Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications

Contents

Foreword

The Architects Act 1997 gives the Architects Registration Board ('the Board') the duty of determining who has the legal right to practise as an architect in the UK. Architects are registered because they have qualifications prescribed (or deemed equivalent) by the Board and the practical experience required by the Board. Therefore, the Board has a statutory duty to set the standards required of someone who wishes to be registered and, accordingly, the prescription of qualifications is central to the Board's work.

In 2010, the Board revised its published Criteria which set out the minimum levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that students/candidates of architecture must acquire at key stages in the process of qualifying to become an architect. The revised Criteria became effective in April 2011 and continue to form the basis upon which the Board makes decisions as to whether or not qualifications can be prescribed. Before the Board prescribes a qualification, it has to be satisfied that any person to whom it is awarded has and will have met all the Criteria at the appropriate level.

The Procedures set out in this document describe how universities, schools of architecture and other similar institutions that award an architecture degree, diploma or other such qualification may apply for and obtain recognition from the Board as a prescribed qualification. They replace the previous 'Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications' published by the Board in April 2010. These revised Procedures have been drawn up following an internal governance review; and stakeholders have been consulted on the adjustments. The Board is grateful to all those who participated in the consultation.

It is intended that the Procedures continue to be simple to operate both from the point of view of the applicant institution and of the Board. The institution retains the freedom to decide what material will best support its application. The Procedures continue to enable the institution to receive a decision in good time before prescription may start and to meet the Board's staff before submitting its application to discuss the Procedures. They also remain reasonably flexible in order to accommodate the position of individual applicants and, if needed, to allow for adjustments which may particularly be needed in the early years. Changes to the Procedures include revisions to the roles and responsibilities of the Board's staff and Prescription Committee, and streamlining the application scrutiny process prior to consideration by the Board. The Board's staff will be happy to provide guidance in relation to any of the revisions.

Alison White
Chair, Architects Registration Board
Month 2019

Introduction

The Architects Act 1997 states in Section 4(1) that a person is entitled to be registered if:

a. He holds such qualifications and has gained such practical experience as may be prescribed; or
b. He has a standard of competence which in the opinion of the Board is equivalent to that demonstrated by satisfying paragraph a.

The Act places on the Architects Registration Board ('the Board') the responsibility for prescribing (recognising) the qualifications and practical training experience required for entry onto the UK Register of Architects. The prescription of qualifications is one of the keys to the Board's strategy, which is to protect the consumer, support architects through regulation, and deliver the Architects Act 1997. The Board publishes Criteria, which set out the minimum levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that students/candidates must acquire at key stages in the process of qualifying to become an architect.

The underlying framework for the Criteria is to be found in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC]. The Directive sets out the minimum requirements for the length and core areas of study for architecture qualifications across the European Union. It facilitates mutual recognition of those qualifications and the right of establishment and freedom to provide services across the European Member States. ARB is the UK's Competent Authority for Architects and as such has the responsibility of ensuring that all UK qualifications for the practise of architecture comply with the requirements of the Directive as well notifying the relevant qualifications to the European Commission.

These Procedures – which are rules pursuant to Section 23(1) of the Architects Act 1997 – set out the processes to be followed in order for a university, school of architecture, institution or similar organisation (henceforth school or institute) to be granted and maintain prescription of a qualification.

The Board cannot delegate its duties under the Act to prescribe qualifications. In order to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to prescription, the Board is supported and advised by, among others, ARB staff, a panel of External Advisers and the Prescription Committee. Full details of the governance of prescription matters can be found on the ARB website.[1]

[1] www.arb.org.uk/prescription

Definitions

Definitions unless the context otherwise requires:

