

Architects Registration Board

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## **Qualifications Department**

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### **Annual Report**

**September 2011 – September 2012**

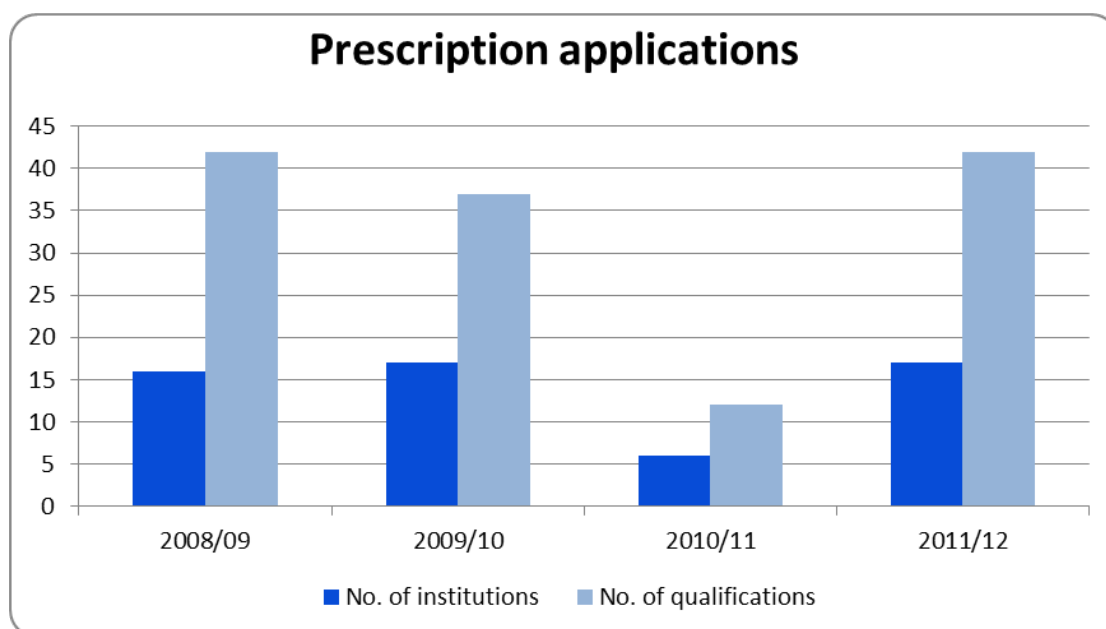
## Maintaining Qualifications of Architects

### 1. Prescription of Qualifications

#### Prescription Cycle

1.1 During the 2011/2012 cycle, the Board considered 42 qualifications from 17 institutions. These qualifications were all subject to the renewal of prescription.

1.2 By comparison, the Board considered 12 qualifications from 6 institutions in the 2010/2011 cycle; 37 qualifications from 17 institutions in the 2009/2010 cycle; 42 qualifications from 16 institutions in the 2008/2009 cycle.



#### Planning Meetings

1.3 During the 2011/2012 cycle, 12 institutions seeking prescription requested planning meetings with ARB's Staff prior to submitting their applications. A further 4 institutions requested informal preliminary discussions about new qualifications. By comparison, 6 institutions requested planning meetings in 2010/2011, 9 institutions requested planning meetings in 2009/2010, 8 institutions requested planning meetings in the 2008/2009 cycle.



## 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. All of the 17 applications submitted in the 2011/2012 cycle were considered within 8 weeks.

1.5 On average, applications relating to the renewal of prescription took 26 weeks to process from the time of submission to the Board making its final decision to renew prescription. The fastest application was processed in 19 weeks. At the other end of the scale, 1 application took 44 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 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.

Timings may also be affected by the scheduling of Committee and Board meetings.

By comparison, it took an average of 28 weeks to process renewal applications for the 2010/2011 cycle with the quickest being processed in 18 weeks, and the slowest 42 weeks. 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. For the 2008/2009 cycle it took an average of 25 weeks to process renewal applications, with the quickest being processed in 11 weeks, and the slowest in 50 weeks.

1.6 There were an additional 6 qualifications for which prescription was being sought for the first time. These new qualifications took an average of 41 weeks to process, with the shortest being completed in 32 weeks and the longest in 44 weeks. New qualifications take longer to process than renewal qualifications, because the Board is duty bound to consult for a period of up to three months before prescription can be granted.

