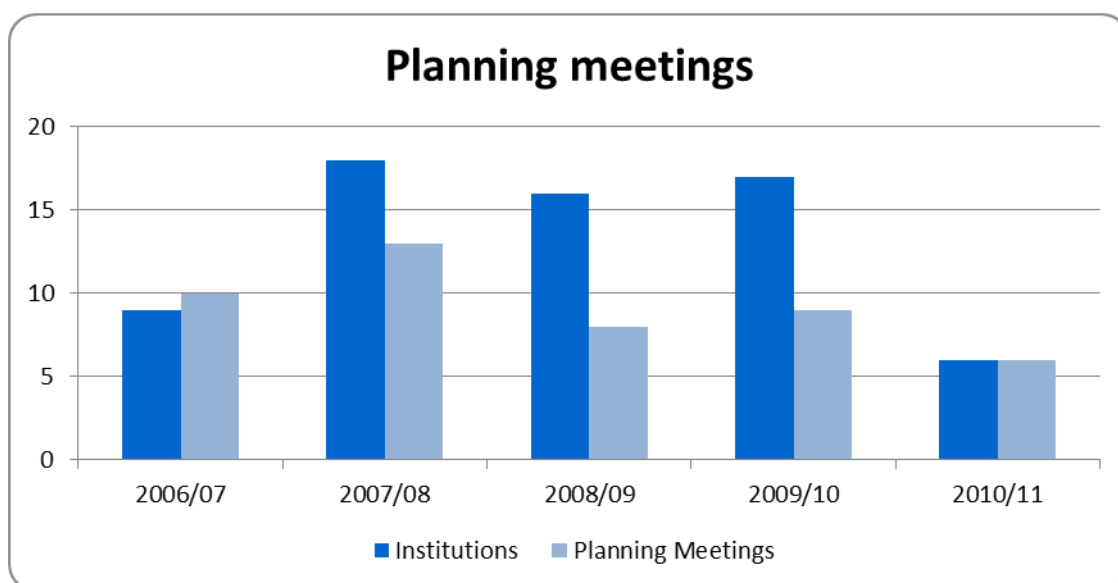
#### Prescription Cycle

- 1.1 During the 2010/2011 cycle, the Board considered 12 qualifications from 6 institutions. These qualifications were all renewals.
- 1.2 By comparison, the Board considered 37 qualifications from 17 institutions in the 2009/2010 cycle; 42 qualifications from 16 institutions in the 2008/2009 cycle; and 42 qualifications from 18 institutions during the 2007/2008 cycle.



#### Planning Meetings

- 1.3 During the 2010/2011 cycle, 6 institutions seeking prescription requested planning meetings with ARB's Staff prior to submitting their applications. By comparison, 9 institutions requested planning meetings in 2009/2010, 8 institutions requested planning meetings in the 2008/2009 cycle, and 13 institutions requested planning meetings in 2007/2008.



## Processing of Applications

### Timings

- 1.4 In accordance with the timescales outlined in the Board's Procedures for Prescription, applications should be reviewed by the Prescription Committee for the first time within 8 weeks. Of the 6 applications submitted in the 2010/2011 cycle, 4 were considered within 8 weeks. The remaining 2 applications were submitted in mid to late November 2010. The first Committee meeting at which these applications could be considered was the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011. As a result both of these applications exceeded the permitted 8 weeks, 1 by 3 days, and 1 by 11 days. The Committee noted that its meeting date of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 had been set without taking into account the fact that any applications submitted 'early', i.e. before 27<sup>th</sup> November 2010, would not be considered by the Committee for the first time, within its target of 8 weeks. It was agreed that this scenario should be monitored in future and avoided where possible. The agreed Committee dates for 2012 will ensure that no application will have to wait more than 8 weeks to be considered for the first time.
- 1.5 For one of the 6 institutions applying, the Committee was satisfied that no additional clarification on the application was needed, and sent it straight to the Board for consideration. Of the 5 institutions from which clarifications were sought, 4 responded to the Committee's requests within the required 3 weeks. The remaining institution sought an extension to the 3 week submission deadline and this was granted. In addition, a second round of clarification was sought from the same institution and the institution responded outside the permitted 3 week deadline. The Board noted these issues when it initially considered the application, and notified the institution that should any future deadlines be

missed, the Board could use its procedures to review prescription of the qualification accordingly.

