



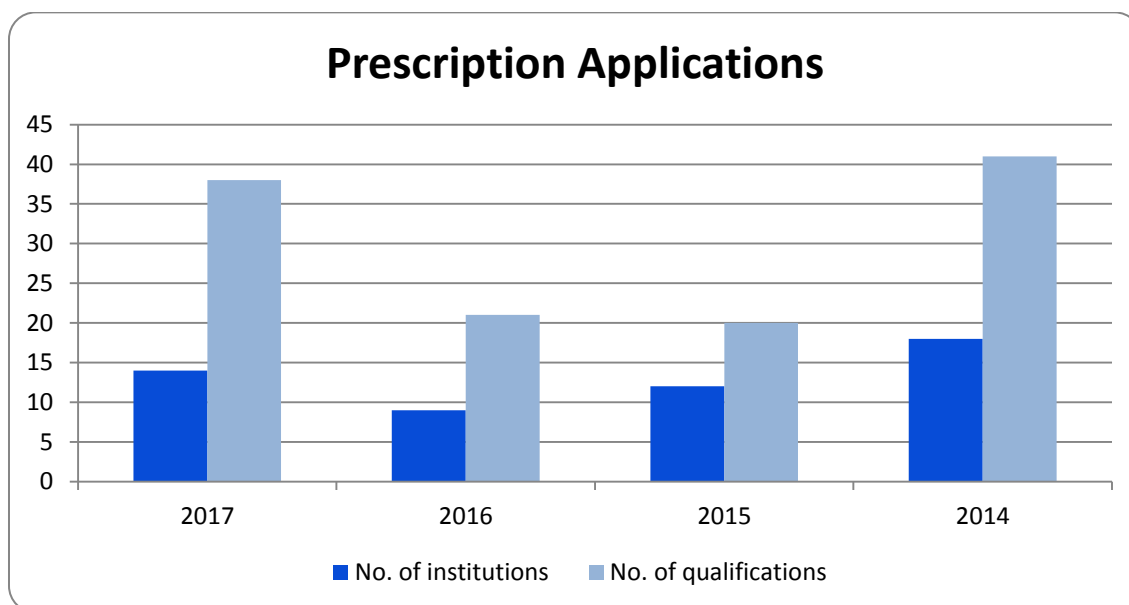
Qualifications Department Annual Report January 2017 – December 2017

Maintaining Qualifications of Architects

1. Prescription of Qualifications

Prescription Cycle

1.1 During 2017, the Board considered applications for the renewal of prescription for 38 qualifications from 14 institutions.



1.2 In addition, the Board prescribed 13 new qualifications offered by 9 institutions. This included six institutions with no history of offering prescribed qualifications resulting in an overall increase of 11% in the number of institutions delivering prescribed qualifications.

Five new qualifications were based on existing qualifications but with slight variances that resulted in a separate qualification being prescribed by the Board e.g., BA (Hons) Architecture with a Year Abroad, which included all of the modules and assessment within an existing BA (Hons) Architecture award but with an additional year spent overseas.

1.3 The Board undertakes an annual exercise to make the prescription process more flexible for institutions. After undertaking a review of the position in July 2017, the Board decided to extend prescription of 13 qualifications offered by four institutions due to renew prescription during the 2017/2018 cycle.

The Prescription Committee considered whether to advise the Board to offer an extension to a further six institutions due to renew in the same cycle. 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, issues had arisen within annual monitoring reports that had been a significant cause for concern for the Committee, or that a special condition had been in place.

One institution was granted a period of prescription of three years rather than the four years requested following a series of late and/or incomplete submissions under a policy agreed by the Prescription Committee in 2016.

Planning Meetings

- 1.4 During 2017, 14 out of 15 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 eight weeks. Of the applications approved by the Board in 2017, 96% were considered within that timescale. Challenges in meeting this deadline arise where Committee meetings are more widely spread. The risk of not meeting this deadline is mitigated through careful planning and spread of Committee meetings throughout the year, and through prioritisation of workloads.
- 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 20 weeks. At the other end of the scale one application took 30 weeks to process.