ARB	The Architects Registration Board – a statutory corporation under the Act – that acts through its authorised staff and representatives.
ARB Executive	The member of ARB's Qualifications Team with responsibility for scrutinising a particular prescription matter (application, annual monitoring, course/title change etc) and ensuring the Board has all materials to facilitate its decision making in respect of qualifications.
Application	The submission made by an institution in order to gain or maintain prescription.
Awarding body	The institution – typically a university – that awards a qualification (e.g. a certificate, diploma, degree etc); and with responsibility for the academic standards of any awards granted in its name, as well as the quality of the learning programme.
The Board	Individual Board members acting collectively. Decisions on awarding prescription and approving course/title changes are made by the Board, taking into account (though not bound by) recommendations from the ARB Executive.
Consultation	Before awarding prescription to a qualification for the first time, the Board has a duty under Section 4(3) of the Act to consult the bodies representative of architects which are incorporated by royal charter and such other professional and educational bodies as it thinks appropriate.
Course change	Any change to the content of any prescribed qualification. Course changes must be notified to ARB either within an annual monitoring submission, if pending, or at the earliest opportunity. See also 'title change' below.
Criteria	ARB's Criteria for the Prescription of Qualifications at Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 levels (as amended from time to time). www.arb.org.uk/criteria
Delivering/delivery body	A university, college, higher education institution or similar organisation responsible for delivering a prescribed qualification; but which does not hold qualification awarding powers.
Institution	The university, college, higher education institution or similar organisation is responsible for delivering a programme leading to a qualification. Institutions that do not hold qualification awarding powers must have an agreement with an awarding body in order for relevant qualifications to be prescribed. See also 'school' below. N.B. For simplicity, institution/school are used interchangeably throughout these Procedures to collectively refer to a university, college, school of architecture, higher education institution or similar organisation.
Eternal Advisers	The group of individuals appointed by ARB to provide external, expert advice on matters relating to prescription. *Updated web link to be inserted*
Notice/notify	A notice in writing (includes a notice sent electronically).
Prescribed qualification	A qualification prescribed by the Board under Section 4(1)(a) of the Architects Act 1997 at the appropriate level for the purposes of joining the UK Register of Architects.

Prescription	Includes the process by which qualifications are prescribed by the Board (the prescription of qualifications) and the result, namely that which a qualification obtains if prescribed by the Board under the Architects Act 1997 (thus a qualification 'has', 'gains' or 'loses' prescription). www.arb.org.uk/prescription
Prescription Committee	The panel of lay and architect members appointed by the Board to review and challenge the scrutiny of prescription submissions; and alert the Board to issues arising from the operation of the prescription process. www.arb.org.uk/the-prescription-committee
The Profession	Those on the UK Register of Architects.
Programme specification	The concise description of a higher education programme. These typically include the educational aims of the programme; strategies for teaching, learning and assessment; and an outline of the structure of the course.
Qualification	Includes a programme of study, an examination or assessment and, where appropriate, refers to first degrees, second degrees and diplomas and professional practice examinations designated as Parts 1, 2 and 3 in the Board's Criteria for the prescription of qualifications.
Schedule 1	Schedule 1 of the Board's General Rules sets out the details of the qualifications that ARB currently prescribes at Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 levels for the purposes of entry onto the United Kingdom Register of Architects. www.arb.org.uk/schedule-1
School	The academic unit within an institution that is responsible to it for the delivery of the qualification. A school may be an institution. See also 'institution' above. www.arb.org.uk/schools
Student/candidate	The individual undertaking a qualification. Student typically refers to those enrolled on a Part 1 or Part 2 qualification; and candidate typically refers to those enrolled on a Part 3 qualification.
Title change	Any change to the title, awarding body or delivering body of any prescribed qualification. Title changes must be notified to ARB either within an annual monitoring submission, if pending, or at the earliest opportunity. See also 'course change' above.

Principles

These Procedures are based on these cardinal principles:

a. The Board will make its decision on the basis of the material submitted with the application (and such other material that the institution or school supplies at the request of the ARB Executive or the Board);
b. It is for the institution to submit the material it considers justifies prescription.

The Board offers guidance as to what material it expects to be provided in ARB's Good Practice Handbook.[1]

[1] www.arb.org.uk/good-practice

Applying for Prescription of a New Qualification

- Qualifications for which prescription has never been sought before.
- Currently prescribed qualifications that have been subject to major modification in terms of structure and content.

1.0 Notifying the Board of an Intention to Apply

1.1 An institution that intends to apply for the prescription of a qualification is strongly advised to request a planning meeting with the Board's staff up to 12 months before applying in order to gain a clear understanding of the steps that should be taken prior to the submission of the application.

At that meeting the institution should be represented by those who are responsible for the preparation and submission of the application and for the assembly of material to support it. A relevant member of the institution's Quality Assurance staff (or faculty equivalent) should also be present.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the procedure to be followed by the institution before submitting its application for prescription, how the application will be considered by the Board, and what occurs when prescription is granted.

The Board will not provide advice or guidance on the content of an application, or on any supporting material, as it is solely for the institution to decide what to submit (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3 below).

The meeting will be informal. No pre-application communication is to be relied upon to vitiate any part of the prescription procedure itself.

1.2 An institution must notify the Board of its intention to apply for the prescription of a qualification not less than 12 months and no longer than 18 months before the date from which prescription of the qualification is to begin.