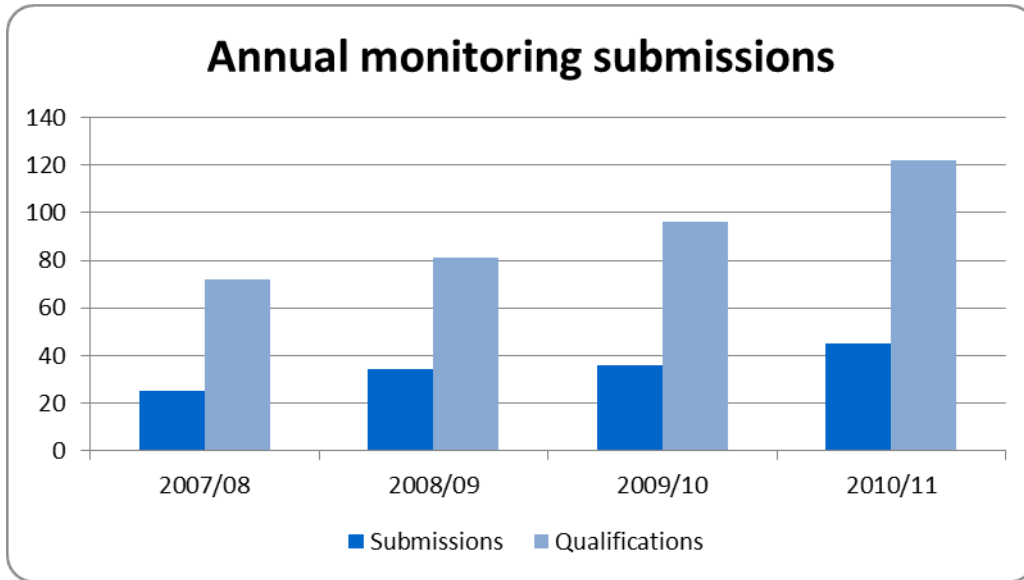
- 1.6 On average, applications relating to the renewal of prescription took 29 weeks to process from the time of submission to the Board making its final decision to renew prescription. The fastest application was processed in 18 weeks. At the other end of the scale, 1 application took 42 weeks to process. It is important to note that the applications which take longer to process often involve the Prescription Committee seeking clarification of some very complex issues regarding the qualifications it is reviewing. It is crucial that institutions are offered reasonable opportunities to respond and clarify complex matters where queries arise.

By comparison, it took an average of 25 weeks to process renewal applications for the 2009/2010 cycle with the quickest being processed in 16 weeks, and the slowest 41 weeks. It took an average of 25 weeks to process renewal applications for the 2008/2009 cycle with the quickest being processed in 11 weeks, and the slowest 50 weeks. For the 2007/2008 cycle it took an average of 24 weeks to process renewal applications, with the quickest being processed in 11 weeks, and the slowest in 33 weeks.

