

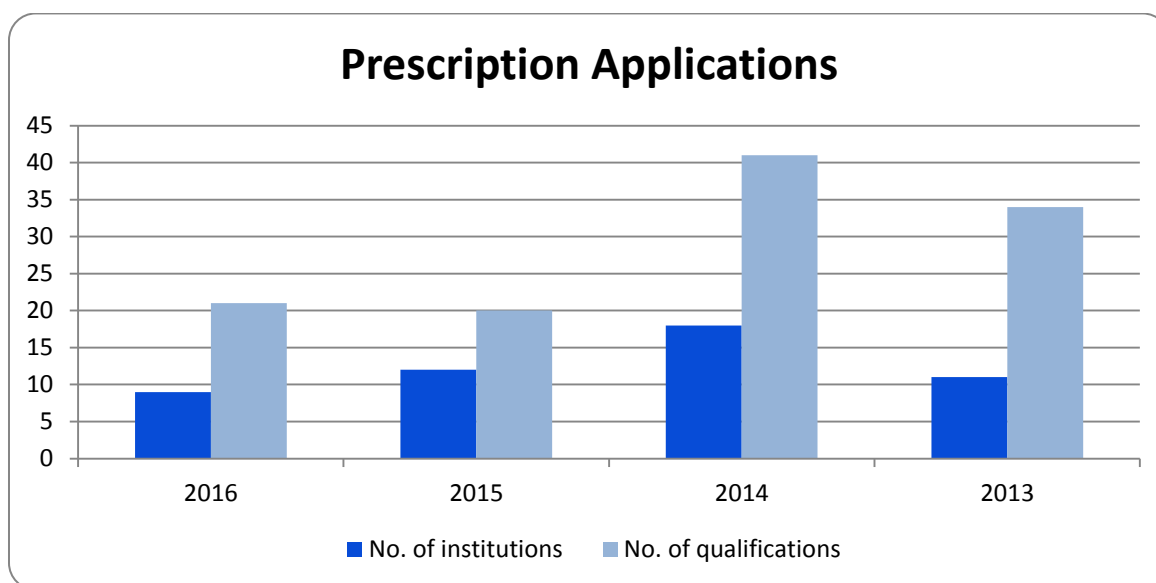
Qualifications Department Annual Report January 2016 – December 2016

Maintaining Qualifications of Architects

1. Prescription of Qualifications

Prescription Cycle

- 1.1 During 2016, the Board considered applications for the renewal of prescription for 21 qualifications from 9 institutions. In 2015 the Board considered applications for the renewal of prescription for 20 qualifications from 12 institutions.



- 1.2 In addition, the Board prescribed 4 new qualifications offered by 4 institutions. In the previous reporting period the Board prescribed 6 new qualifications offered by 6 institutions.

During 2016 the Board also rejected one application for prescription.

- 1.3 In previous years, the Board has undertaken an exercise to make the prescription process more flexible for institutions. After undertaking a review of the position, the Board decided to extend prescription of 3 qualifications offered by 1 institution which was due to renew prescription during the 2016/2017 cycle.

The Prescription Committee considered whether to advise the Board to offer an extension to a further 8 institutions. These institutions were deemed not to have met the eligibility criteria for which an extension could be offered. The key reasons were that the annual monitoring submissions had not been made by their due dates, or these submissions had been incomplete upon receipt.

In 2016, and due to an increase in the number of late and/or incomplete

submissions, the Prescription Committee issued information to all institutions offering prescribed qualifications confirming that repeated late and/or incomplete submissions would be likely to impact upon the duration of future periods of prescription, e.g., where there were instances of successive late submissions in any given prescription period, the Board would be likely to reduce the duration of prescription by a year when prescription was next renewed.

Planning Meetings

- 1.4 During 2016, 12 institutions seeking to renew prescription or seeking prescription for the first time requested planning meetings prior to submitting their applications.

Processing of Applications

Timings

- 1.5 In accordance with the timescales outlined in the Board's Procedures for Prescription, an application should be reviewed by the Prescription Committee for the first time within 8 weeks. All of the applications approved by the Board in 2016 were considered within that timescale.
- 1.6 On average, applications for the renewal of prescription took 25 weeks to process from submission, to the Board making its final decision. The fastest application was processed in 21 weeks. At the other end of the scale, 1 application took 33 weeks to process. This is broadly comparable to 2015 where the average time taken to process an application for renewal of prescription was 23 weeks.