Applications which take longer to process often involve the Prescription Committee seeking clarification about complex issues, e.g., new qualification structures and the mapping of learning outcomes to ARB's Criteria. It is crucial that institutions are offered reasonable opportunities to respond and clarify complex matters where queries arise. Additionally, the Committee can request that it meet with representatives from an institution in order to seek clarification. During 2017 the Committee agreed to meet with two institutions as part of the renewal of prescription process.

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 13 new qualifications during 2017. New qualifications typically take longer to process than renewal qualifications because the

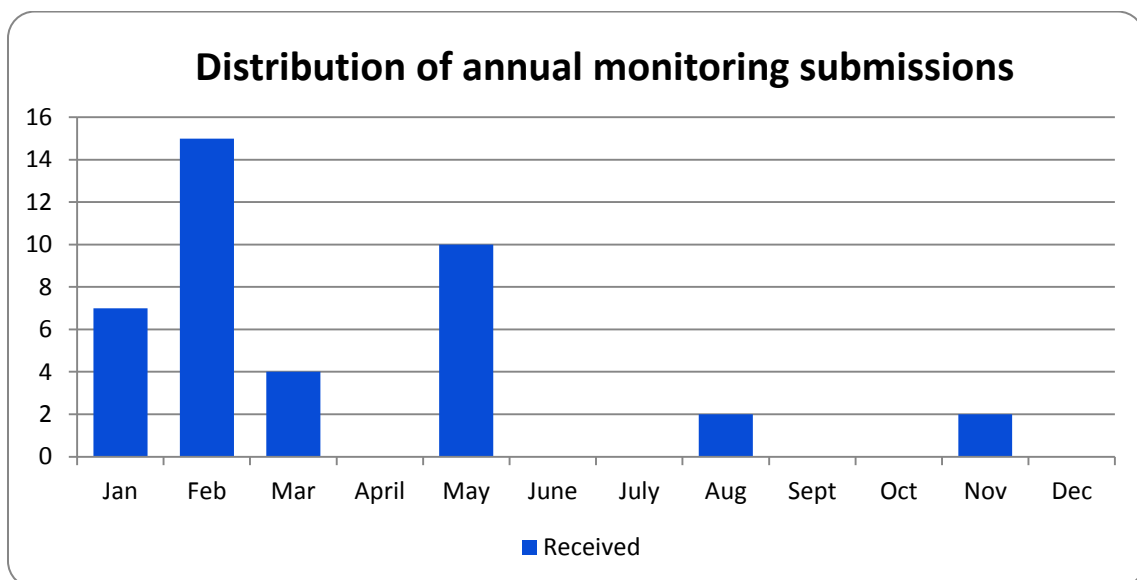
Board must consult for a period of up to three months before prescription can be granted. Additionally, the issues which require clarification are often more complex and difficult to resolve. The average time taken to process a first time application for prescription during 2017 was 49.5 weeks. There are no published timescales by which the Board must make a decision following the submission for an application for prescription/renewal of prescription, however we will work to improve this figure in 2018 where possible.

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. Ten institutions responded to an on-line questionnaire during the reporting period, and these responses were made available to the Committee for its consideration in October. Key themes were drawn from the feedback and will be fed back into the Procedures Review.

2. Annual Monitoring Submissions and Course/Title Changes

- 2.1 During 2017 the Prescription Committee reviewed 40 annual monitoring submissions covering a total of 104 qualifications. An institution is required to have a single annual monitoring date for all of its prescribed qualifications. Annual monitoring submissions are not normally expected from institutions renewing prescription in any given year.



- 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 five or more while others may offer only one.

- 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 40 submissions received during the reporting period, 28 required the Committee to seek additional information. Requests for further information were based on the Committee/Board's need for assurance that the standard conditions and prescription objectives were continuously being met. The Committee sought additional explanations 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;
 - Documents which should have been provided as part of the submission but were not; and
 - Comments from External Examiners in relation to threshold standards.