## **2. Annual Monitoring Submissions and Course/Title Changes**

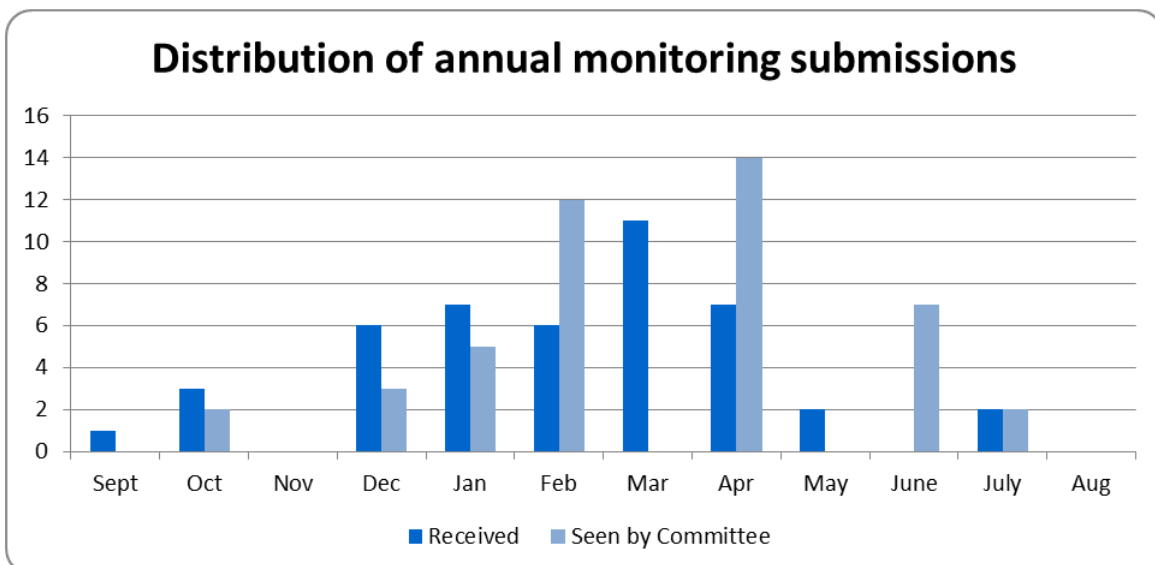
- 2.1 During the period September 2010 to August 2011, the Prescription Committee reviewed 45 Annual Monitoring submissions from 44 institutions covering a total of 122 qualifications. Submissions are not expected from institutions which are seeking to renew prescription in a given year and where the submission date falls due at the time the application is being considered by the Prescription Committee.

By way of comparison, during the period September 2009 to August 2010 the department received submissions from 35 institutions covering 96 qualifications and from September 2008 to August 2009, submissions from 34 institutions covering 81 qualifications.



2.2 These variances occur because the number of qualifications prescribed by the Board in any given year differs. Additionally, the number of prescribed qualifications offered by institutions can vary greatly with some offering 5 or more prescribed qualifications while others may offer only 1.

2.3 The chart below sets out how many Annual Monitoring submissions were reviewed by the Committee on a month by month basis during the reporting period. It should be noted that Prescription Committee meeting dates are not consistent year on year and may move by a week or so.



## **Follow up to Annual Monitoring Submissions**

- 2.4 Of the 45 submissions received during the reporting period 11 required the Committee to seek additional information from the relevant institution. These requests involved the follow-up of concerns raised by the Committee in respect of the submissions. These concerns were most frequently with regard to the resourcing of the qualification, comments made by external examiners, and additional questions in respect of changes made to the qualifications.

## **Deadlines for the Processing of Submissions**

- 2.5 Timescales, which set out the maximum period that should be taken by ARB's staff and the Prescription Committee to consider annual monitoring submissions for the first time, are incorporated in the departmental key performance indicators.

The maximum period is set at 8 weeks. This is the same period by which applications for prescription must be considered by the Prescription Committee for the first time.

- 2.6 For the 2010/2011 reporting period, the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was approximately 3.67 weeks, and 100% of submissions were considered within the 8 week deadline. This shows a decrease in time taken on the 2008/2009 reporting period where the average time taken was 4.5 weeks. During the 2008/2009 reporting period 94.5% of submissions were considered within the deadline.

Variances in processing time can be attributed to the varying dates by which institutions make their annual monitoring submissions, and changes to Prescription Committee meeting dates year on year.