Applications which take longer to process often involve the Prescription Committee seeking clarification about complex issues, e.g., new qualification structures; 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.

- 1.7 The Board granted prescription of 4 new qualifications during 2016. New qualifications typically take longer to process than renewal qualifications, because the Board must consult for a period of up to three months before prescription can be granted and the issues which require clarification are often more complex and difficult to resolve. The average time taken to process a first time application for prescription during 2016 was 47 weeks.

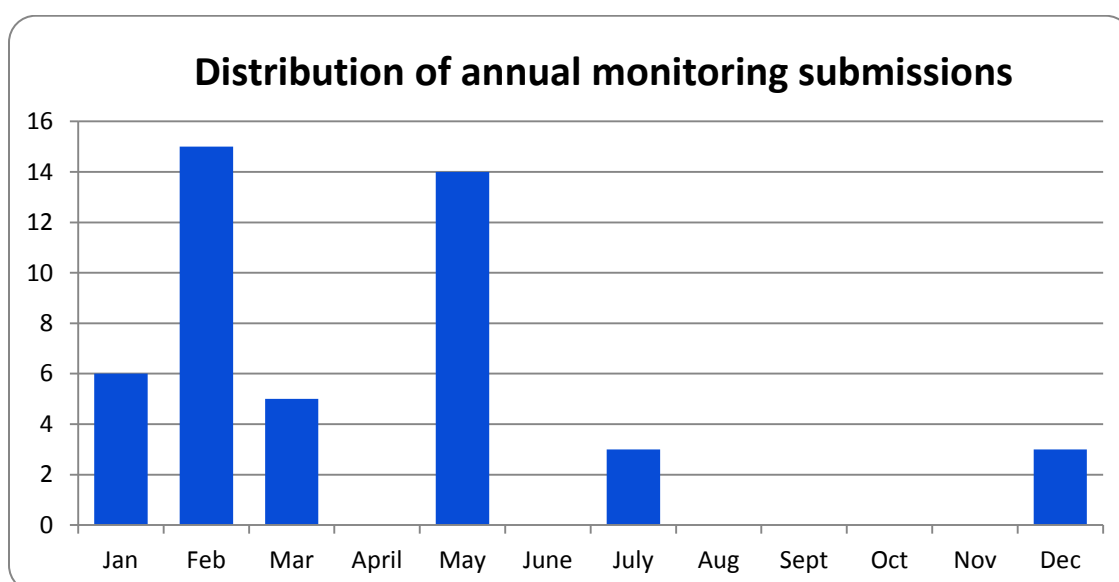
Annual Review of the Operation of the Prescription Process

- 1.8 The Qualifications Team undertakes an annual review of the operation of the

prescription process. Seven institutions responded to an on-line questionnaire, and these responses were made available to the Committee for its consideration in October. Recommendations were drawn from the feedback and minor adjustments to the guidance that sits behind the application procedure have been undertaken as a result.

2. Annual Monitoring Submissions and Course/Title Changes

- 2.1 During 2016 the Prescription Committee reviewed 46 annual monitoring submissions from 45 institutions covering a total of 120 qualifications. Annual monitoring submissions are not normally expected from institutions renewing prescription in any given year. In 2015, submissions were received from 45 institutions covering a total of 118 qualifications.



- 2.2 Variances can occur year on year because the number of institutions required to make an annual monitoring submission differs in any given year, depending on the number of institutions seeking renewal of prescribed qualifications. Additionally, the number of prescribed qualifications offered by institutions can vary with some offering 5 or more while others may offer only 1.
- 2.3 The chart above 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 46 submissions received during the reporting period, 31 required the

Committee to seek additional information from the institution. Requests for further information were sought for a variety of reasons including:

- Clarification regarding title or awarding body changes and evolutionary changes to modules/units;
- Concerns over the appropriateness of both staff and physical resourcing provision;
- Whether appropriate action had been taken in response to recommendations from internal and/or external peer reviews;
- Clarification on the status of qualifications which were due to expire;
- Clarification on the appropriateness of external examining provision and examination procedures; and
- Documents which should have been provided as part of the submission but were not.