This is broadly similar to 2016 where the Committee sought additional information on 31 occasions. A number of 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.

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 eight weeks.
- 2.6 In 2017 the average time taken for each submission to receive initial scrutiny by the Committee was 4.6 weeks, and 100% of submissions were considered before the eight week deadline. 100% of submissions were also considered within the deadline in the previous reporting period, taking an average of 4.5 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, five institutions failed to meet the deadline for submitting their annual monitoring submissions compared with 11 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. Institutions have been advised 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 four requests from institutions to make changes to the titles of prescribed qualifications. There were a further seven requests relating to course changes. Some institutions also submit changes through their annual monitoring submissions rather than through a specific request. Requests to amend award titles have also included some changes to the structure/delivery of the qualification, without the change being deemed significant enough to be deemed as a new qualification.

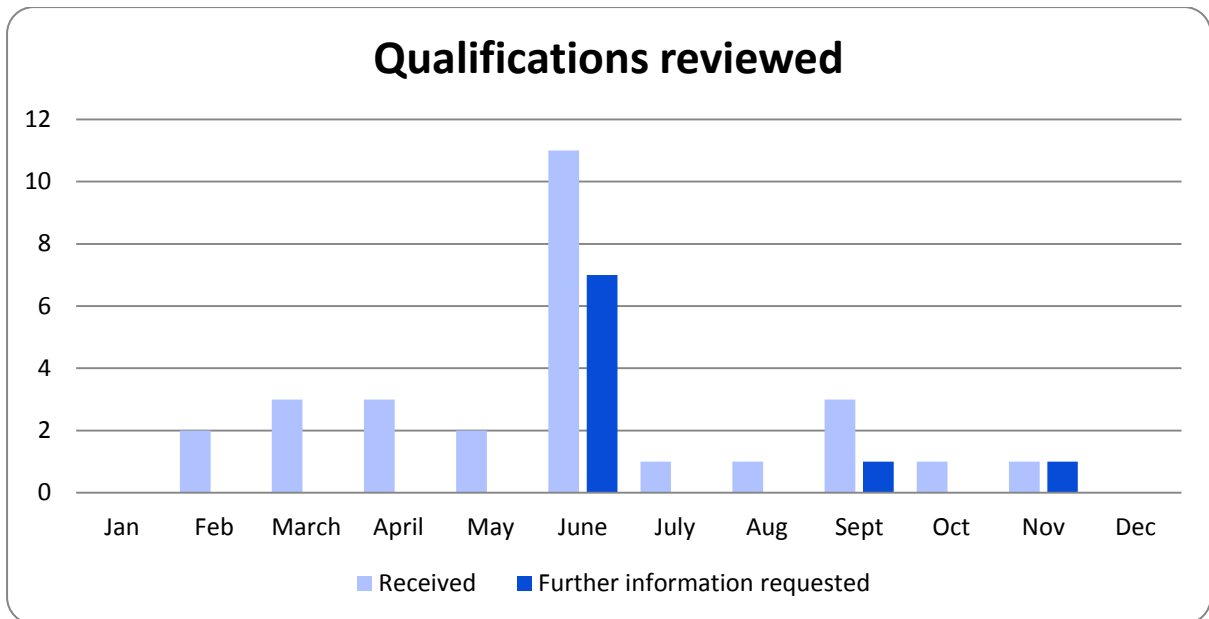
3. European Qualifications

Notification of UK Qualifications for Listing under the Directive

- 3.1 3 new UK qualifications were notified and successfully listed under Annex V in 2017.
- 3.2 1 European Notification Planning Meetings was 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