## **Late Submissions from Institutions**

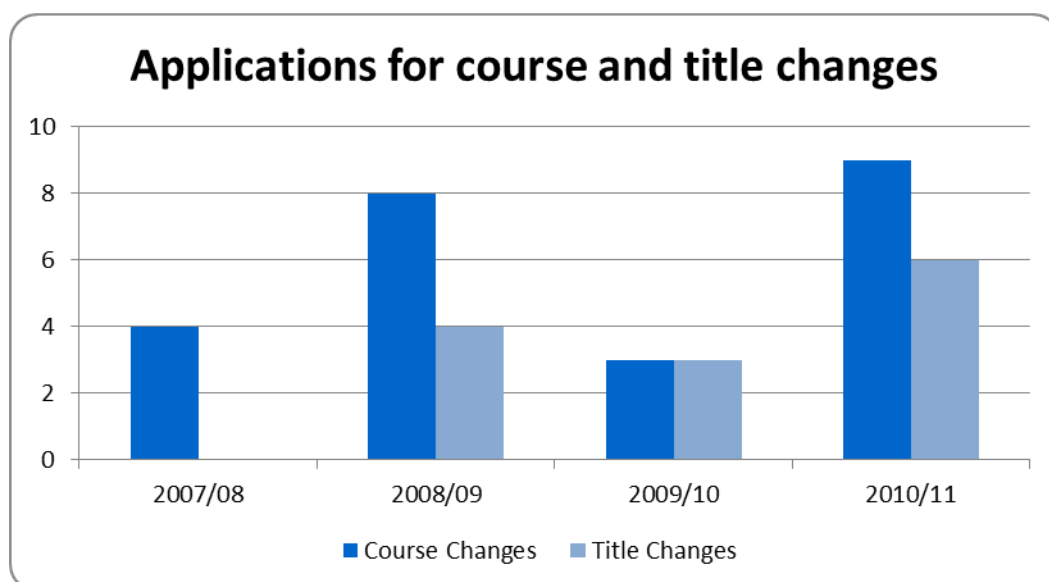
- 2.7 During the period September 2010 to September 2011, 11 institutions did not meet the deadline by which their Annual Monitoring submissions should have been made. The Chair of the Prescription Committee exceptionally agreed to extend the deadline by which the submission must be made for a further 3 institutions.

Liaison meetings with SCHOSA (the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture) are frequently used to remind institutions that Annual Monitoring submission must be made on time.

## Course and Title Changes

- 2.8 Over the reporting period the Department received 9 requests from institutions wishing to make changes, significant or otherwise, to their prescribed qualifications. Additionally, there were 6 requests from institutions who wished to make changes to the titles of their prescribed qualifications.

This shows an increase on the period September 2009 to August 2010 where there were 3 requests from institutions wishing to make changes to their qualifications, and a further 3 title amendments. This increase can, in part, be attributed to institutions moving from the old to the new criteria, and a trend amongst schools to move from Postgraduate Diploma qualifications to MArch qualifications.



## Feedback on Prescription Procedures

- 2.9 Each year, following the completion of the application for prescription process, feedback is sought from participating institutions with a view to making improvements to the prescription process. Written feedback is sought and a round table meeting is normally held in order to obtain views from institutions. For the current reporting period, although written feedback was sought in the usual way, a round table meeting was not held. This was because institutions which had prescription renewed during the reporting period, were the last to do so under the outgoing Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications.

- 2.10 Institutions seeking to renew prescription in the reporting period September 2011 to August 2012 will be doing so under the new Procedures for the

Prescription of Qualifications, and it is expected a round table meeting will be held to discuss the new procedures with these institutions in summer 2012.