1.3 The notification should be in writing and must include the following:

a. Details of the title,[1] length and mode of the qualification;

b. A sample copy of the final award certificate which includes details of the award title that students/candidates will graduate with;

c. The up-to-date internally validated programme specification for the qualification;

d. The date on which the Board should expect to receive the full application (which must be within two months of the date on which the notification letter is received by the Board); and

e. Any other information that is material to the application in accordance with these procedures.

[1] It is imperative that institutions ensure that the title listed in the notification, application form and throughout its full submission is consistent and is stated in the exact form that will appear on award certificates (e.g. if award certificates will state 'Master of Architecture', this should not be shortened to 'MArch Architecture' in the application documentation as these are not the same title). Only students/candidates with the prescribed qualification title as listed on Schedule 1 of ARB's General Rules will have a qualification eligible for registration upon graduation. For further advice on titles, please refer to the Good Practice Handbook.

2.0 Submitting the Application

2.1 The institution must submit its application to the Board within two months of the date of the notice given under Section 1.2 above. The application must be submitted electronically.

A school may submit an application on behalf of an institution provided that it is accompanied by the appropriate authorisation from the institution.

Amongst other things, the institution must specify the dates for which prescription is sought, as well as a date by which it wishes to make its annual monitoring submission each year once prescription has been granted (see Appendix 2).

Objectives – Prescription of a New Qualification

2.2 When applying for a new qualification to be prescribed, an institution should bear in mind that in order for the Board to prescribe a new qualification, the institution and the Board must be confident that:

a. The course proposal – including the educational aims, the intended learning outcomes, the assessment criteria etc – have been designed with the clear aim of ensuring that all those who receive the qualification will have met all the Criteria;

b. Systems are in place to ensure that all Criteria will be met by all students/candidates receiving the qualification for the period of prescription; and

c. The institution has adequate resources to maintain and, where appropriate, increase the achievements of students/candidates meeting all the Criteria.

2.3 When deliberating an application for the prescription of a new qualification, the Board will assess whether the following factors – and any other factors suggested by the institution and agreed by the Board – are demonstrated in that application:

a. That explicit strategies and mechanisms for assessing students/candidates are proposed to ensure that all the relevant Criteria will be achieved;

b. That strategies and mechanisms of assessment will be subject to both internal and external periodic review and audit;

c. That assessments will be rigorously monitored for consistency and benchmarked for comparability with other institutions offering prescribed qualifications;

d. That mechanisms will exist to allow the institution to appropriately respond to problems identified by benchmarking, review and audit processes;

e. That internal and external review and audit processes will be rigorous and that, in their implementation, steps will be taken to ensure that they take account of the vocational, as well as the academic, aspects of the qualification;

f. That there will be engagement with the profession – that will be ongoing during the period of prescription – in the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students/candidates;

g. That the institution will have appropriately qualified staff to deliver the course and assess students/candidates;

h. That appropriate mechanisms will exist to ensure that the appointment, development and leadership of staff and examiners (including external examiners) is in accordance with best practice and that take account of the vocational, as well as the academic, aspects of the qualification;

i. That appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance with the duties relating to equality and diversity placed on the institution by equality legislation;

j. That the institution will have adequate resources during the period of prescription; and

k. That the institution is committed to maintaining and, where appropriate, enhancing its provision relating to the matters listed above for the future period of prescription.

Material to be Submitted with an Application

2.4 It is the responsibility of the institution to provide the Board with the relevant evidence to justify prescription and give the Board confidence that the objectives in Section 2.2 above will be met.

Guidance on information typically submitted with an application (and what not to include) can be found in the Good Practice Handbook.[1] However, this is not intended to be exhaustive or restrictive – the institution is free to decide what information to supply as part of an application.

2.5 The material submitted must be the latest available, and must address the objectives and factors set out in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above, as this will inform the Board's consideration of and decision on the application.

In considering the material submitted, the Board will not undertake a general audit of an institution's systems and processes. However, it will take into account audits undertaken by other bodies.

2.6 When providing reports from examiners, agencies and advisers as evidence, institutions should also provide details of the procedures, methodologies, criteria and personnel underpinning the reports (where these are not given as part of the material already provided), so that the Board can give such reports due weight and relevance.

2.7 Once an institution has submitted a full application, it may not amend or add to the application (unless the ARB Executive and/or Board requests or permits further explanation(s) and/or representations in relation to the application).

2.8 The application must be addressed to ARB's Registrar, and must be submitted by or on behalf of the institution. If the application is not submitted by the school responsible for the

qualification, the school must certify that the application and all supporting material has been seen and approved by the head of that school.

