

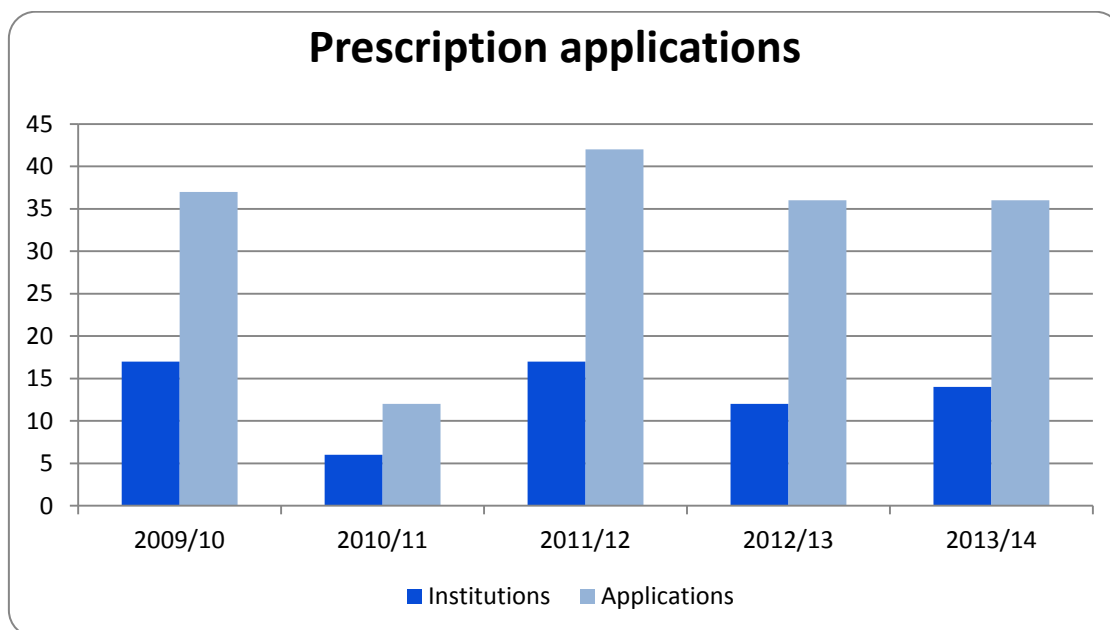


Qualifications Department Annual Report September 2013 - September 2014

1. Prescription of Qualifications

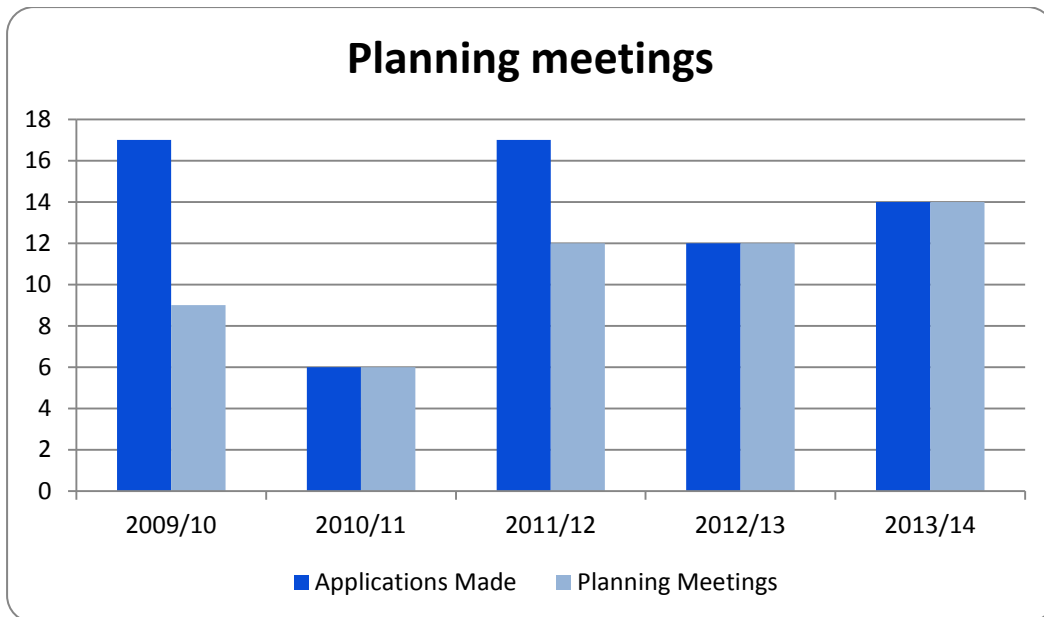
Prescription Cycle

1.1 During the 2013/2014 cycle, the Board considered 36 qualifications from 14 institutions. These qualifications were all subject to the renewal of prescription. By comparison, the Board considered 36 qualifications from 12 institutions in 2012/2013.



1.2 In addition, the Board prescribed two new qualifications offered by two institutions which had not previously offered any prescribed qualifications.

1.3 The Board undertakes an annual exercise to make the prescription process more flexible for institutions. After undertaking a thorough review of the position, the Board offered to extend prescription of four qualifications offered by three institutions which were due to renew prescription during the 2014/2015 cycle. On this occasion one institution offering a single Part 3 qualification accepted the offer to extend prescription.



Planning Meetings

- 1.5 During the 2013/2014 cycle, 14 institutions seeking to renew prescription or seeking prescription for the first time requested planning meetings with ARB's Staff prior to submitting their applications. By comparison, 12 institutions seeking to renew prescription requested planning meetings in 2012/2013.

Processing of Applications

Timings

- 1.6 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 applications considered by the Board in the 2013/2014 cycle were considered within 8 weeks.