This is a significant increase from 2015 where the Committee sought additional information on 11 occasions. A number of these queries arose as a result of institutions notifying the Board about recent course changes through their annual monitoring submissions. Staff have emphasised to institutions the importance of reporting course changes to the Board, and institutions appear to have taken note of this advice.

A large number of queries have also been raised by the Committee in relation to the appropriateness of both staff and physical resourcing as a result of comments made either by external examiners or within internal/external reports. The Committee will continue to query the appropriateness of resourcing whenever concerns arise to ensure that institutions continue to meet all of the standard conditions of prescription.

Deadlines for the Processing of Submissions

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 In 2016 the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was 4.5 weeks, and 100% of submissions were considered before the 8 week deadline. 100% of submissions were considered before the deadline in the previous reporting period, taking an average of just over 4 weeks to reach the Committee for the first time.

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 can also impact on this time period.

Late Submissions from Institutions

- 2.7 During the reporting period, 11 institutions failed to meet the deadline for submitting their annual monitoring submissions compared with 7 institutions in the previous reporting period.

ARB staff have continued to emphasise 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 was largely done through liaison meetings with SCHOSA and by writing to the university directly where submissions have been received late. Staff have advised institutions that where submissions are submitted late year-on-year, this is likely to impact on the future period of prescription when an application for renewal of prescription is made.

Course and Title Changes

- 2.8 Over the reporting period the Department received 2 requests from institutions wishing to make changes to the titles of prescribed qualifications. There were a further 10 requests relating to course changes. It should be mentioned however that some institutions also submit changes through their annual monitoring submissions rather than through a specific request.

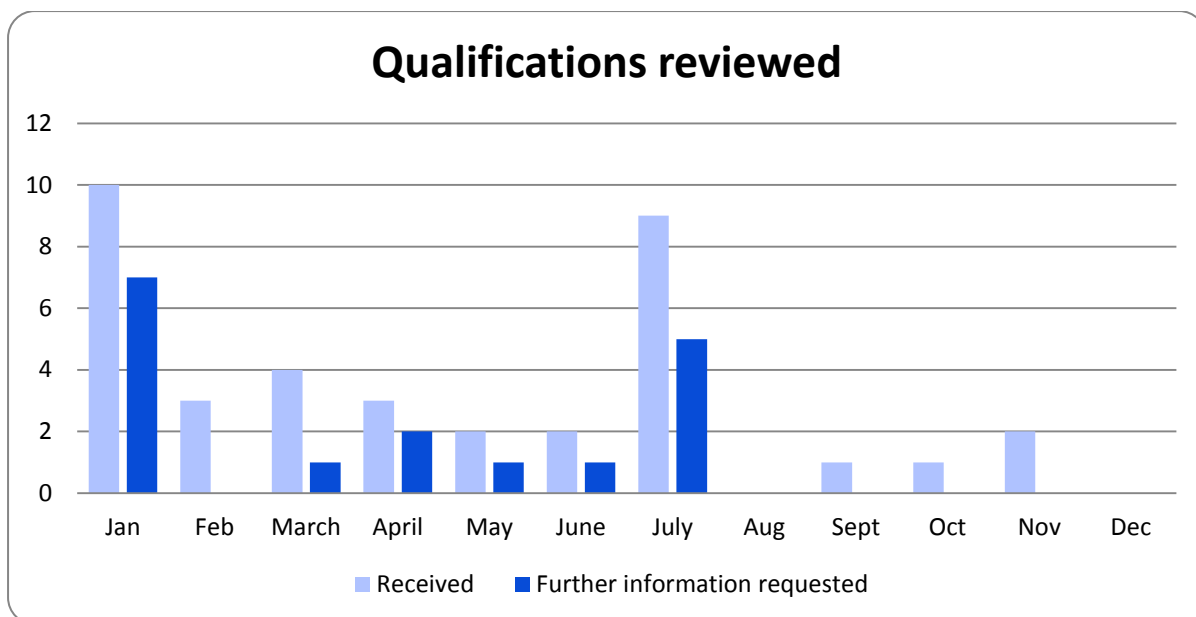
3. European Qualifications

Notification of UK Qualifications for Listing under the Directive

- 3.1 1 UK title change and no changes in awarding body changes were notified to the Commission in 2016.
- 3.2 2 new UK qualifications were notified and successfully listed under Annex V in 2016.
- 3.2 2 European Notification Planning Meetings were held. Only institutions making significant changes to their Part 2 level qualifications or gaining prescription of their Part 2 level qualifications for the first time require planning meetings.