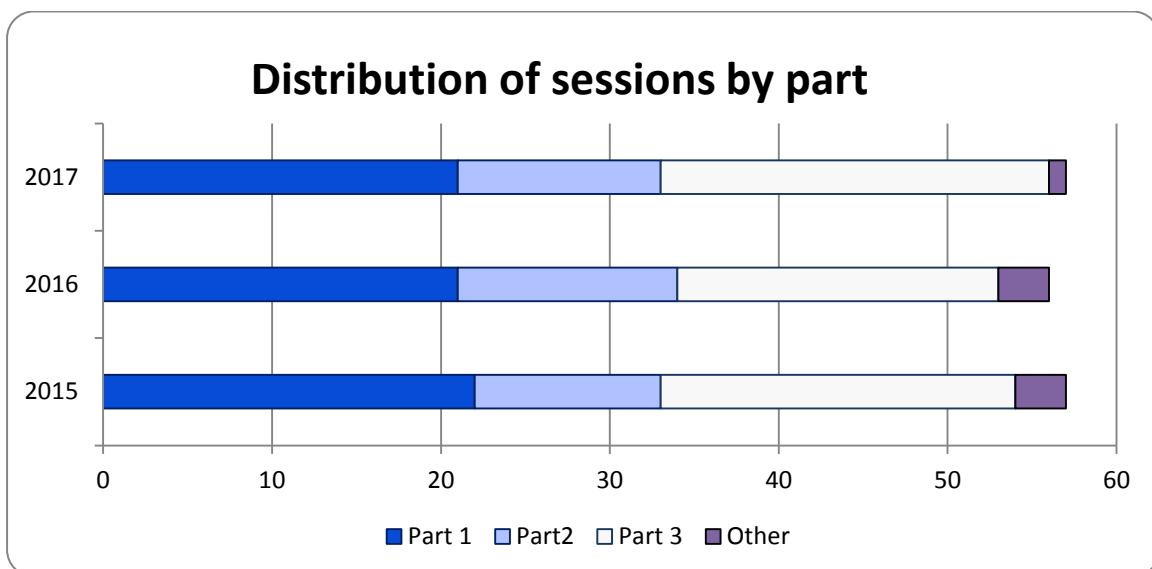
- 3.3 28 EU qualifications were notified by 7 different Member States during 2017. This compares with 37 qualifications in 2016, 47 qualifications in 2015 and 34 in 2014. Of the 28 notifications considered, further information was sought by the UK in relation to 9 qualifications.



4. University Liaison Programme

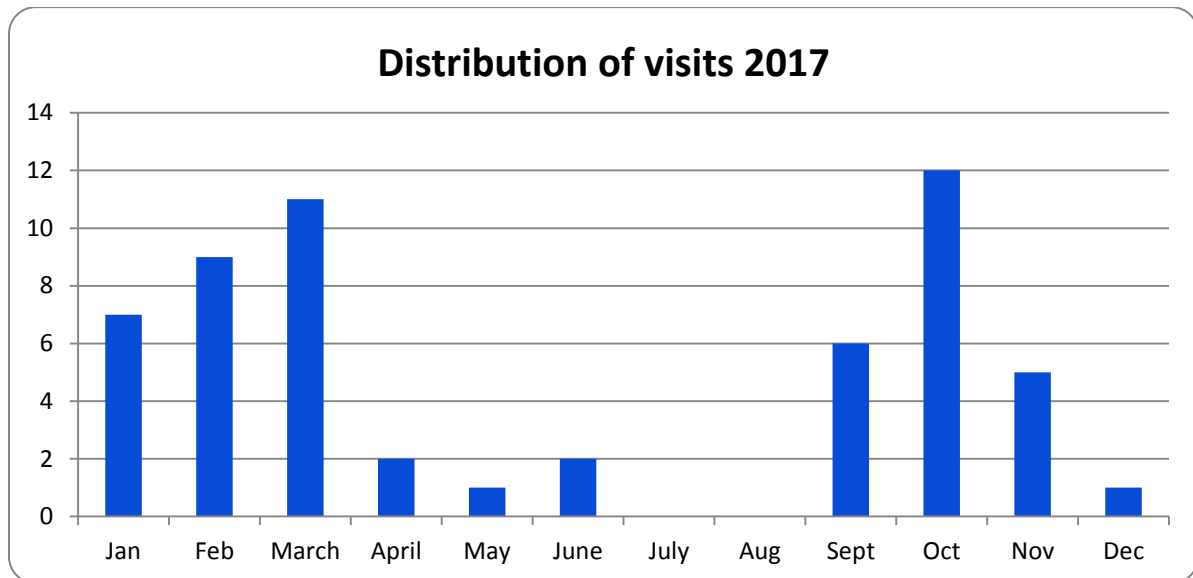
4.1 During the reporting period, 57 presentations were delivered in 40 institutions reaching around 3000 students.