- 1.7 On average, applications for the renewal of prescription took 24 weeks to process from the time of submission to the Board making its final decision. The fastest application was processed in 14 weeks. At the other end of the scale, the longest application took 34 weeks to process. Applications which take longer to process often involve the Prescription Committee seeking clarification of some complex issues on more than one occasion, and/or the addition of a special condition to prescription of a qualification by the Board. Timings may also be affected by the scheduling of Committee and Board meetings as these do not remain constant year on year. Statistics in this area are however broadly consistent with the 2012/2013 prescription cycle, where the fastest application was processed in 17 weeks, the slowest in 35 weeks and with the average being 23 weeks.

- 1.8 During the 2013/2014 cycle the Board considered two qualifications for which prescription was being sought for the first time. Both of these applications were originally submitted within the 2012/2013 prescription cycle, with one taking 53 weeks and the other 75 weeks to process. Both of these applications were unusual in their complexity and required the Prescription Committee and the Board to seek further explanations on a number of occasions. Additionally, staff and Committee members held meetings with representatives from both of these providers in order to obtain the information necessary to allow the Board to make a decision in relation to these applications.

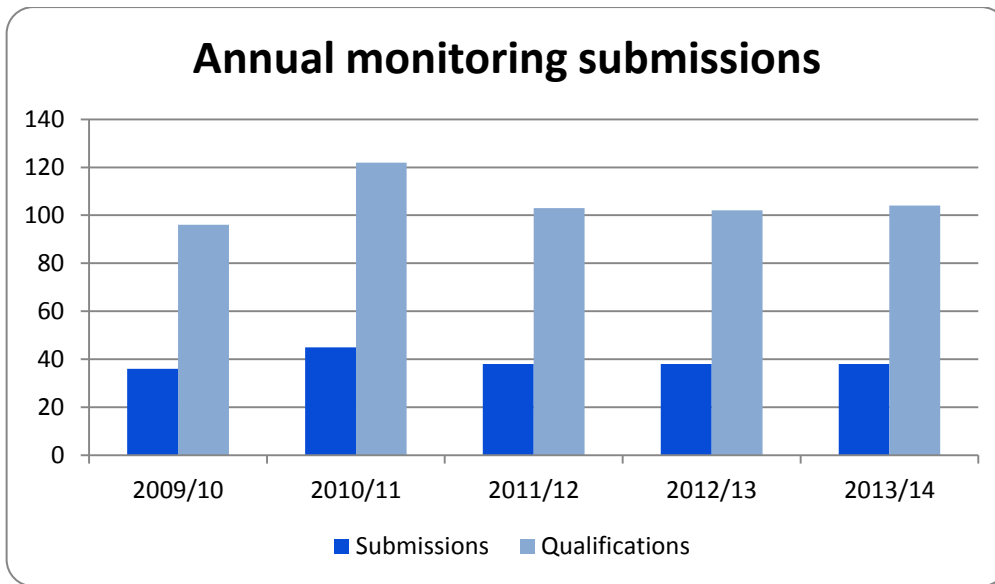
Annual Review of the Operation of the Prescription Process