If the application is submitted by a school on behalf of the institution, a name and address for communication must be provided, as thereafter the Board will only communicate with that person who will be deemed to have complete authority on behalf of the institution to act on its behalf for all purposes connected with the application and the qualification.

The institution should nominate a second contact (with whom the Board will communicate in the absence of the primary contact).

2.9 Please refer to the application form and guidance on completing this document available online.[2]

[1] www.arb.org.uk/good-practice
[2] www.arb.org.uk/prescription

3.0 Application Checks and Scrutiny

3.1 The application will first be checked by the ARB Executive to see if it contains all the information and material that the institution intended the Board to have. If the ARB Executive considers that something may be missing, they will notify the institution. This will normally be within three weeks. The institution will have three weeks to supply the missing item(s) or notify the ARB Executive that it does not intend to do so and why.

3.2 The ARB Executive will then scrutinise the application against the objectives and factors identified in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above. If any clarifications are required, the ARB Executive will liaise with the institution. Any explanation must be provided in writing within three weeks.

The ARB Executive may draw upon the expertise of an External Adviser(s)[1] as and when required.

3.3 Typically within three months of receipt of an application, the Prescription Committee will advise the ARB Executive on any additional aspects the ARB Executive may wish to consider.

Should further areas of clarification be identified, the ARB Executive will liaise with the institution, and the institution will have a further period not exceeding three weeks to respond.

The ARB Executive will decide whether or not the Prescription Committee will review any additional information submitted.

3.4 The ARB Executive will make a recommendation on the application to the Board at the point at which there is sufficient information to do so. The ARB Executive may seek the further advice of the Prescription Committee in relation to the recommendation.

Recommendations will be submitted to the Board in writing and accompanied by all of the

material provided by the institution.

3.5 The institution is entitled to have sight of the paper to be presented to the Board; and will have the opportunity to make representations on the paper and to offer comments on accuracy. The institution must provide any such comments within three weeks of receiving the paper. In exceptional circumstances, the ARB Executive may permit a longer period in which the institution may respond.

The institution's comments will be presented to the Board alongside the application.

[1] *updated web link to be inserted*

4.0 The Board's Preliminary Consideration of a New Qualification

4.1 Once received, the Board will consider the application, along with the ARB Executive's recommendations and any comments/representations from the institution.

At this point, the Board will not make a final decision on the application. The Board will provide an indication as to the decision it is 'minded' to make, and this will be subject to the subsequent consultation – as required by Section 4(3) of the Act – and any further representations made by the institution in accordance with the process set out below.

Stage 1

4.2 The Board will indicate that it is minded:

a. To accept the application and to prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution; or

b. Not to prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution by:

   i. Not granting prescription to all of the qualifications for which prescription is sought (where applying for prescription of more than one qualification); and/or

   ii. Attaching special conditions; and/or

   iii. Prescribing for a period less than that requested by the institution; or

c. Not to prescribe.

If the Board indicates at this Stage that it is minded not to prescribe, or to prescribe on the basis set out in Section 4.2.b above; the institution will be notified in writing of the reasons for this indication, and will have three weeks to make representations in writing to the Board.

If the Board is minded at this Stage to accept the application and prescribe a qualification as sought, the Board will proceed directly to consultation in accordance with Section 5 below and Stages 2 and 3 will not apply.

Stage 2

4.3 On receipt of any Stage 1 representations, the Board will take these into account and reconsider its position.

4.4 If the Board is minded to alter its stated position and prescribe a qualification as initially requested by the institution, the Board will conduct its consultation in accordance with Section 5 below and Stage 3 will not apply.

4.5 If the Board is still minded to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above, the Board will conduct its consultation in accordance with Section 5 below and Stage 3 will not apply.

However, in this circumstance, the Board will not conduct its consultation without first giving the institution the opportunity to defer the consultation pending further representations. The institution will have three weeks to submit such representations.

4.6 If:

a. The institution requests that the consultation is so deferred; or
b. The Board, after reconsidering its position following receipt of any Stage 1 representations, is minded to reject the application;

the Board will consider further representations and on such terms as it considers appropriate.

4.7 If no Stage 2 representations are received, the Board may, in accordance with its indication at Stage 1, either reject the application or proceed to consultation on the basis that it is minded to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above.

If the Board rejects the application, the provisions of Section 4.8 below will apply.

