



Subject Update on ARB's Operational Activities
Purpose For Note
From ARB's Staff Team

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1. Summary

To update the Board on ARB's operational activities since the last Board meeting.

2. Open Session

Open session. Any confidential matters will be discussed in a separate report in the confidential session.

3. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

- Protect the users and potential users of architects' services, and
- Support architects through Regulation

ARB's Operational Activities Report keeps the Board informed of activities which ensure that ARB meets its purpose and objectives, its statement of priorities and delivers against the Business Plan.

4. Stakeholder Relations

Hackitt Review

The Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety was announced by government in July 2017 following the Grenfell Tower tragedy and was led by Dame Judith Hackitt. Its purpose was to make recommendations that will ensure a sufficiently robust regulatory system for the future. One of those recommendations was that there should be a competence framework specifically for those involved in the design, construction and maintenance of Higher-Risk Residential Buildings (HRRBs).

ARB is a member of the working group that is considering the competencies that should be required for architects and building designers involved in Higher-Risk Residential Buildings. The substantive work of that Group has now finished, and since the last Board meeting the

interim report of the Competency Steering Group¹ has been published².

The report is to be launched at two events on 30 September and 18 October, with the latter date also being the closing date for consultation responses.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education (HE) wherever it is delivered around the world. Their main areas of work include reviewing HE, Access to HE, the UK Quality Code and providing advice and guidance.

We reported in May that the QAA was in the process of establishing an expert review team to review the Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement. ARB is represented on this review team by the Head of Qualifications and Governance, who is supported by three members of the former Criteria Task and Finish Group. The Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement includes the ARB/RIBA Criteria at Parts 1 and 2, and the shared Criteria at Part 3 is appended to the current Statement. Prior to the Board's meetings in July, the aim was to retain this structure and to include any revised output which resulted from the business as usual review of the Criteria within the Statement. As a result of the Board's discussions on 19 July 2019 and its decision to cease the business as usual review of the Criteria, we communicated details of the Board's decision to the QAA shortly after the meeting. Notwithstanding this, the Chair of the Subject Benchmark Statement Review Group sent us a copy of the draft revised statement which was being worked on at that time. We will have reviewed that draft and sent the Group our comments and feedback in relation to the draft by the time the Board meets on 11 September. We will reiterate the position in relation to the business as usual review of the Criteria and will reconfirm that the Subject Benchmark Statement will need to include the existing Criteria. The Review Group is due to meet on 25 September for an editing meeting. We will also use this as an opportunity to provide additional feedback accordingly. We will continue to keep the Board up to date as this review continues.

Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

Is the self (non-broadcast) and co-regulator (broadcast) for advertising in the UK. The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) is the sister organisation of the ASA and is responsible for writing the Advertising Codes which the ASA enforce. Although the nature of their regulator activities differs to ARB, some of their systems and process are comparable.

Following a meeting in July to share learning around data capture and processing, representatives from CAP/ASA kindly meet with ARB again to discuss recent learnings around their own data developments. The meeting provide an excellent catalyst for ideas on how ARB could improve its own approaches.

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (CA)

CA is a network of independent charities that offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free. They are a voice for people on the issues that

¹ The Competency Steering Group is the group overseeing the response to the Hackitt Report from 12 different professions involved with the design, construction or maintenance of HRRBs.

² <http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/raising-the-barinterimfinal-1.pdf>

matter to them as well as the statutory consumer watchdog for the energy and post industries.

Having provided a 'briefing note' for CA staff to reference when handling relevant enquiries/cases, we have now signed a data sharing agreement with CA in the hope that this will provide useful intelligence on conduct, competence and title misuse issue relevant to our statutory role. We will be exploring the data available and it's possible applications over the coming weeks.

6. EU Exit

Since the last Board meeting, we have continued to review our communications regularly to ensure that the information provided on our website remains up to date. We have also re-evaluated the risks associated with Brexit, particularly in relation to a no deal scenario arising, to ensure that our approach to managing Brexit related risks remains appropriate and that we have accounted for all foreseeable and significant events and impacts.

We will be sending an email out to all registrants with an email address the week commencing 9 September 2019, urging that they contact us if they are concerned about the impact of Brexit. We have also been working with Part 3 providers to ensure that those graduating close to 31 October 2019 are aware of the potential impacts and to contact us with any queries.