4.2 In addition to the typical liaison sessions in institutions offering prescribed qualifications, one presentation was delivered for the Practice in the UK course offered jointly by the RIBA and London Metropolitan University.



4.3 The majority of sessions (40%) involved Part 3 candidates, with 21% for Part 2 students and 37% for Part 1 students

4.4 Sessions take place throughout the academic year with a peak occurring during the spring and autumn terms.



Key Performance Indicators

1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

Note: the Qualifications Team worked to revised KPIs in 2017 following a review of the KPIs in 2016. No comparison with previous KPIs has therefore been undertaken.

Performance Indicator	Target for 2017	Outcomes	Level of Achievement	Comments
Prescription Applications				
Average no. of weeks to complete initial scrutiny of Prescription Applications	95% within 2 weeks	100% in 0.77 weeks		This KPI has been exceeded. The Qualifications Team will review this in 2018 to see if the KPI should be adjusted.
Average no. of weeks taken between an application being received to it being considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 7 weeks	96% in 5.45 weeks		This KPI has been exceeded. The Qualifications Team will review this in 2018 to see if the KPI should be adjusted.
Average no. of weeks taken for an Independent Adviser to respond to Committee's request	95% within 3 weeks	N/A		No routine applications were referred directly by the Committee to its independent advisers.
Annual Monitoring Submissions				
Average no. of weeks taken for an annual monitoring submission to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 6 weeks	100% in 4.51 weeks		This KPI has been exceeded. The Qualifications Team will review this in 2018 to see if the KPI should be adjusted.
Average no. of weeks taken for a significant change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 6 weeks	100% in 4.86 weeks		This KPI has been exceeded. The Qualifications Team will review this in 2018 to see if the KPI should be adjusted.
Average number of weeks taken for a minor change to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 6 weeks	100% in 4.67 weeks		This KPI has been exceeded. The Qualifications Team will review this in 2018 to see if the KPI should be adjusted.
Average number of weeks taken for evolutionary change/s to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 6 weeks	100% in 6.31 weeks		This KPI has been narrowly missed; this is due to the variances in Committee dates and/or further information/clarifications needing to be sought immediately following the submission of the information. We will monitor this area closely in 2018 in order to ensure we improve

Performance Indicator	Target for 2017	Outcomes	Level of Achievement	Comments
				performance in this area in 2018.
Average number of weeks taken for an extension to prescription request to be considered by the Committee for the first time	95% within 7 weeks	N/A		No institutions sought extensions to prescription outside of the routine exercise the staff undertaken to determine if prescription can be extended by up to one year through the 'making prescription more flexible' process.s
UK/European Notifications				
To hold a planning meeting with each UK institution that has to notify its qualifications to the European Commission	100%	100%		This KPI has been met.
UK to respond to all queries received within the 2-month consultation period set out in the Commission's Notification Procedures	100%	100%		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%	66%		Three UK notifications were made in 2017; queries were raised by other EU member states in relation to one of those three notifications. We prepared responses and sought the relevant institution's agreement to them. There were delays in securing the institution's agreement to the proposed responses due to the availability of staff/the timing of the queries. The Team will reflect on this and consider more effective strategies for securing institutions' agreement to proposed responses in 2018.
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%		This KPI has been met.