If the Board is minded to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above, the Board will proceed to consultation in accordance with Section 5 below. However, the institution will be given the opportunity to withdraw its application before the consultation starts. The institution will have three weeks in which to withdraw its application.

Stage 3

4.8 If, on receipt and consideration of any Stage 2 representations (or if no Stage 2 representations are received), the application is rejected by the Board, the institution will be notified of the reasons for its decision within three weeks.

The Board will indicate which of its Criteria and/or objectives have not been or may not be met; but will not provide advice on any remedial or other action that should be taken, as the institution will have to decide what it should do if it chooses to submit another application.

If the Board rejects an application, an institution can re-apply at any time.

4.9 If, on receipt and consideration of any Stage 2 representations, the Board is minded to accept the application and prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution, the Board

will proceed to consultation in accordance with Section 5 below.

4.10 If, on receipt and consideration of any Stage 2 representations (or if no Stage 2 representations are received), the Board is minded to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above, the Board will proceed to consultation in accordance with Section 5 below. However, the institution will be given the opportunity to withdraw its application before the consultation starts. The institution will have three weeks in which to withdraw its application.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Before prescribing a new qualification, Section 4(3) of the Architects Act 1997 requires the Board to consult bodies representative of architects which are incorporated by royal charter and such other professional and educational bodies as it thinks appropriate.

ARB typically consults with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS), the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW), the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA), the relevant RIBA region (if different from above), and the Association of Consultant Architects (ACA).

Should an institution wish to make suggestions in relation to any additional bodies with whom the Board may wish to consult, it should state these in the application form.

5.2 The Board will provide consultees with the details of its stated position, i.e. the decision it is 'minded' to make in relation to the application and the reasons for its stated position.

The Board will also provide consultees with a copy of these Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications, the Criteria for prescription and information provided by the institution that describes the qualification.

5.3 The Board will normally offer consultees three months to provide a response. However, in order that the institution applying for prescription receives a timely decision, the Board may ask consultees to respond within a shorter timeframe.

5.4 A copy of any response submitted by a consultee will be provided to the institution.

The institution will have the opportunity of submitting any final comments or representations to the Board in respect of any consultation response(s) before the Board reaches its final decision.

The Board normally offers an institution three weeks in which to submit any final comments or representations. However, in order that the institution can receive a timely decision on its application, the Board may ask the institution to respond within a shorter timeframe.

6.0 The Board's Final Decision (Following a Consultation)

6.1 Once all consultation responses and any further representations from the institution have been received, all of this information will be considered by the ARB Executive.

Once satisfied that no further clarification and/or explanation is required in relation to the material, the ARB Executive will forward the application to the Board to make a final decision to either accept or reject the application, or to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above.

6.2 If the application is rejected by the Board, the institution will be notified of the reasons for its decision within three weeks.

The Board will indicate which of its Criteria and/or objectives have not been or may not be met; but will not provide advice on any remedial or other action that should be taken, as the institution will have to decide what it should so if it chooses to submit another application.

If the Board rejects an application, an institution can re-apply at any time.

6.3 The Board's decision to accept or reject an application, or to grant prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above will be final (including any decision on any period or condition), and there will be no appeal.

In case of rejection or the granting of prescription as outlined in Section 4.2.b above, the institution may make another application in accordance with these Procedures. An institution can re-apply at any time.

6.4 In exceptional circumstances and/or should the Board become aware of any material which was not available to it at the date of its decision, the Board is entitled to reconsider any decision to reject an application or, where it prescribed a qualification, the period or conditions applicable.

The Board will determine the procedure to be adopted in order to consider such material and to reconsider its decision. Unless and until the decision is reconsidered, the Board's decision will be unaffected and will remain binding.

7.0 Standard Conditions of Prescription

7.1 Prescription of a qualification will be subject to the following Standard Conditions.

a. The period of prescription shall commence on a date to be decided by the Board.

b. Prescription of a qualification shall be by reference to a programme specification. No change may be made to the title of any qualification, or material change to the content so defined within a programme specification (allowing for normal course development) without first obtaining the written permission of the Board (see Appendix 3).

c. Annually and by a date to be set by the Board, the institution shall be required to provide the Board with information of the nature set out in Appendix 2 to enable the Board to see that:

    i. All its Criteria and the relevant requirements set out in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] have been attained by all students/candidates awarded the prescribed qualification;

ii. Adequate systems are in place to ensure that all the Board's Criteria will be met by students/candidates for the period of prescription;

iii. The institution's resources remain as set out in its application and are adequate; and

iv. All of the factors referred to in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above continue to be demonstrated, and any conditions of prescription continue to be met.

d. The institution will ensure that appropriate procedures will be maintained so that all students/candidates undertaking a prescribed qualification are fully informed of the extent of the application of that qualification to entitlement to registration as an architect in circumstances in which the student/candidate lacks a required antecedent qualification, e.g. Part 2 without Part 1.

e. Following each and every set of examinations, the institution shall be required to submit to the Board its pass lists of graduating cohorts who have received the prescribed award.