We will be attending a Regulatory Forum which is being hosted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in mid-September which will be a valuable opportunity to share information between other similar organisations and will facilitate our no deal planning to ensure that we are ready for 31 October should the UK exit the EU on this date.

7. Business as Usual Reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications

Further to the Board's decisions to cease the business as usual reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications, we have communicated the position to stakeholders and updated them on the Board's revised plans. The Chair of the Board exchanged correspondence with the President of the RIBA; the Executive have additionally written to the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture; the Association for Professional Studies in Architecture; the Architecture Students Network and the Quality Assurance Agency as well as other individuals who had contacted ARB directly as part of the pre-consultation exercises. We have also updated our website to reflect the position and included an update in the latest Ebulletin. In terms of the Criteria, this involves undertaking a deeper analysis of the skills required by modern architects beginning with a piece of work in 2019, looking at how the how best to accommodate within the Criteria both the recommendations resulting from the Hackitt Review and climate change. We will provide further updates on how we will be looking to take this work forward at the Board's meeting on 11 September 2019. In relation to the Procedures, we have been reviewing the Procedures with a view to making operational and governance adjustments to them and a paper seeking the Board's agreement to issue a revised version of the Procedures for a short consultation is on the agenda for this meeting. We will be bringing a project scope for the

root and branch review of the Procedures to the Board for consideration in December 2019.

8. Mutual Recognition Agreements

In 2017 we were approached by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) with a view to exploring the potential development of a mutual recognition agreement. High level discussions between the AACA, NZRAB and the ARB have continued since that point. Since our last conversation with both bodies in July, we have been progressing a deeper analysis of our respective requirements. We hope to have completed this part of our analysis by late Autumn and will then discuss next steps. We have also ensured that both the MHCLG and the Department for International Trade (DIT) were aware of our discussions and debriefed them following our recent call with the AACA and NZRAB. We are actively engaged in discussions with both departments as to how ARB could further discussions about the establishment of agreements with international partners. We have also been invited to join one of the DIT's Expert Trade Advisory Groups; the first meeting of this group takes place in early September and relevant updates will be provided to the Board at its meeting on 11 September 2019.

9. Communicating ARB's work

Publications

Earned media (content not directly created by ARB but by others without payment) is a highly trusted source of information. Earned press coverage enables us to inform and raise awareness of ARB and our regulatory activities with a range of stakeholders. In addition significant earned coverage in a national newspaper that will be seen by a large readership would cost thousands if the equivalent space was bought as advertising.

Since the last Board meeting in July, we have been referenced in a least 18 articles, published 2 news release and responded to 9 press enquiries.

We also reached out to five publications in order to coordinate the correction of factual errors in their content.

eBulletin

Our eBulletins remind the profession of their responsibilities and provide updates on decisions made by the Board as well as other information of interest and relevance to architects. Issues are published after Board meetings, which are usually held around five times a year.

The last eBulletin email, published 12 August 2019, was delivered to 41,264 recipients and opened by 14,963 in the first week following publication. The July eBulletin microsite received 4,537 page views.

The July edition was the second most engaged with email and microsite since records began in 2015.

To help ensure the Register is kept up to date, the eBulletin email prominently features recipient contact details together with a click through option to update. We received

approximately 620 contact detail updates in the week immediately after the eBulletin was sent out compared to 84 in the previous week, an increase of approximately seven fold.

Correspondence

As the 31 October/Exit Day draws near we have distributed further advice to our stakeholders who may be thinking of registering in the EU in the near future, to help them manage next steps as effectively as possible. At the end of August we contact Part 3 providers to ask them to encourage their soon-to-be graduates to contact us if they are thinking of registering in the EU upon qualifying. We are preparing to repeat our messaging to the profession from March this year about ensuring they request proof of qualification/registration with us in good time should they be thinking of registering in the EU. We anticipate our communication being sent the week commencing 9 September 2019.

10. Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency

Numbers on Register

On 31 December 2018, the Register stood at 41,170. As of 27 August 2019, there were 42,270 architects on the Register. Of these, 9,197 are EU nationals (not including UK). 7,850 of these individuals have registered addresses in the UK. This compares with 8,108 EU nationals (not including UK) at the start of 2018, with 6,943 based in the UK. This demonstrates that the Register is still growing and that the number of EU nationals on the Register and with addresses in the UK is still increasing.

