Qualifications Department Annual Report
September 2014 – December 2014

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Maintaining Qualifications of Architects

1. Prescription of Qualifications

Prescription Cycle

1.1 During the period 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2014, the Board considered applications for the renewal of prescription for 7 qualifications from 3 institutions.

Planning Meetings

1.2 During the reporting period, 7 institutions seeking to renew prescription or seeking prescription for the first time requested planning meetings prior to submitting their applications.

Processing of Applications

Timings

1.3 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. One of the applications was considered for the first time outside this timescale. This was because the Prescription Committee was not quorate at the point at which the application was due to be discussed. In order to prevent similar problems occurring in the future, the Committee will use its Independent Advisers to ensure quoracy wherever possible.

1.4 On average, applications for the renewal of prescription took 30 weeks to process from the time of submission to the Board making its final decision. The fastest application was processed in 16 weeks. At the other end of the scale, 1 application took 52 weeks to process.

Applications which take longer to process often involve the Prescription Committee seeking clarification of some complex issues, e.g., the mapping of learning outcomes to ARB's Criteria, 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 as these do not remain static each year.

Annual Review of the Operation of the Prescription Process

1.5 The Qualifications Team undertake an annual review of the operation of the prescription process. None of the institutions which sought to renew prescription during the reporting period wished to provide any feedback. Staff will conduct a further feedback exercise during summer 2015 when a larger number of institutions will have completed

the prescription process.

2. Annual Monitoring Submissions and Course/Title Changes

2.1 During the period 1 September 2014 – 31 December 2014, the Prescription Committee reviewed Annual Monitoring submissions from 2 institutions covering a total of 5 qualifications. The vast majority of annual monitoring submission are scheduled to be submitted in the first half of the calendar year.

Follow up to Annual Monitoring Submissions

2.2 Of the 2 submissions received during the reporting period 1 required the Committee to seek additional information from the institution.

Deadlines for the Processing of Submissions

2.3 The maximum period allowed for ARB's staff and the Prescription Committee to consider annual monitoring submissions for the first time, is 8 weeks. This is the same period by which applications for prescription must be considered by the Prescription Committee for the first time.

2.4 For the reporting period, the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was approximately 3 weeks, and 100% of submissions were considered before the 8 week deadline. This compares with 100% of submissions considered before the deadline in the previous reporting period, taking an average of 4 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, but also in part to the improvements which staff have made to the tools used to process the submissions.

Late Submissions from Institutions

2.5 During the reporting period, 1 institution failed to meet the deadline for their Annual Monitoring submission.

The 2013/2014 reporting period had seen a fall in the numbers of late submissions compared to previous years. Where a reporting year sees an increase in the number of late submissions ARB staff use opportunities, such as SCHOSA Conferences and liaison meetings the stress the importance of timely submissions.

Course and Title Changes

2.6 Over the reporting period the Department received 1 request from an institution wishing to make a change to the title of its prescribed award. One other institution made a request for the consideration of course changes.

3. European Qualifications

Notification of UK Qualifications for Listing under the Directive

3.1 No new UK qualifications or title changes were notified to the Commission between September 2014 and December 2014.

Number of European Qualifications reviewed

3.2 34 EU qualifications were notified by 5 different Member States between September and December 2014. 31 of the 34 EU qualifications were reviewed in 2015.

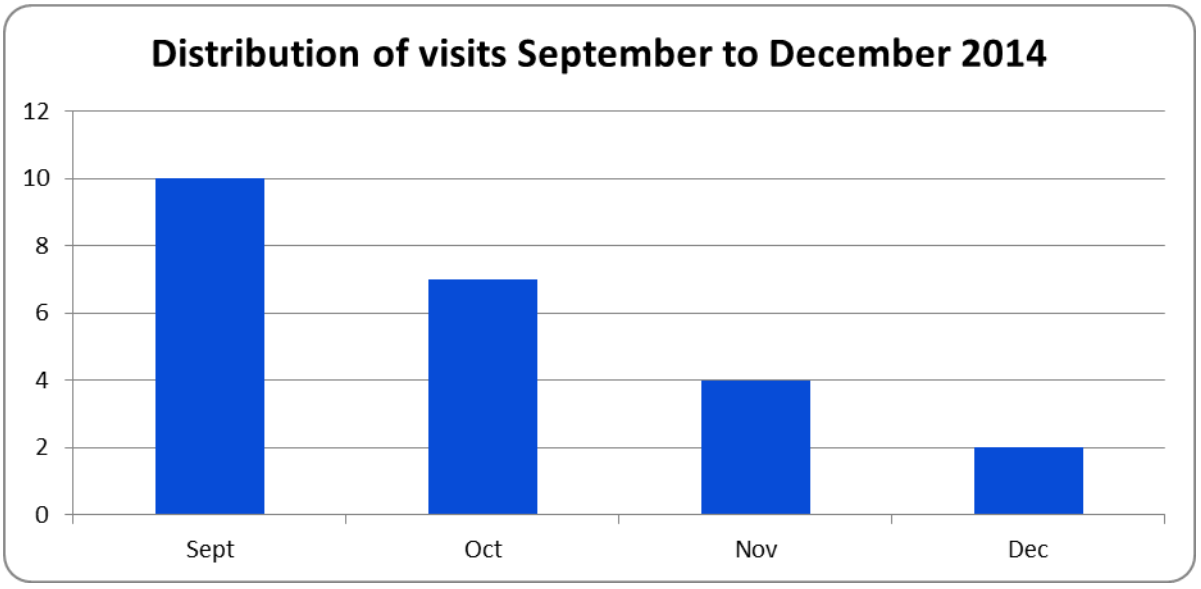
4. University Liaison Programme

4.1 During the reporting period, 23 presentations were delivered in 17 institutions reaching approximately 1200 students.