7.2 Where it deems appropriate, the Board may vary any of the Standard Conditions and make prescription of a qualification subject to other conditions.

7.3 If, as a result of the information provided in accordance with Section 7.1.c above or from any source at any time (see also Appendix 5), the Board considers that:

a. The application or any material relied on by the institution in support (including explanations given) was untrue and/or was misleading in a material respect, as a result of which the Board might not have accepted the application; or

b. Criteria or the relevant requirements set out in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] are not being met by students/candidates awarded the prescribed qualification; or

c. The institution does not have the resources stated in its application and/or its resources are not adequate; or

d. The institution has not complied with any of the conditions set out in Section 7.1 above or any other condition made in accordance with Section 7.2 above;

then the Board may notify the institution that it is of the opinion that prescription should be revoked in whole or in part, together with its reasons for that opinion.

The institution will have three weeks (or such period as the Board allows) to make any representations in writing to the Board as to why it should not so act.

On receipt of such representations (and taking account of any representations submitted to it by any other body, whether or not the Board shall be obliged in law to consult it), the Board will decide within four weeks whether or not to revoke prescription of the qualification in whole or in part.

If it does so, the revocation will not affect the validity of the qualification awarded prior to the revocation.

The institution may make an application in accordance with these Procedures for prescription of the qualification from which prescription has been revoked.

7.4 The above provisions will not prevent the Board from entering into discussions with the institution in order to avert the need for a decision to revoke prescription.

7.5 Where it considers it necessary and appropriate, the Board may require an institution to provide additional relevant information. This may be through the submission of documentation and/or during the course of a visit to the institution by representatives nominated by the Board.

7.6 Where any of the events set out in Section 7.3 above have occurred or are present and the circumstances require urgent action, the Board may by notice to the institution revoke prescription with immediate effect.

8.0 Notification of a New Qualification to the European Commission

8.1 Under the terms of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC], any new Part 2 qualification that is prescribed by ARB will be notified to the European Commission (see Appendix 6).

Applying to Renew Prescription of a Qualification

- Qualifications that are currently prescribed by ARB.

9.0 Notifying the Board of an Intention to Renew Prescription

9.1 An institution which intends to apply for the prescription of a qualification is strongly advised to request a planning meeting with the Board's staff up to 12 months before applying in order to gain a clear understanding of the steps that should be taken prior to the submission of the application.

At that meeting the institution should be represented by those who are responsible for the preparation and submission of the application and for the assembly of material to support it. A relevant member of the institution's Quality Assurance staff, or faculty equivalent, should also be present.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the procedure to be followed by the institution before submitting its application for prescription, how the application will be considered by the Board, and what occurs when prescription is granted.

The Board will not provide advice or guidance on the content of the application, or on any supporting material, as it is solely for the institution to decide what to submit (see Sections 10.2 and 10.3 below).

The meeting will be informal. No pre-application communication is to be relied upon to vitiate any part of the prescription procedure itself.

9.2 An institution must notify the Board of its intention to apply for the prescription of a qualification not less than 12 months and no longer than 18 months before the date that the existing period of prescription expires.

9.3 The notification should be in writing and must include the following:

a. Details of the title,[1] length and mode of the qualification;

b. A sample copy of the final award certificate which includes details of the award title that students/candidates will graduate with;

c. An up-to-date internally validated programme specification for the qualification;

d. The date on which the Board should expect to receive the full application (which must be within two months of the date on which the notification letter is received by the Board); and

e. Any other information that is material to the application in accordance with these Procedures.

[1] It is imperative that institutions ensure that the title listed in the notification, application form and throughout its full submission is consistent and is stated in the exact form that will appear on award certificates (e.g. if award certificates will state 'Master of Architecture', this should not be shortened to 'MArch

Architecture' in the application documentation as these are not the same title). Only students/candidates with the prescribed qualification title as listed on Schedule 1 of ARB's General Rules will have a qualification eligible for registration upon graduation. For further advice on titles, please refer to the Good Practice Handbook.

10.0 Submitting the Application

10.1 The institution will submit its application to the Board within two months of the date of the notice given in Section 9.2 above. The application must be submitted electronically.