- 1.9 The Qualifications Team undertake an annual review of the operation of the prescription process. Staff took the opportunity to review the tools used to analyse applications for prescription, the Good Practice Handbook and the application forms. Small adjustments have been made to these documents to ensure that they remain up to date and effective. Feedback was also sought from institutions for which applications for renewal of prescription had been granted by the Board. In light of the fact that a full exploration of ARB's routes to registration is planned for 2015, a more extensive review of ARB's Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications was not undertaken during 2013/2014.

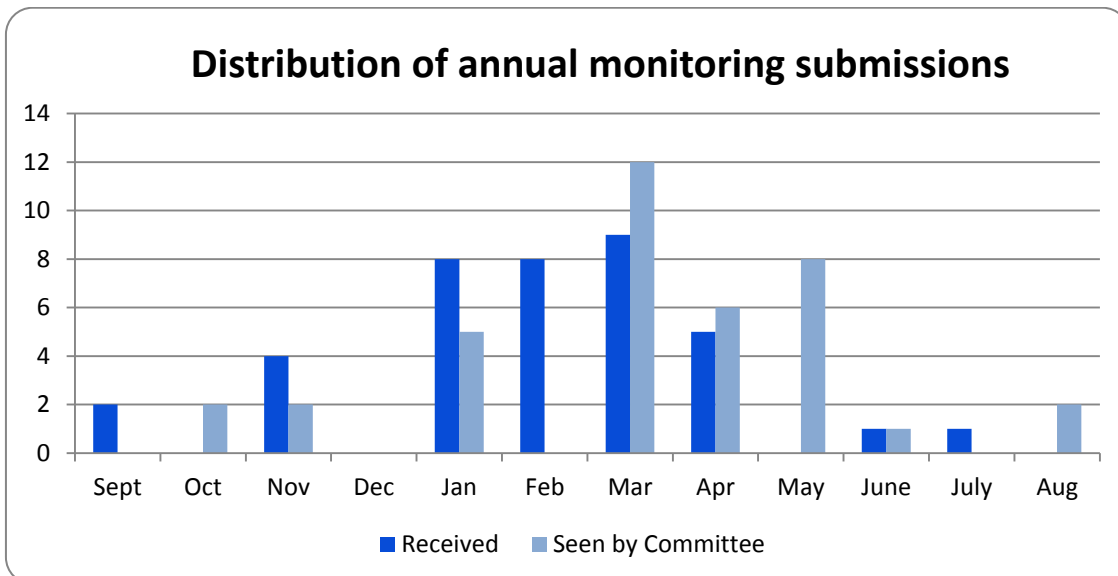
Annual Monitoring Submissions and Course/Title Changes

- 2.1 During the period September 2013 to August 2014, the Prescription Committee reviewed Annual Monitoring submissions from 38 institutions covering a total of 104 qualifications across all levels. 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 already being considered by the Prescription Committee.

By way of comparison, during the period September 2012 to August 2013 the team received submissions from 38 institutions covering 102 qualifications.



2.2 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

2.3 Of the 38 submissions received during the reporting period 14 required the Committee to seek additional information from the relevant institution. Requests for further information were sought for a variety of reasons. Some changes had been made to prescribed qualifications including title changes, awarding body changes as well as evolutionary changes to courses and further explanation was

required in respect of these changes. Additional information was also sought in respect of the adequacy of institutions' resources and clarification as to whether appropriate action had been taken in response to recommendations from both internal and external peer review reports.

Deadlines for the Processing of Submissions

- 2.4 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.