### **Feedback on Prescription Procedures**

1.7 Institutions seeking to renew prescription in the reporting period September 2011 to August 2012 were the first to do so under the new Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications. Each year, following the completion of the application for prescription process, feedback is sought from participating institutions as a way of seeking examples of best practice.

Feedback was also sought to establish whether the prescription process provided any added value to participating institutions. The following comments were received:

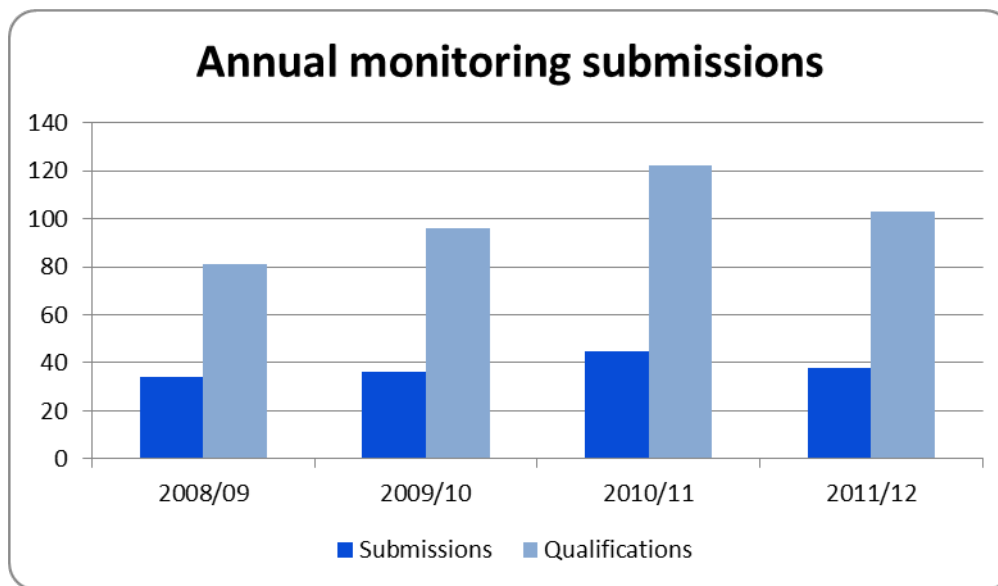
‘It required that the institution address its information processes and retrieval systems.’

‘As a new course the prescription process was a valuable opportunity for us to benchmark the course against the criteria and attributes of the ARB and to question some of the assumptions we had made in how we met this criteria. The process allowed us to clearly define our course.’

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

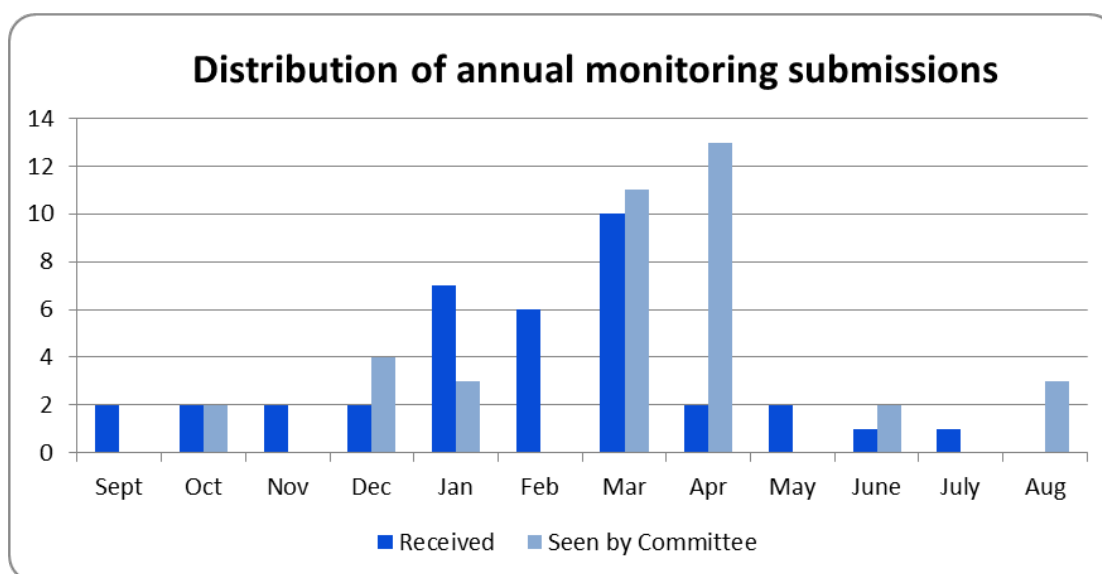
2.1 During the period September 2011 to August 2012, the Prescription Committee reviewed Annual Monitoring submissions from 38 institutions covering a total of 103 qualifications. Submissions are not normally expected from institutions which are seeking to renew prescription in a given year and where 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 2010 to August 2011 the department received submissions from 44 institutions covering 122 qualifications and from September 2009 to August 2010, submissions from 35 institutions covering 96 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 38 submissions received during the reporting period 18 required the Committee to seek additional information from the relevant institution. The majority of requests involved the Committee asking institutions to provide details of how they were intending to implement the new criteria, which became effective from September 2011. A number of requests also asked institutions to provide details of the guidance offered to students in respect of ARB's registration process.