A school may submit an application on behalf of an institution provided that it is accompanied by the appropriate authorisation from the institution.

Amongst other things, the institution must specify the dates for which prescription is sought, as well as a date by which it wishes to make its annual monitoring submission each year once prescription has been granted (see Appendix 2).

Objectives – Renewal of Prescription

10.2 An institution should bear in mind that in order for the Board to prescribe a qualification that has previously been prescribed, the institution and the Board must be confident that:

a. All students/candidates awarded the qualification since the qualification was prescribed or last renewed have met all the Criteria;

b. The systems used by the institution to ensure that all students/candidates awarded the qualification have met all the Criteria are adequate, and will continue to ensure that the Criteria are met for the future period of prescription; and

c. The institution's future plans and commitment are such that the institution will maintain its ability to ensure that all students/candidates awarded the qualification meet all the Criteria.

10.3 When deliberating an application for prescription, the Board will assess whether the following factors – and any other factors suggested by the institution and agreed by the Board – are demonstrated in that application:

a. That explicit strategies and mechanisms for assessing students/candidates have existed to ensure that all the relevant Criteria have been achieved;

b. That these strategies and mechanisms of assessment have been subject to both internal and external periodic review and audit, and been found to be adequate;

c. That assessments have been rigorously monitored for consistency and benchmarked for comparability with other institutions offering prescribed qualifications, and been found to be adequate (e.g. by external examiners);

d. That the institution has appropriately responded to problems identified by benchmarking, review and audit processes;

e. That internal and external review and audit processes have been rigorous and that, in their implementation, steps have been taken to ensure that they take account of the vocational, as well as the academic, aspects of the qualification;

f. That appropriate mechanisms exist to ensure that the appointment, development and leadership of staff and examiners (including external examiners) is in accordance with best practice and has taken account of the vocational, as well as the academic, aspects of the qualification;

g. That the vocational aspects of the qualification are accepted as satisfactory by architects in practice;

h. That appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance with the duties relating to equality and diversity placed on the institution by equality legislation;

i. That the institution has adequate resources and will continue to have adequate resources during the future period of prescription; and

j. That the institution is committed to maintaining and, where appropriate, enhancing its provision relating to the matters listed above for the future period of prescription.

Material to be Submitted with an Application

10.4 It is the responsibility of the institution to provide the Board with the relevant evidence to justify prescription and give the Board confidence that the objectives in Section 10.2 above are being and will continue to be met.

Guidance on information typically submitted with an application (and what not to include) can be found in the Good Practice Handbook.[1] However, this is not intended to be exhaustive or restrictive – the institution is free to decide what information to supply as part of an application.

10.5 The material submitted must be the latest available, and must address the objectives and factors set out in Sections 10.2 and 10.3 above, as they will inform the Board's consideration of and decision on the application.

In considering the above factors, the Board will not undertake a general audit of an institution's systems and processes. However, it will take into account audits undertaken by other bodies.

10.6 When providing reports from examiners, agencies and advisers as evidence, institutions should also provide details of the procedures, methodologies, criteria and personnel underpinning the reports (where these are not given as part of the material already provided), so that the Board can give such reports due weight and relevance.

10.7 Once an institution has submitted a full application, it may not amend or add to the application (unless the ARB Executive and/or Board requests or permits further explanation(s) and/or representations in relation to the application).

10.8 The application must be addressed to ARB's Registrar, and must be submitted by or on behalf of the institution. If the application is not submitted by the school responsible for the qualification, the school must certify that the application and all supporting material has been seen and approved by the head of that school.

If the application is submitted by a school on behalf of the institution, a name and address for communication must be provided as thereafter the Board will only communicate with that person who will be deemed to have complete authority on behalf of the institution to

act on its behalf for all purposes connected with the application and the qualification.

The institution should nominate a second contact (with whom the Board will communicate in the absence of the primary contact).

10.9 Please refer to the application form and guidance on completing this document available online.[2]

[1] www.arb.org.uk/good-practice
[2] www.arb.org.uk/prescription

11.0 Application Checks and Scrutiny

11.1 The application will first be checked by the ARB Executive to see if it contains all the information and material that the institution intended the Board to have. If the ARB Executive considers that something may be missing, they will notify the institution. This will normally be within three weeks. The institution will have three weeks to supply the missing item(s) or notify the ARB Executive that it does not intend to do so and why.