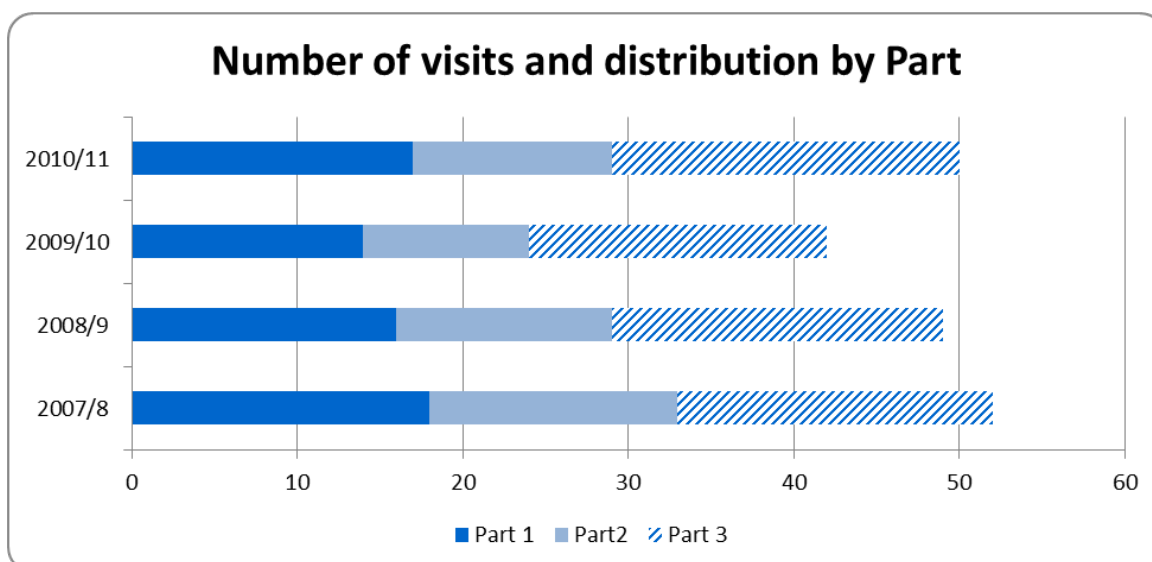
### Suspension of Prescription

2.11 During the reporting period the Prescription Committee received 2 requests from institutions to suspend prescription of Part 3 qualifications. While institutions had varying reasons for wishing to suspend prescription, the current economic climate has been a contributing factor in the decreasing numbers of students on many Part 3 qualifications across the UK. Should this trend continue, it is possible that more institutions will seek to suspend or cease delivery of Part 3 qualifications.

## 3. University Liaison Programme

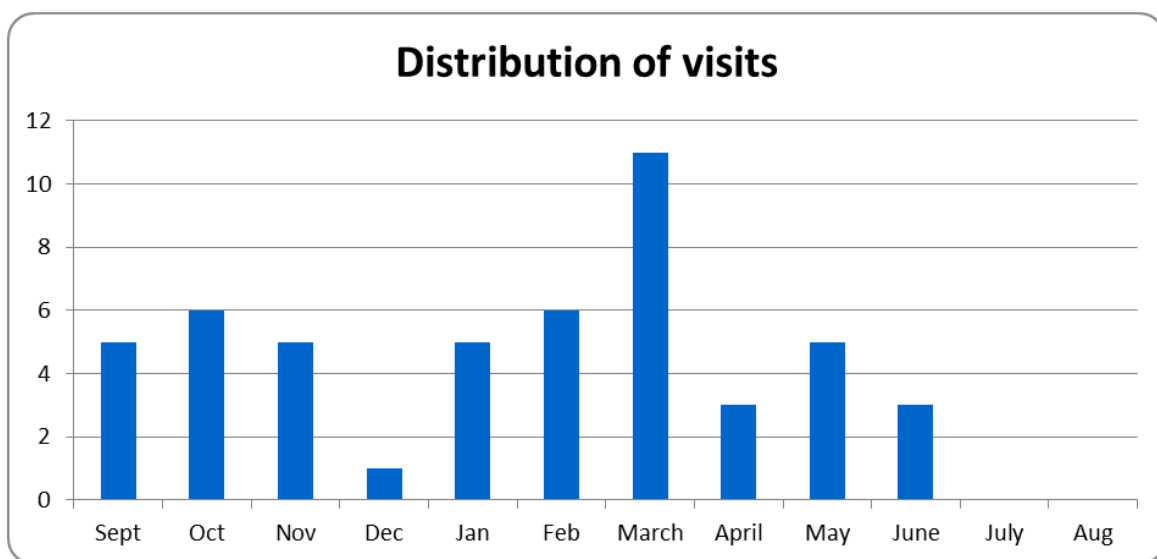
3.1 In the academic year 2010/2011, 50 presentations were arranged in 36 institutions reaching approximately 2,600 students. This represents 8 more sessions than the previous year and 1 additional institution.

