



Architects Registration Board
eBulletin : December 2016

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Chair's Message

Welcome to the December eBulletin.

As we approach the end of the year our focus turns to the collection of the 2017 retention fee. Last year over 95% of registrants paid on time, and by working hard to alert registrants to the end of December due date we are hoping to improve on this figure.

At the November Board meeting we received updates on the organisation's work over recent months, particularly in relation to ensuring the accuracy of the information on the Register. The Board noted that a number of very constructive meetings have taken place with key stakeholders including the Architects Council of Europe; the European Network of Architects Competent Authorities (ENACA); the RIBA and the Architects Benevolent Society. You can read more about our work over the last few months in the [Operational Activity report](#) and the [Chairman's report](#).

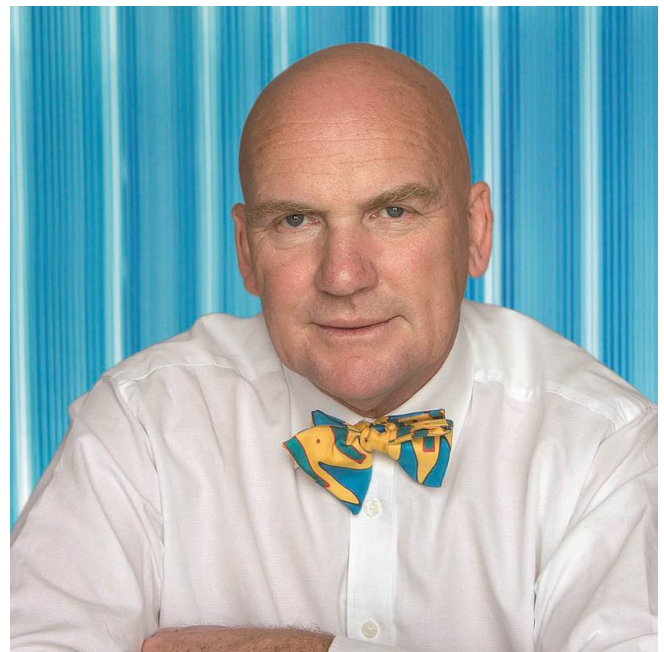
As a Board we took decisions on a number of important matters, including agreeing an amendment to our future investment policy. We have always been mindful of the need to manage carefully the money we hold in reserves and consequently we made a modest change by adopting a lower risk investment strategy for the coming year. In addition to this, we discussed the proposed review of the eligibility requirements for the prescribed exam and agreed that it would be inappropriate to commence this until the wider review of routes to registration takes place. The Board also approved small changes to ARB's travel

and subsistence policy and to the staff headcount as well as hearing about the organisation's work in the area of equality and diversity.

Looking ahead, the new Code of Conduct will come into force on 1 January 2017, which will be digitally available. An email providing more details about this new document will be going out to all architects soon.

If you have any questions please contact the staff team via email at info@arb.org.uk or via telephone on +44 (0) 20 7580 5861.

Sincere good wishes to you and your families as we enter the festive season.





Retention fee – be part of the 95%

Last year 95% of architects paid their retention fee by the 31 December deadline. We are keen to ensure that as many architects who want to stay on the Register do pay and avoid the unnecessary burden and cost of having to apply for reinstatement. We appreciate that many of you might want to pay your fee closer to the deadline, so we have provided a few pointers on how you might ensure your payment is received on time:

- The direct debit deadline has passed so unless you already have a DD set up, you will need to use another payment method.
- You can use the following links to insert a reminder in your electronic calendars [iCalendar](#) • [Google Calendar](#) • [Outlook](#) • [Outlook Online](#) • [Yahoo! Calendar](#) (compatible with most electronic calendars).
- We will be sending out text message reminders; to sign up to these all you need to do is to provide us with a mobile number. If you haven't already done so you can provide this by clicking [here](#).
- The easiest way to pay is online via the [payments site](#).
- The fee is £107 although those based outside of the UK may need to factor in additional transaction costs from their banks if paying by bank transfer.

We're operating extended hours in the run up

to the fee due date, with members of staff in the office to answer your calls up until 8pm on 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 29th and 30th December – so please do get in touch if you need any help.

Apologies to those of you who have already paid or have the payment date in mind for communications such as these. We try to strike a balance between providing the reminders to those yet to pay, whilst not burdening those who do not need this information.

Please email us on info@arb.org.uk or call us on +44 (0) 20 7580 5861 if you have any questions or require any additional information.



Dear Architect

The Architects Registration Board has released data on the type of complaints it has received about architects over the last five years.

The information shows that male architects over the age of 55 and working as sole practitioners or small practices are most vulnerable to having complaints made to ARB, particularly when working with domestic clients. The most common reasons for those complaints were a lack of adequate Terms of Engagement, poor communication as to the progress of a project, and the inability or unwillingness to deal with disputes appropriately.