Number of European Qualifications reviewed

- 3.3 37 EU qualifications were notified by 10 different Member States during 2016. This compares with 47 qualifications in 2015, 34 qualifications in 2014 and 14 in 2013. Of the 37 notifications considered, further information was sought by the UK in relation to 17 qualifications.



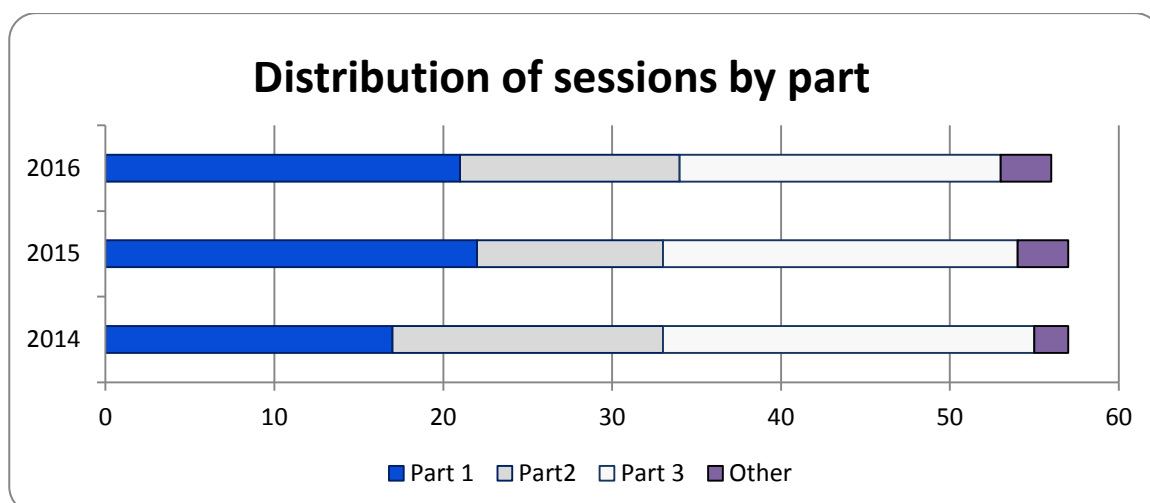
4. University Liaison Programme

4.1 During the reporting period, 53 presentations were delivered in 37 institutions reaching around 2800 students.

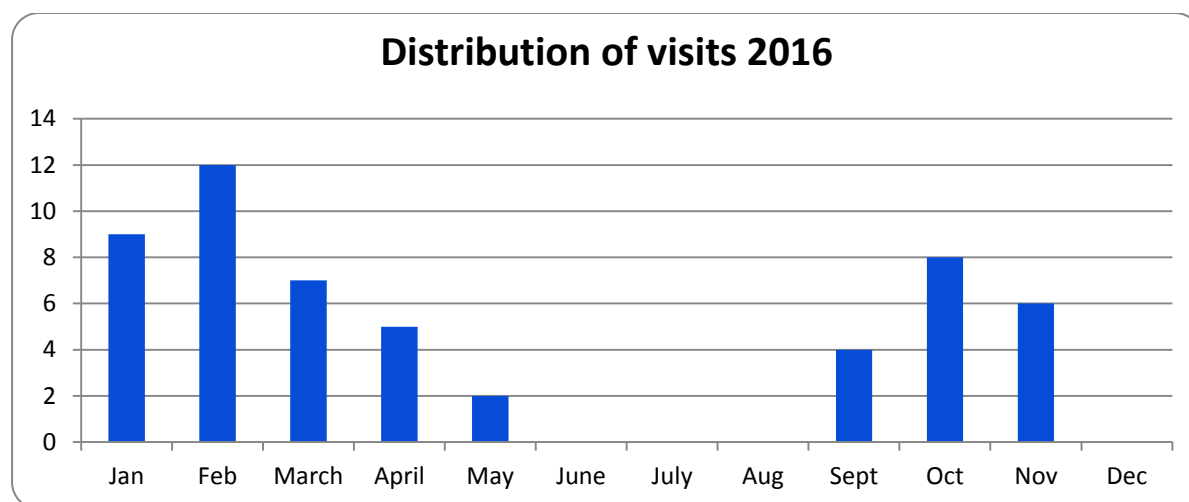
4.2 In addition to the typical liaison sessions in institutions offering prescribed qualifications, the following were also delivered:

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

4.3 A number of practices have requested continuing professional development sessions on the Code of Conduct or updates for their Human Resources staff on registration in the UK for their EU and overseas-qualified staff.












- 4.5 The majority of sessions (40%) involved Part 1 candidates, with 24% for Part 2 students and 36% for Part 3 students.
- 4.6 Sessions take place throughout the academic year with a peak occurring during the spring and autumn terms.




Key Performance Indicators

1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016

Performance Indicator	Target for 2015/2016	Outcomes	Direction of Travel	Comments
Prescription applications				
Average no. of weeks to complete initial scrutiny of Prescription Applications	95% within 3 weeks	100% in 1.79 weeks in 2016 100% in 1.19 weeks in 2015		There was a slight increase in the time taken to complete the initial reviews of the prescription applications following their arrival during 2016; the team operated with only three of its usual four members for three months during 2016 which may have had an impact on this area during the latter part of the year. The target has still been fully met despite this.
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 4.92 weeks in 2016 100% in 4.25 weeks in 2015		There was a slight increase in the time taken for the prescription applications to reach the Prescription Committee for consideration for the first time; as noted above, the team was not fully staffed for a short period and external support was used to help support the team's work in this area, which may have had an impact during the latter part of the year. Variances in the timing of the Committee meetings and the application submission dates may also have had an impact. The target has still been fully met despite this.
Average no. of weeks taken for an Independent Adviser to respond to Committee's request	95% within 3 weeks	N/A 100% in 9.86 weeks in 2015		The Prescription Committee did not refer any applications to its Independent Advisers for advice during 2016.
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 4.14 weeks in 2016 100% in 4.25 weeks in 2015		This area has seen a small improvement in the time taken to process the annual monitoring submissions and them being considered by the Committee for the first time.
Average no. of weeks taken for a significant change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% in 6 weeks in 2016 N/A in 2015		This KPI has been met.

Average number of weeks taken for a minor change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% in 4.29 weeks in 2016 N/A in 2015		This KPI has been met.
Average number of weeks taken for evolutionary change/s to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 8 weeks	100% in 4.01 weeks in 2016 100% within 3.86 weeks in 2015		There has been a slight increase in the number of weeks taken for evolutionary course changes to be considered by the Committee during 2016; this may be due to the variances in Committee dates although occasionally further information/clarifications need to be sought immediately following the submission of the information and institutions may have taken slightly longer to respond. The KPI has still been met.
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 in 2016 N/A in 2015		No institutions requested extensions during 2016.
European notifications				
To hold a planning meeting with each UK institution that has to notify its qualifications to the European Commission	100%	2 planning meetings held in 2016 2 planning meetings held in 2015		This KPI has been met.
ARB to respond to all queries received regarding a notified UK qualification within 2 weeks from the day of receipt	100%	2 full notifications and 1 title change notification were made in 2016 – all queries from the Commission were dealt with within 2 weeks 12 title notifications were made during 2015 – all queries from the Commission were dealt with within 2 weeks.		This KPI has been met.

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%	97% in 2016 100% in 2015		ARB requested one extension from the European Commission in order to allow comments to be made on one notification shortly after the original deadline; this was due to the complexity of the issues being considered within the notification and the timing of an internal ARB European Notifications meeting.
---	------	-----------------------------	---	---

Note: in response to feedback received from the Prescription Committee/ARB Board in early 2016, the KPIs for 2017 have been adjusted to continue to improve the Team's performance.