- 2.5 For the 2013/2014 reporting period, the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was approximately 3.87 weeks. During the 2012/2013 reporting period submissions were considered within the 8 week deadline, taking an average of 3.55 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

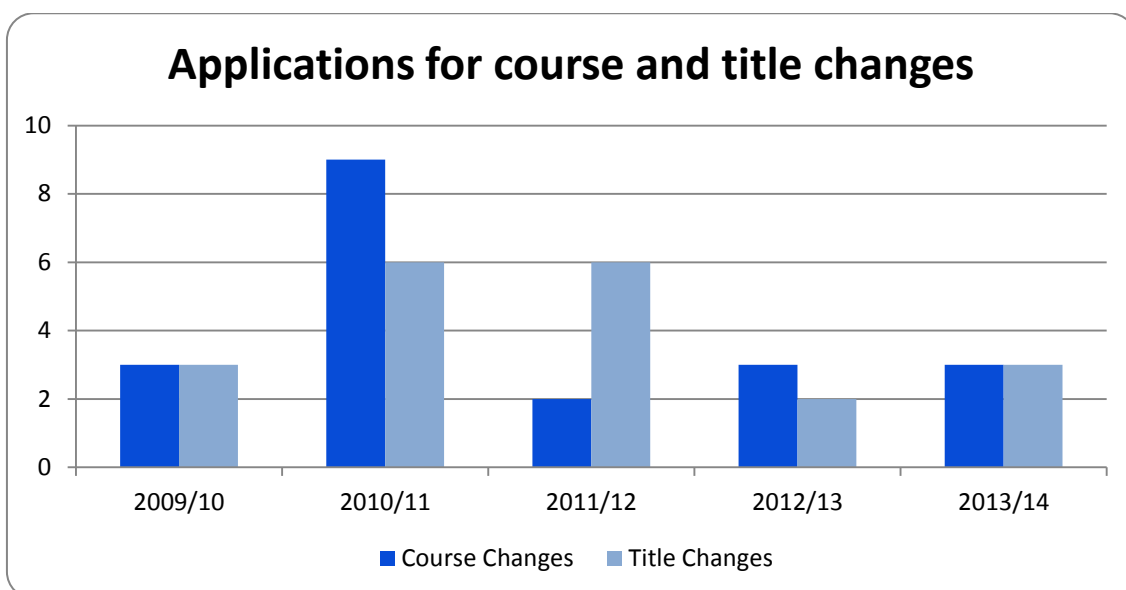
- 2.6 During the period September 2013 to August 2014, 6 institutions did not meet the deadline by which their Annual Monitoring submissions should have been made. For the period 2012/2013 13 institutions failed to make submissions on time.

The 2012/2013 reporting period had seen a rise in the numbers of late submissions compared to previous years. As a result more emphasis had been placed on the importance of making timely submissions during liaison meetings with SCHOSA and other stakeholders. ARB staff re-emphasised the importance of making submissions on time, and the impact that late submissions have on the Board's confidence that qualifications are continuing to meet its objectives. This appears to have been successful and there has been an improvement in submission deadlines being met in 2013/2014.

Course and Title Changes

- 2.7 Over the reporting period the Department received four requests from institutions wishing to make changes to the titles prescribed qualifications, including one

request to amend the title of the institution itself. There were a further two qualifications which involved the consideration of course changes.



3. European Qualifications

The revised Professional Qualifications Directive was published in January 2014. It introduces a new process for the scrutiny and publication of Directive-compliant qualifications under Annex V.7.1. Under the new system, the notification process is supported by the Internal Market Information system (IMI) which is still being developed by the European Commission. While the new IMI notification process was being developed, Member States were discouraged from notifying new qualifications and change of titles/institutions denominations. This explains the low number of EU and UK notifications processed during the period 2013/2014.

Updating the UK's entry under Annex V

- 3.1 During 2013/2014, 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 June 2013.