## **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 2011/2012 reporting period, the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was approximately 3.9 weeks, and 97% of submissions were considered within the 8 week deadline. During the 2010/2011 reporting period 100% of submissions were considered within the deadline, taking an average of 3.7 weeks.

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 2011 to September 2012, 8 institutions did not meet the deadline by which their Annual Monitoring submissions should have been made. For the period 2010/2011 11 Institutions failed to make submissions on time.

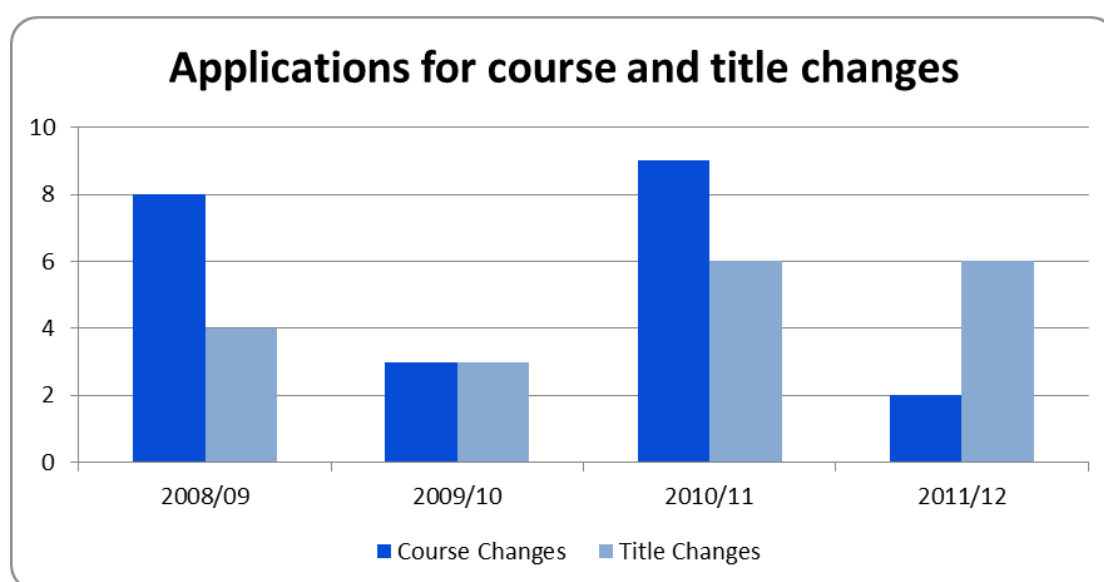
Liaison meetings with SCHOSA (the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture) are frequently used to remind institutions that Annual Monitoring submission must be made on time. Institutions are also regularly contacted and reminded of the need to make timely submissions.

## **Course and Title Changes**

2.8 Over the reporting period the Department received 2 requests from institutions wishing to make changes to their prescribed qualifications. 1 of these requests involved reviewing a series of evolutionary changes. Consideration of these changes took longer

than expected to review due to delays in the university supplying the relevant internally approved documentation.

Additionally, there were 6 requests from institutions who wished to make changes to the titles of their prescribed qualifications.