In 2019, we removed 1,094 architects for non-payment of the retention fee. 609 (56%) of those removed have since been reinstated. Each year, we audit the list of individuals struck off from the Register to ensure that those still using the title 'architect' are aware of their registration status and apply for reinstatement, or stop using the title. We have concluded 231 preliminary cases since the start of the year from this audit.

We are currently looking to revise the data we derive from the register systematically to give us a greater insight into trends. The data we are now routinely gathering will give us greater insight into the demographics of the Register. We will present some preliminary information to the Board at this meeting.

Email data

The email management system used to track email traffic coming into the main generic information account (monitored by Registration), indicates that in 2018, the Registration team sent a total of 16,553 email responses to queries, with an average response rate of one day.

So far in 2019 (as of 27 August 2019), we have sent 11,997 emails (an increase of 34% on 2018 which stood at 8,952 message sent) with the most popular topics being prescribed examination (772), requests for certificates to register in the EU (697), changing an address (518), making an application from the EU (516), and UK applications (396). The number of queries relating to Brexit and obtaining the documentation required to register in Europe has declined since the peak months of March (370 certificate and 363 Brexit queries) and April (130 certificate and 31 Brexit queries), with only 103 certificate and 20 Brexit queries

received since.

Systems update

Work remains underway to build an end to end application processing system in Registration which will link the front end systems we have already built to host online applications, with back end office management systems. A tender went live for prospective developers on 12 August 2019 and closed on 30 August 2019, with interviews with prospective providers on 26 and 27 September 2019.

Registration EU matters

As reported above, we are tracking the number of architects with EU nationality (other than UK) entering and leaving the Register. We note that the number of EU nationals on the Register is still increasing at a faster pace than in 2018.

Overall, for the year to date, in 2019, 727 architects have joined the Register via the EU routes compared with 552 in the same period in 2018 (31% increase), 697 in 2017 (4% increase) and 930 in 2016 (22% decrease).

Finally, the number of certificates we have issued (which would potentially enable a UK architect to register in Europe) has increased exponentially in 2019, with 458 being issued to the end of August. This is already 105% higher than the entire annual total for 2018, when 223 were processed across the year. In 2016, the year the referendum on whether the UK should remain in or leave the EU, 105 certificates were issued in the whole year.

Prescribed Examination Review

As was reported in 2018, and in line with the agreed 2018 Business Plan, we have undertaken the initial stages 'business as usual' review of the Procedures for the Prescribed Examination ('the Exam'). Following the decision to cease the review of the Criteria reviews, we are looking to review the position and put proposals for change to the Board in December 2019.

11. Committee Meetings held since July Board Meeting

Professional Conduct Committee – 6 to 8 August
Prescription Committee – 15 August
Professional Conduct Committee – 2 to 5 September

12. Future Meetings and Events

Audit Committee – 2 October 2019
Professional Conduct Committee – 2 to 4 October
Professional Conduct Committee – 15 to 16 October
Board Development Day – 25 October 2019
Professional Conduct Committee – 28 to 29 October 2019

13. Resource Implications

Only as identified in the paper.

14. Risk Implications

ARB's Operational Activities Report provides the Board with an update on business activities, progress against the Business Plan, as well as highlighting any emerging risks which may impact on delivery.

We continue to manage the risks associated with Brexit as far as we are able to despite uncertainty and are updating arrangements for the UK leaving the EU on 31 October 2019 with no deal in place. Our internal Brexit working group met in late August to re-consider risks the organisation faces and whether the current mitigation plans in place are sufficient.

Risks also remain with regards the review of the Criteria, Procedures and Prescribed Examination which the Board decided to cease at its meeting on 29 July 2019. Risks associated with proceeding, which included the proximity of the proposed changes to potential further changes necessitated by the climate change crisis and Hackitt review, and risks associated with ceasing were considered as part of the decision making process.

Further detail of specific risks to the organisation and in relation to operations will be provided in the confidential Registrar's report.

15. Communication

The update on ARB's operational activities, informs the Board of ARB's work and any risks which may prevent the delivery of ARB's operations.

16. Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and Diversity considerations will be central to the review of the prescribed examination with comments drawn from the pre-consultation response being factored into the direction of travel. An Equality Assessment will be carried out once the shape of any changes has been formulated.

17. Further Actions

These are referred to within the key points set out above.