Notification of UK qualifications for listing under the Directive

- 3.2 2 newly prescribed Part 2 qualifications were notified to the European

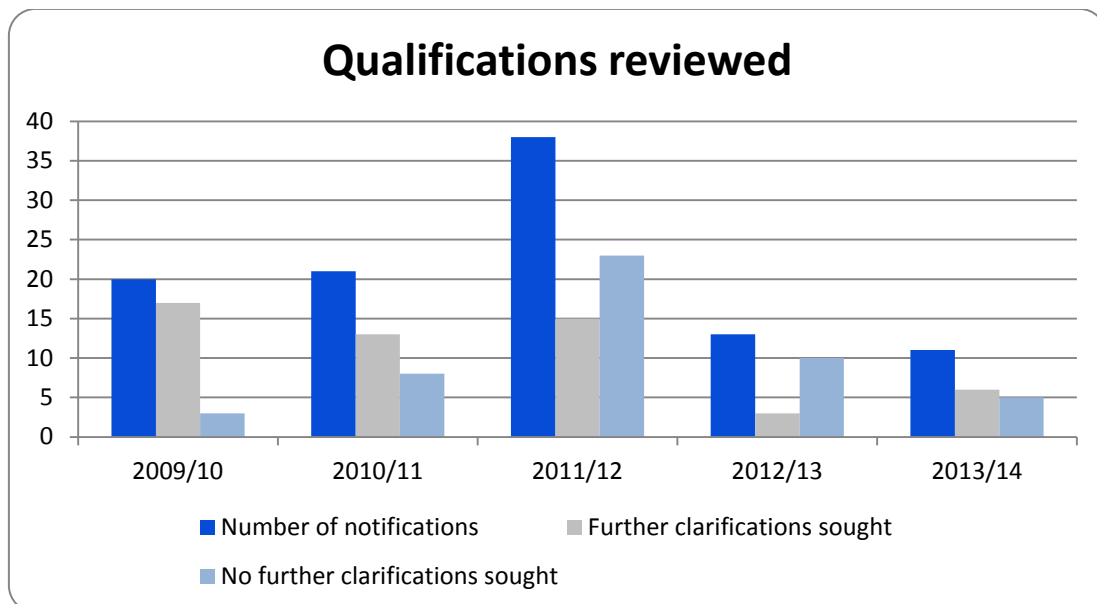
Commission during in 2013. Both notifications were successful and are now due to be listed in the next amended version of Annex V in 2014/2015.

3.3 5 title changes have been successfully notified but the process of publication is still ongoing. These title changes will only appear in the next version of Annex V due to be published in 2014/2015.

3.4 No European Notification Planning Meetings were held in the period 2013/2014.

Number of European qualifications reviewed

3.5 11 EU qualifications were notified by 5 different Member States compared to 13 in the previous year. Further information was sought by the UK in relation to 6 qualifications.