Of the formal investigations undertaken by ARB, 88% were made against male architects (who make up 75% of the Register). Almost a third of investigations involved architects aged 55 – 64, while there were disproportionately few complaints about architects under 35 years of age.

There were further statistical anomalies. 22% of all investigations were into the conduct or competence of architects registered in Scotland, while they make up just 9% of the overall Register. There were only 12 investigations into architects who had qualified outside of the UK.

More in-depth information on the figures of ARB investigations can be found [here](#).

While there is little that can easily be done about one's age, gender or employment, there are simple steps architects can take to reduce the likelihood of disputes arising. All architects should familiarise themselves with the new [2017 Code of Conduct](#), and particularly those operating small businesses should ensure that they have adequate Terms of Engagement which are provided to clients before undertaking work. Further advice on how to avoid complaints can be found [in this presentation](#).

If you have any questions on any of these matters, please do email professionalstandards@arb.org.uk



Local authority project update

As part of our commitment to raising awareness of the Register, we are continuing to contact local authorities to encourage them to add links from their planning websites to the online [Register of Architects](#).

As a result of contacts we made through this project we were recently invited to speak at a meeting of the London branch of the Planning

Officers Society. After our presentation to the London branch the Society invited us to present to other regions and we are keen to get in touch with other planning networks to connect with local authorities across the UK.

The planning sections of council websites are often the first port of call for consumers who are considering building projects and so we are asking these key organisations to add a link to the Register.

Consumers have told us of many cases in which their builders, estate agents or friends have recommended an 'architect' only to discover later on that the person in question was not on the Register. We want the public to have the resources to hand to check this information so that they can make an informed decision about who they employ.

Thank you to those of you who have contacted us to offer assistance with this project, your help is greatly appreciated. Readers who would like more information about this piece of work can email sandrai@arb.org.uk or call us on +44 (0) 20 7580 5861.

The Architects Code: Standards of Professional Conduct and Practice

Coming soon – Look out for the new Code of Conduct

A new Architects Code: Standards of Conduct and Practice will come into force on 1 January 2017. All architects have been sent a card setting out the twelve Standards of the new Code along with their retention fee notice. The new Code is available [here](#) and will also be sent out to all architects via email in the coming days.



Equality and diversity Board update

At the November Board meeting we provided an update on our work on equality and diversity matters, setting out the progress which has been made in a number of key areas during 2016.

In terms of our data collection, we have enhanced our online services facility to enable registrants to provide their equality and diversity details at the same time as they update their contact details. A further digital project is underway to amend the examination database to accommodate E&D data in order to make better use of the information currently collected.

Training has also been a key focus area, with the staff team undergoing training on mental health awareness and equality impact analysis. Additionally, equality and diversity sessions were provided for members of the Professional Conduct Committee and the Investigations Pool, and training specifically for Board Members will take place in 2017.

We continue to build relationships with organisations working in the equality and diversity sector to gain their insights and tap into their networks. In 2016, we met with the Judicial Appointments Commission which is recognised as a leader in this area following previous criticism. We also met with Elevation Networks, a youth employment charity to discuss barriers faced by young people in particular.

You can read more about our work on equality and diversity matters in the recent [Board report](#).



Consumers warmly welcome ARB's attendance at exhibitions

We are delighted with the positive response we received from the members of the public we met at exhibitions in 2016.

This year, we had stands at three shows for those considering construction projects. We exhibited at the Homebuilding and Renovating Show in Birmingham and London in April and September, and at Grand Designs at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham in October.

These shows provide us with a valuable opportunity to speak directly to consumers to inform them about our regulatory role and the Register of Architects. We have been encouraged by the warm welcome we received from visitors to these shows who, upon realising that we were a regulator and public interest body, willingly engaged with us outlining their concerns and hopes in terms of finding the right person to work with on their projects.

We have invested in a spot survey tool which enables visitors to use tokens to answer simple questions about their decisions regarding the appointment of an architect; this engaging idea has proved helpful by providing us with useful data as well as prompting discussions with visitors. Many consumers spoke about the importance they place on recommendations and reputation. This provided us with a starting point to have conversations about the title architect and how

members of the public can check the Register to make informed decisions.

Over the course of the three shows we spoke to thousands of visitors who were not only consumers, but also architects and students. Our 'Meeting with your Architect' form continues to be a popular handout, with some 2,000 copies distributed over the course of the three shows and a further 430 electronic copies downloaded so far this year.



Prescription of Qualifications

At the last Board meeting on 24 November 2016, the Board considered an application from an institution seeking to renew prescription of one of its qualifications under the Architects Act 1997.

The Board decided that prescription of the following qualification should continue until March 2021:

Nottingham Trent University
Master of Architecture (MArch) in Architecture

For further details, please see the 'Qualifications' section of ARB's website, www.arb.org.uk/information-prescription-of-qualifications.