### 3. University Liaison Programme

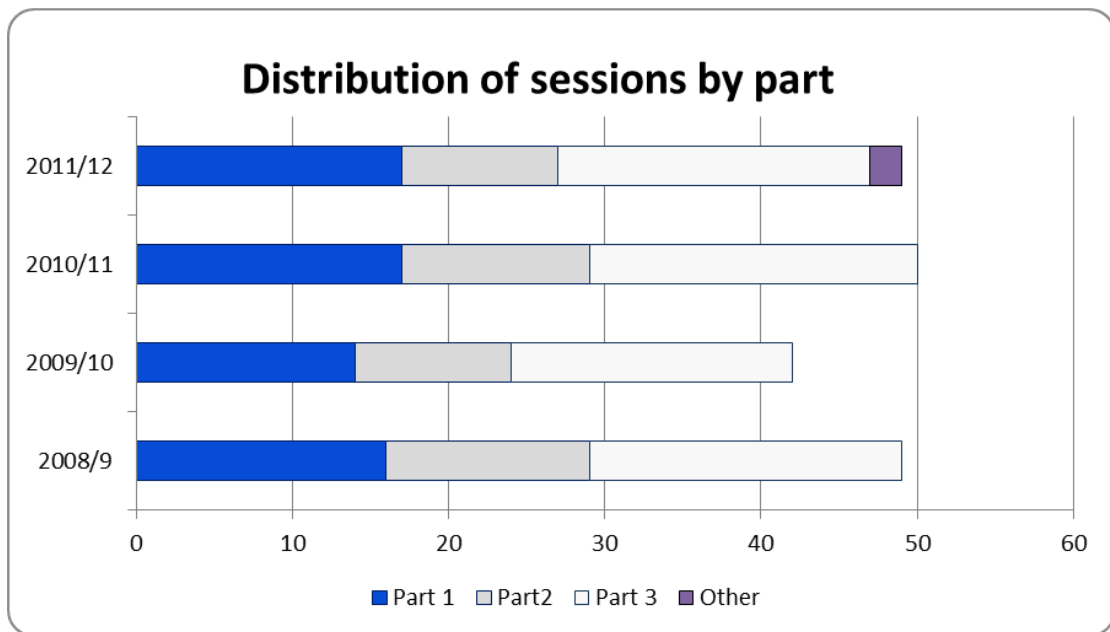
3.1 During the academic year 2011/2012, 49 presentations were arranged in 40 institutions reaching approximately 2,600 students. This represents 1 session less than the previous year, in 4 more institutions.

3.2 In addition to the 46 typical liaison sessions in institutions offering prescribed qualifications, a presentation on the Qualifications and Services Directives was delivered at Cardiff University; a contribution was made to the RIBA/London Metropolitan University's Return to Practice Course and a presentation was delivered at the Girne American Academy in Canterbury to architecture students who were considering UK registration.

3.3 The small decrease 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.
- 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 2 Institutions offering newly prescribed qualifications requested visits for the first time and contact was re-established with 1 institution which had not recently participated in the Liaison Programme.