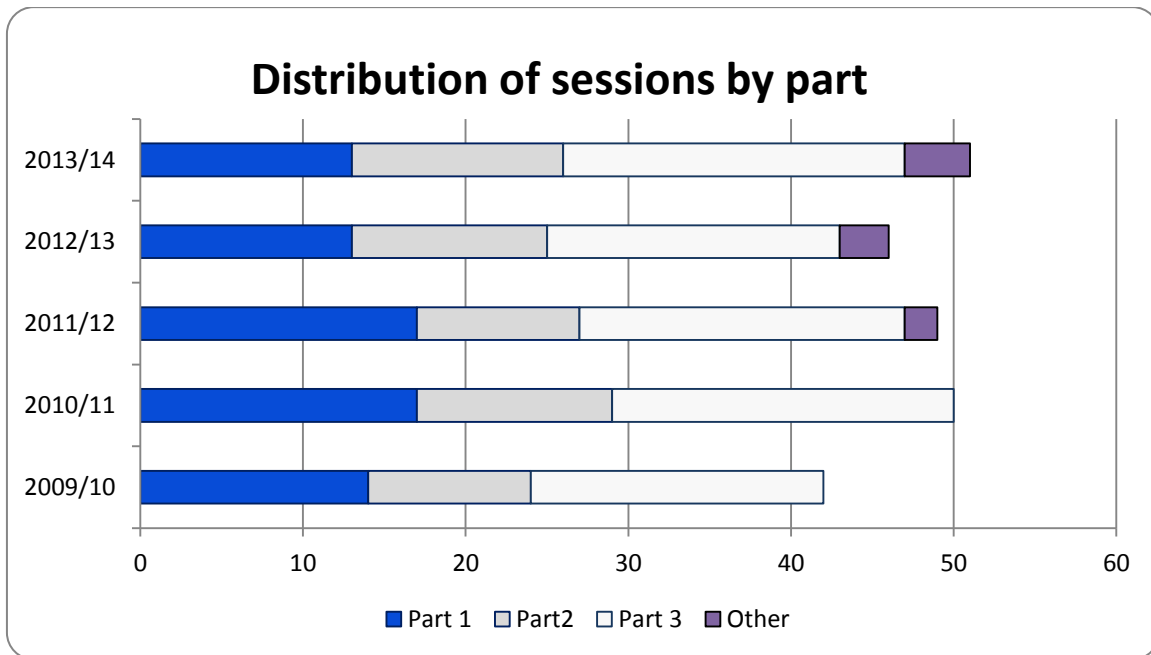


4. University Liaison Programme

4.1 During the academic year 2013/2014, 47 presentations were delivered in 34 institutions reaching approximately 2700 students.

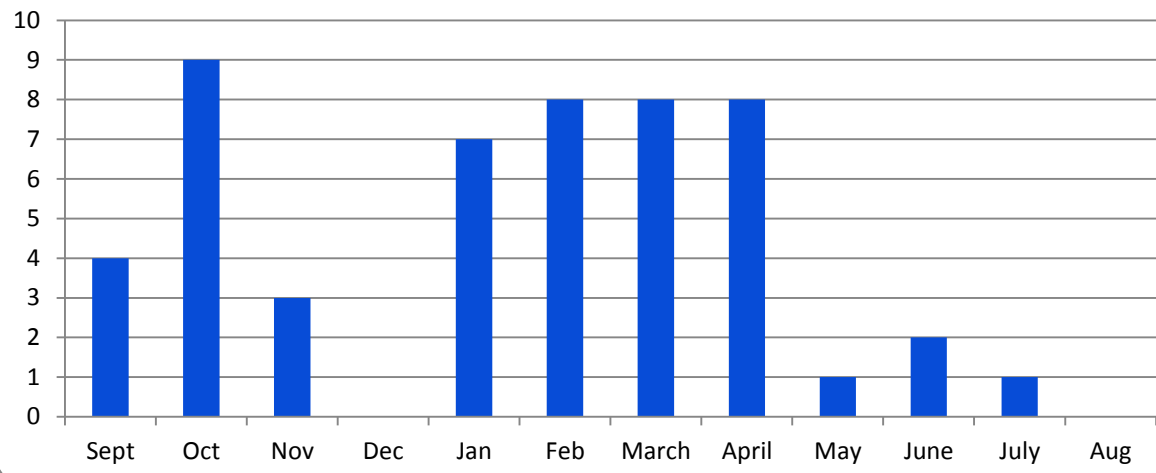
4.2 In addition to the typical liaison sessions in institutions offering prescribed qualifications, 1 presentation was delivered on ARB, Registration and the Prescribed Examination at an institution currently offering a non-prescribed qualification in architecture. Contributions were also made to 2 training sessions for examiners and employment mentors and a lecture on ARB and registration was delivered for a course on Practice in the UK.

- 4.3 1 institution offering a recently prescribed qualification requested a visit for the first time.
- 4.4 12 institutions (which offer ARB prescribed qualifications) did not engage with the programme this year, 4 of which regularly fail to participate. Of the remaining, pressure on timetables and ARB staff commitments meant that it was not possible to accommodate invitations from 4 of these institutions.






- 4.5 In line with previous years the majority of sessions (45%) involved Part 3 candidates, with 27.5% for Part 1 students and 27.5% for Part 2 students.
- 4.6 Sessions took place throughout the academic year with peaks occurring in October and during the spring term.