3.2 In line with previous years the majority of sessions (42%) involved Part 3 candidates. There was a small increase in sessions for Part 1 students and a corresponding decrease in those for Part 2 groups.





- 3.3 The increase in overall visits could be due to a number of factors:
- It is sometimes difficult to accommodate all requests because of an over-demand for visits on the same dates. Apart from a particularly busy month in March, the spread of visits this year has been much more even with the potential to accommodate more visits.
  - Some institutions request visits every 2 years rather than on an annual basis, averaging over a 2-year period would provide a more accurate indicator of demand.
- 3.4 5 institutions did not participate in the programme this year, 2 of which regularly fail to engage with ARB. The remaining 3 have had a change of professional studies adviser and this often results in a visit not being arranged during that academic year because of difficulties in establishing contact.
- 3.5 Sessions take place throughout the academic year with a peak occurring during the Spring term.



- 3.6 In addition to the typical liaison sessions, a presentation on the Qualifications and Services Directives was delivered at the University of Cardiff; a contribution was made to the RIBA/London Metropolitan University's Return to Practice Course and a presentation on routes to registration was delivered to staff at John McAslan and Partners.

## **4. European Affairs**

### **Updating the UK's entry under Annex V**

- 4.1 During 2010/2011, ARB Staff played a key role in advising the UK Government regarding the revision of the UK's entry under Annex V of the Directive – the Annex which lists each Member State's requirements for registration, including qualifications and practical training experience. After lengthy and careful negotiations, the UK's revised entry under Annex V was published in the European Union Official Journal in June 2011. Staff will continue to notify relevant qualifications and title/awarding body changes to the Commission as the need arises.

### **Notification of UK Qualifications for Listing under the Directive**

- 4.2 During 2010/2011, Staff worked closely with the relevant schools of architecture and the UK Government to begin notifying ARB-prescribed qualifications to the European Commission. 7 new\* qualifications and 1 significant course change were notified during this period.
- 4.3 The 7 new qualifications were issued for consultation by the Commission in October 2010. Whilst Member States raised several queries regarding the UK's notifications, Staff and the schools of architecture were able to respond to these by exchanging correspondence and discussing relevant matters at the Commission's Architecture Sub-Group. All 7 of the qualifications were approved for listing in early 2011 and were published in the European Union Official Journal in June 2011. [The significant course change was notified at a later date and is still under consideration. An update on this will be provided in the 2011/2012 reporting period.]
- 4.4 In addition to the above, Staff put forward the details of 17 title changes and 3 awarding body changes during 2010/2011. The first round of title/awarding body changes [12 title changes and 3 awarding body changes] were considered, approved by the Commission and published in the Official Journal in June 2011. [The remaining title changes were notified at a later date and are still under consideration. An update on this will be provided in the next reporting period.]

