



Board Meeting 15/09/2016
Agenda Item 13

Subject	Registration and other Fees 2017		
Status	Open Session		
Purpose	For Decision		
From	Registration Team Leader		
History	Parent Committee	First Submitted	Revision Number
	N/A	15/09/2016	1

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1. Purpose

In line with the Architects Act 1997 ('the Act') and the Board's General Rules, the Board is asked to review and agree the 2017 fee charges for joining and re-joining the Register, undertaking the Prescribed Exam (including referral to lead examiner), the annual cost of providing a Register of Architects (in PDF format) and providing Certificates of Architectural Education.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board;

- i. agree no change to the current fees, as illustrated in [Annex A](#) (the retention fee element is subject to separate approval under Agenda Item 14).

3. Terms of Reference

The Board determines the fees charged by ARB under the terms of the Act.

4. Open

5. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are to protect the users and potential users of architects' services, and to support architects through regulation.

ARB is funded by the fees that the Act states it may charge. Income is generated from registration and retention fees to enable ARB to deliver its statutory functions so must be set at an appropriate and proportionate level to ensure that ARB can carry them out effectively. The Board is also able to charge a prescribed fee for providing additional

services such as the provision of an electronic version of the Register. These fees must be set to cover the processing and material costs of the respective activities.

6. Key Points

i. Current fee regime for applications

The Act gives the Board powers to charge for aspects of its work. In 2011, ARB introduced a new fee structure for those joining and re-joining the Register. The basis of the change was a 'user pays' approach and the rationale for this was that those on the Register should not be carrying the costs associated with individuals seeking to join it. The new approach included:

- the introduction of an application fee;
- a reduction in the associated prescribed fee (the fee charged for anyone having been removed for non-payment wishing to re-join the register); and
- a pro-rata retention fee, meaning that applicants who join the Register at different stages of the year do not pay for the full quarters they have not been registered for.

Processing fees are non-refundable, even where a refund may be given to an applicant for a withdrawn or rejected application.

When the new fee structure was approved, the Board agreed that the structure and the amounts payable would be reviewed annually to ensure proportionate fees continue to be charged.

ii. ARB can also charge a fee for:

- providing an electronic copy of the Register;
- providing Certificates of Architectural Education; and
- the Prescribed Examination.

iii Proposed fee regime for applications for 2017

Having reviewed the costs associated with processing applications and ARB's additional services, in line with the agreed approach to ensuring the fees charged reflect the 'users pays' objective, **Annex A** sets out a table illustrating the proposed fees (the retention fee element of any of the fees could potentially change, depending upon the discussion at agenda item 14). These fees are unchanged from the 2016 fee regime.

Application fees will remain payable at the point of submission. ARB will continue to offer refunds for unsuccessful and withdrawn applications, and processing costs such as the application fee will remain non-refundable.

- iv. The Board will note that in 2014, 2015 and 2016 the fee associated with re-joining the register was reduced by £10 year on year as the introduction of the online application process helped to create efficiencies. This year, the Operational Management Group has considered the costs associated with removing and reinstating individuals to the Register for non-payment of the annual retention fee and removal under Section 11 (failing to provide an up to date address), and has concluded that as processing costs are unlikely to reduce further, it would not be appropriate to reduce the fees further for 2017.

- v. The Operational Management Group has considered the other fees highlighted in [Annex A](#) (excluding the retention fee which will be discussed under Item 14) and concluded that there is no evidence that processing costs have changed or any other reason to adjust them. As such, the Board are asked to approve the fee regime at [Annex A](#).

7. Risk Implications

ARB relies on the income generated by the chargeable activities, as defined in the Act, to finance the running of the organisation. Ongoing scrutiny of the costs associated with each activity ensures the fees charged are both proportionate and as accurate as possible.

The numbers used to calculate income are based on movements on the Register over several years, taking into consideration any trends identified.

The Board operates a pro-rata retention fee for those joining or re-joining the Register. It is difficult to predict the exact amount of income that will be generated from this activity, as this will be dependent on the time of year when individuals join or re-join, which can vary on a year by year basis.

To mitigate the risk, the Board undertakes an annual review of costs associated with processing applications. This ensures that fees fairly reflect associated costs in line with the Board's approach to 'user pays'. Further efficiencies through investment in technology and self-service processes to reduce costs, currently make an annual review desirable.

8. Resource Implications

The financial implications have been factored into the 2017 budget.

9. Communication

The review of the fees payable demonstrates transparency in formulating the fees and remains in line with the Board's view that the user should pay.

Having a clear table of fees on the Board's website, along with detailed information in the Board's online registration facility, enables applicants to make an informed decision about when they apply for registration and how much they will need to pay.

10. Growth Duty Considerations

The setting of fees must be reasonable and proportionate to achieve the stated aim; they should not impose an unnecessary burden on the profession, nor act as an unreasonable obstacle to registration.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

While no specific equality and diversity implications have been identified in the course of the review, there is a possibility that as fees generally increase so too does the likelihood of disadvantages to those on lower incomes.

The process of setting the retention and other fees has not been subject to a full equality impact assessment at this stage. It is therefore not possible to report on any potential impact that the fee-setting process might have on different equality groups. However, as the associated costs relate directly to the costs of securing registration for all, it is considered that no one group will be disadvantaged.

As we continue to collect equality information of registrants, an analysis can be undertaken where appropriate.