4.2 This represents a 44% increase in visits over the same period in the previous year. It is likely that this increase is due to the distribution of visits and the concentration of sessions within the shorter reporting period. When taken in the context of visits over the whole of 2014, the increase is closer to 15%.

4.3 The majority of sessions (38%) involved Part 1 candidates, with 31% for Part 2 students and 31% for Part 3 students. In previous years there were more Part 3 sessions but again, this is likely to be a reflection of the timing of the reporting period rather than a change in pattern.

4.4 Sessions take place throughout the academic year.



4.5 In addition to the typical liaison sessions in institutions offering prescribed qualifications, the following were also delivered:

- A presentation on the Qualifications and Services Directives at Cardiff University;
- A presentation for the Practice in the UK course, run by London Metropolitan University and the RIBA, on professional regulation and registration in the UK.

Key Performance Indicators

1 September 2014 to 1 December 2014*

*** Note: this is a snap shot of one part of 2014 to regularise the Department's reporting to the Board. It is therefore not representative of the Department's typical performance over a year.**

Performance Indicator	Target for 2013/ 2014/2015	Outcomes	Direction of Travel	Comments
Prescription applications				
Average no. of weeks to complete initial scrutiny of Prescription Applications	95% within 3 weeks	100% in 4.48 weeks 100% in 1.88 weeks between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 1.12 weeks in 2012/2013 100% in 2.3 weeks in 2011/2012		As noted above, this represents a four month snap shot of the Team's performance at the end of 2014. This was a particularly busy period with a number of applications being processed, which were scrutinised and analysed before being considered at either of two Prescription Committee meetings in January 2015. Therefore applications allocated to the late January 2015 meeting would not have undergone their initial scrutiny until later in December 2014/early January 2015 having arrived in late November 2014/early December 2014. The figure for the whole of 2015 is closer to that achieved in previous years.
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 7.52 weeks 100% in 6.33 weeks between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 6.65 weeks in 2012/2013 100% in 7.14 weeks in 2011/2012		As noted above, this represents a four month snap shot of the Team's performance at the end of 2014. This was a particularly busy period with a number of applications being processed, which were scrutinised and analysed before being considered at either of two Prescription Committee meetings in January 2015. Applications allocated to the late January 2015 meeting is likely to have led to a distortion of the figures. The figure for the whole of 2015 is closer to that achieved in previous years.
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	N/A	N/A

		No applications sent to independent advisers in 2012/2013. 100% in 3.5 weeks in 2011/2012		
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 2.67 weeks 100% in 3.87 weeks between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 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 decreased during the Autumn 2014 period. This is due to the small number of submissions during this period and the timely scheduling of Committee meetings.
Average no. of weeks taken for a significant change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	No data for period 1 September 2014 and 31 December 2014 100% within 4.07 weeks between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 5.43 weeks in 2012/2013 No data available in 2011/2012		There were no significant changes considered during this period.
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 2.71 weeks 100% within 5.81 weeks		The average number of weeks taken for a minor change to be considered by the Committee for the first time has decreased for this period. This is due to the timely reciept of the details

		between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 3.24 weeks in 2012/2013 100% in 3.38 weeks in 2011/2012		regarding the changes and the timely scheduling of Committee meetings.
Average number of weeks taken for evolutionary change/s to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% within 8.57 weeks N/A between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 5.29 weeks in 2012/2013 100% in 9.43 weeks in 2011/2012		As noted above, this represents a four month snap shot of the Team's performance at the end of 2014. Whilst the processing of the evolutionary change/s is in line with the KPI, it is likely that the Team needed to seek additional clarifications regarding the nature of the change before it was considered by the Committee.
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 N/A between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 No extensions requested in 2012/2013 or in 2011/2012	N/A	No institutions approached ARB requesting an extension during this period; however, the Prescription Committee/ARB Board undertook an exercise to determine whether institutions could be offered the opportunity of extending prescription in 2015.
Average number of applications received in electronic format	90% during 2013/2014 cycle	100% 100% between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014		All institutions are now submitting their applications electronically in line with the requirements of the Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications.

		(100% in 2012/2013; 100% in 2011/2012)		
European notifications				
To hold a planning meeting with each UK institution that has to notify its qualifications to the European Commission	100%	N/A	N/A	No new UK qualifications required 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%	N/A 100% between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 2012/2013 100% in 2011/2012		There were no UK notifications made during this period.
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% between 1 September 2013 and 30 August 2014 100% in 2012/2013 100% in 2011/2012		The team continued to meet this target during this period.