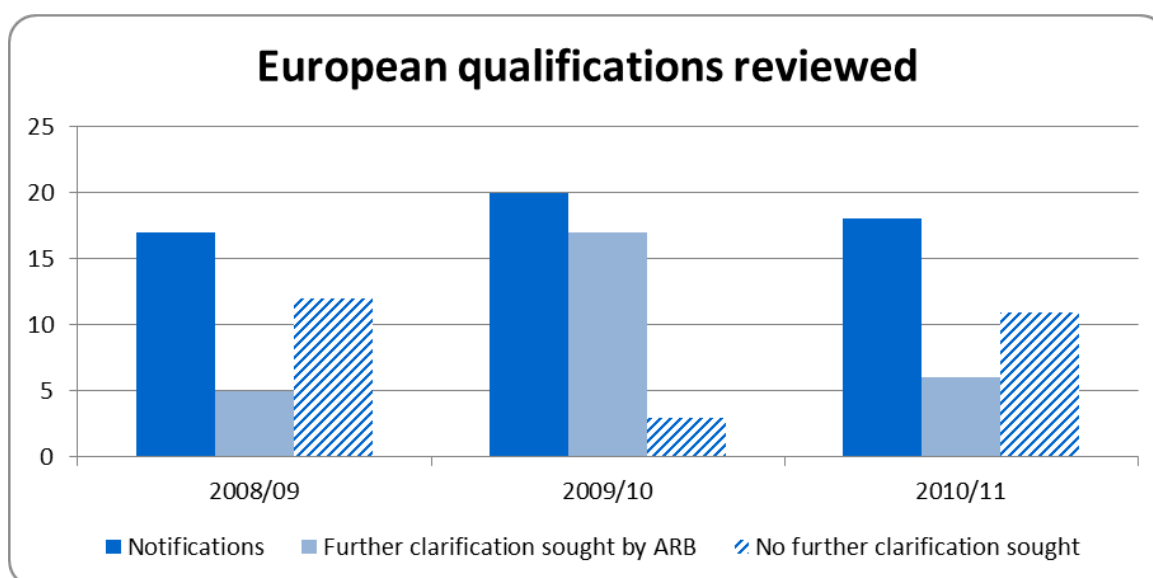
\* a 'new' qualification refers to any Part 2 level qualification which ARB has prescribed for the first time since 2005/2006

- 4.5 In 2009/2010, Staff held 7 European Notification Planning Meetings whereas in 2010/2011 Staff held only 1. Now that the UK has updated its entry under Annex V it is anticipated that only those institutions making significant changes to their Part 2 level qualifications or gaining prescription of their Part 2 level qualifications for the first time will require Planning Meetings. As a result, the

number of European Notification Planning meetings has decreased in 2010/2011. It is anticipated that an average of 2-3 European Notification Planning Meetings will take place in each future years.

### Number of European qualifications reviewed

4.6 During 2010/2011, ARB Staff, together with the UK's Nominated Expert to the European Commission's Architecture Sub-Group and the ARB's Independent Adviser on European Notifications, provided comments and feedback on each notified qualification received during the reporting period to confirm whether or not the qualification met the relevant requirements of the Qualifications Directive. In some instances, the UK had to seek further explanations/clarification in order to assure itself that the notified qualification met all the relevant requirements under the Directive.



4.7 In 2010/2011, 18 notified qualifications were received and considered compared with 20 in 2009/2010 and 17 in 2008/2009.

4.8 Whilst fewer notifications than expected have been received, the Commission continues to indicate that there are in the region of 100 qualifications which still need to be notified by the remaining 26 Member States in order to ensure that Annex V of the Directive is brought completely up to date.

### European Commission's Architecture Sub-Group

4.9 The UK has 2 nominees who regularly participate in the Commission's Architecture Sub-Group meetings. If Member States have any outstanding

queries regarding a European Notification and these have not been resolved within the 2 month consultation period, the Architecture Sub-Group is tasked with the responsibility of considering the notification in more detail. During 2010/2011 there were 2 Architecture Sub-Group meetings [2 meetings were cancelled during this period]. The UK was fully represented at both meetings.