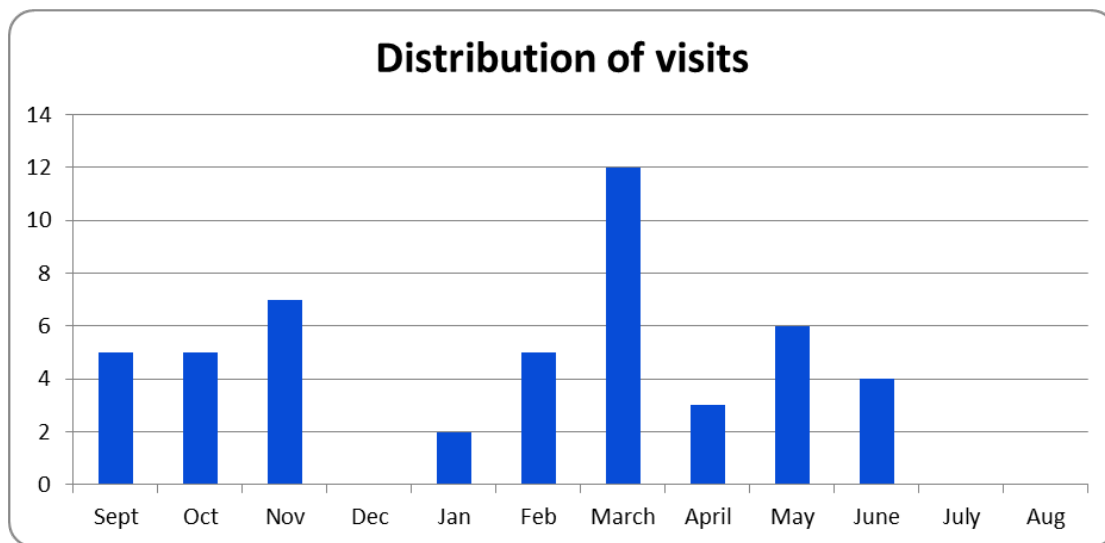


3.5 In line with previous years the majority of sessions (41%) involved Part 3 candidates. There was a small increase in sessions for Part 1 students and a corresponding decrease in those for Part 2 groups.

3.6 7 institutions did not participate in the programme this year. 2 of these regularly fail to engage with ARB. 4 of the remaining institutions 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.

3.7 Sessions take place throughout the academic year with a peak occurring during the spring term.





## 4. European Affairs

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

4.1 During 2011/2012, Staff played a key role in advising the UK Government regarding the revision of the UK's entry under Annex V of the Directive which lists each Member State's requirements for registration. The latest UK's revised entry under Annex V was published in the European Union Official Journal in August 2012.

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

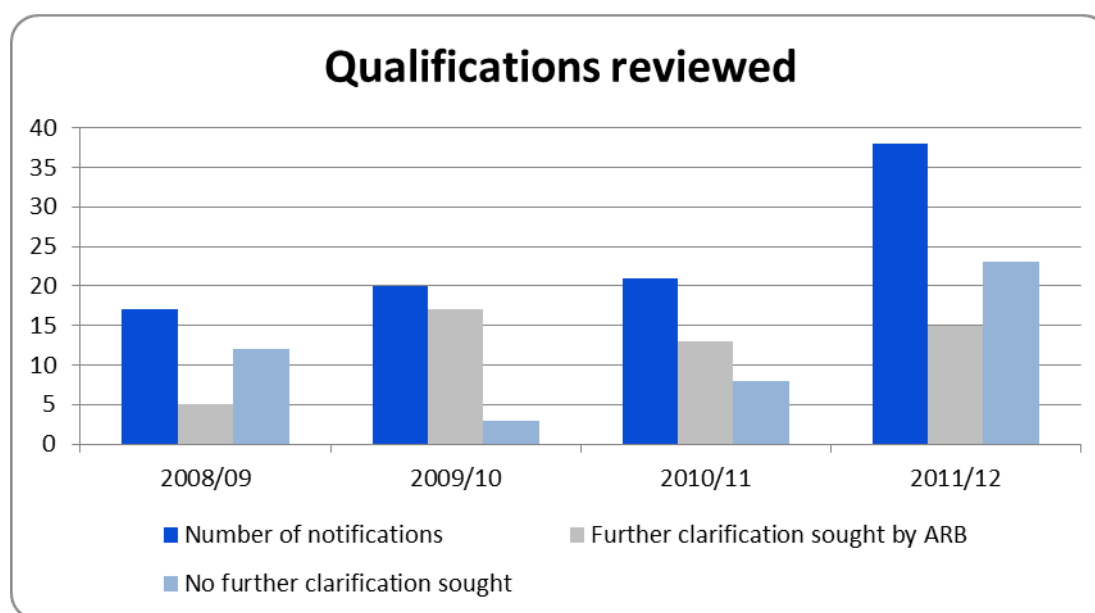
4.2 1 significant course change was notified to the European Commission during this period.

Member States raised several queries regarding this notification, 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. This significant course change is still under consideration.

4.3 12 title changes were notified during 2011/2012, 7 of which were approved by the Commission and published in the Official Journal in the course of 2012. The process of publication of the 5 remaining title changes is still on-going.

4.4 2 European Notification Planning Meetings were held. It is anticipated that only 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.

## Number of European Qualifications reviewed



4.5 38 notified qualifications were received and considered compared to 21 in the previous year. 23 of these were considered with no further information required, while for 15 notifications, further information was sought.

4.6 It is worth noting that the consultation process for 7 further notifications was suspended by the European Commission in 2011/2012, as the notification documents were considered incomplete.

### European Commission's Architecture Sub-Group

4.7 The UK has 2 nominees who regularly participate in the Commission's Architecture Sub-Group meetings. In 2011/2012 there was 1 Architecture Sub-Group meeting. The UK was fully represented at this meeting.