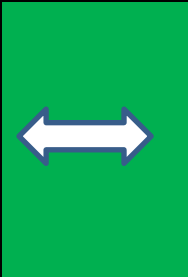
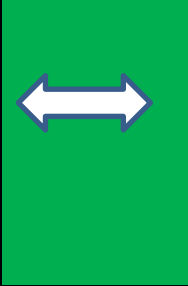
Distribution of visits



Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Target for 2013/2014	2013/2014 Outcome	Direction of Travel	Comments
Prescription applications				
Average no. of weeks to complete initial scrutiny of Prescription Applications	95% within 3 weeks	100% in 1.88 weeks (100% in 1.12 weeks in 2012/2013; 100% in 2.3 weeks in 2011/2012)	↓	The average number of weeks to complete the initial scrutiny of an application has slightly increased, however, the KPI has still be met well within target. This is primarily due to increasing workloads across the team and the timing of when most applications are received, i.e., last week in November/first week in December.
Average no. of weeks taken between an application being received to it being considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% in 6.33 weeks (100% in 6.65 weeks in 2012/2013; 100% in 7.14 weeks in 2011/2012)	↑	The average number of weeks taken to process an application internally and it being considered by the Prescription Committee for the first time has been reduced again in 2013/2014 by 0.32 weeks. Applications are becoming more streamlined, possibly as a result of clear and transparent information being conveyed at planning meetings and/or institutions consulting the Good Practice Handbook, and are therefore easier to process. The team was also well prepared for the prescription cycle which may also have helped to achieve the improvement in this area.
Average no. of weeks taken for an Independent Adviser to respond to Committee's request	95% within 3 weeks	No applications sent to independent adviser in 2013/2014 or 2012/2013. (100% in 3.5 weeks in 2011/2012)	N/A	
Annual Monitoring and course changes				
Average no. of weeks taken for an annual monitoring submission to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% in 3.87 weeks (100% in 3.55 weeks in 2012/2013; 100% in 4.17 weeks in 2011/2012)	↓	The average number of weeks taken to process an annual monitoring submission to consideration by the Prescription Committee for the first time has increased very slightly by 0.32 weeks, but remains well within the KPI target. This could be due to the timing of the Prescription Committee meetings being slightly different than in previous years.

Average no. of weeks taken for a significant change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% within 4.07 weeks (100% in 5.43 weeks in 2012/2013; No data available in 2011/2012)		The average number of weeks taken for a significant change to be considered by the Committee for the first time has improved by 1.36 weeks. This could be due to the timing of the submission of the relevant and correct information and its alignment with a Committee meeting, as well as an improvement in the efficiency of the team in terms of processing the changes.
Average number of weeks taken for a minor change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% within 5.81 weeks (100% in 3.24 weeks in 2012/2013; 100% in 3.38 weeks in 2011/2012)		The average number of weeks taken for a minor change to be considered by the Committee for the first time has increased this year by 2.41 weeks, although the KPI target has been met. This increase could be due to the timing of the submission and its alignment with a Committee meeting.
Average number of weeks taken for evolutionary change/s to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	N/A (100% in 5.29 weeks in 2012/2013; 100% in 9.43 weeks in 2011/2012)	N/A	No evolutionary changes were received during the reporting period.
Average number of weeks taken for an extension to prescription request to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	N/A (No extensions requested in 2012/2013 or in 2011/2012)	N/A	No institutions approached ARB requesting an extension during 2013/2014; however, the Prescription Committee/ARB Board undertook an exercise to determine whether institutions could be offered the opportunity of extending prescription in 2013 and 2014.
Average number of applications received in electronic format	90% during 2013/2014 cycle	100% (100% in 2012/2013; 100% in 2011/2012)		All institutions are now submitting their applications electronically in line with the requirements of the Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications.
European notifications				
To hold a planning meeting	100%	N/A	N/A	No new UK qualifications required

with each UK institution that has to notify its qualifications to the European Commission				notification during this period.
ARB to respond to all queries received regarding a notified UK qualification within 2 weeks from the day of receipt	100%	100% (100% in 2012/2013; 100% in 2011/2012)		The team has continued to meet 100% of its targets in relation to the notification of UK qualifications to the European Commission for the third year in succession.
ARB to respond to the notifying Member States for each notified qualification with comments as appropriate within the 2-month consultation period set out in the Commission's Notification Procedures	100%	100% (100% in 2012/2013; 100% in 2011/2012)		The team has continued to meet this target for the third year in succession.