11.2 The ARB Executive will then scrutinise the application against the objectives and factors identified in Sections 10.2 and 10.3 above. If any clarifications are required, the ARB Executive will liaise with the institution. Any explanations must be provided in writing within three weeks.

The ARB Executive may draw upon the expertise of an External Adviser(s)[1] as and when required.

11.3 Typically within three months of receipt of an application, the Prescription Committee will advise the ARB Executive of any additional aspects the ARB Executive may wish to consider.

Should further areas of clarification be identified, the ARB Executive will liaise with the institution, and the institution will have a further period not exceeding three weeks to respond.

The ARB Executive will decide whether or not the Prescription Committee will review any additional information.

11.4 The ARB Executive will make a recommendation on the application to the Board at the point at which there is sufficient information to do so.

Recommendations will be submitted to the Board in writing and accompanied by all of the material provided by the institution.

11.5 The institution is entitled to have sight of the paper to be presented to the Board; and will have the opportunity to make representations on the paper and to offer comments on accuracy. The institution must provide any such comments within three weeks of receiving the paper. In exceptional circumstances, the ARB Executive may permit a longer period in which the institution may respond.

The institution's comments will be presented to the Board alongside the application.

[1] *updated web link to be inserted*

12.0 The Board's Decision

12.1 Once received, the Board will consider the application, along with the ARB Executives' recommendations and any comments/representations from the institution.

Stage 1

12.2 The Board will indicate that it is minded:

a. To accept the application and to prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution; or

b. Not to prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution by:

   i. Not granting prescription to all of the qualifications for which prescription is sought (where applying for prescription of more than one qualification); and/or

   ii. Attaching special conditions; and/or

   iii. Prescribing for a period less than that requested by the institution; or

c. Not to prescribe.

If the Board indicates at this Stage that it is minded not to prescribe or to prescribe on the basis set out in Section 12.2.b above; the institution will be notified in writing of the reasons for this indication, and will have three weeks to make any representations in writing to the Board.

If the Board is minded at this Stage to accept the application and prescribe the qualification as sought, this will be its final decision and Stage 2 below will not apply.

Stage 2

12.3 On receipt of any Stage 1 representations, the Board will take them into account, reconsider its position, and decide whether to:

a. Accept the application and prescribe the qualification as sought by the institution; or

b. Grant prescription as outlined in Section 12.2.b above; or

c. Reject the application.

For the avoidance of doubt, if no Stage 1 representations are received, the Board will be entitled, in accordance with its current stated position, to either reject the application or to proceed on the basis that it is minded to grant prescription as outlined in Section 12.2.b above.

12.4 If the Board rejects the application, or grants prescription as outlined in Section 12.2.b above, the institution will be notified of the reasons for this decision within three weeks.

The Board will indicate which of its Criteria and/or objectives have not been or may not be met; but will not provide advice on any remedial or other action that should be taken, as the institution will have to decide what it should so if it chooses to submit another application.

12.5 The Board's decision to accept or reject an application, or to grant prescription as outlined in Section 12.2.b above will be final (including any decision on any period or condition), and there will be no appeal.

In case of rejection or the granting of prescription as outlined in Section 12.2.b above, the institution may make another application in accordance with these Procedures. An institution can re-apply at any time.

12.6 In exceptional circumstances and/or should the Board become aware of any material which was not available to it at the date of its decision, the Board is entitled to reconsider any decision to reject an application or, where it prescribed a qualification, the period or conditions applicable.

The Board will determine the procedure to be adopted in order to consider such material and to reconsider its decision. Unless and until the decision is reconsidered, the Board's decision will be unaffected and will remain binding.

13.0 Standard Conditions of Prescription

13.1 Prescription of a qualification will be subject to the following Standard Conditions.

a. The period of prescription shall commence on a date to be decided by the Board.

b. Prescription of a qualification shall be by reference to a programme specification. No change may be made to the title of any qualification, or material change to the content so defined within a programme specification (allowing for normal course development) without first obtaining the written permission of the Board (see Appendix 3).

c. Annually and by a date to be set by the Board, the institution shall be required to provide the Board with information of the nature set out in Appendix 2 to enable the Board to see that:

   i. All its Criteria and the relevant requirements set out in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] have been attained by all students/candidates awarded the prescribed qualification;

   ii. Adequate systems are in place to ensure that all the Board's Criteria will be met by students/candidates for the period of prescription;

   iii. The institution's resources remain as set out in its application and are adequate; and

   iv. All of the factors referred to at Sections 10.2 and 10.3 above continue to be demonstrated, and any conditions of prescription continue to be met.

d. The institution will ensure that appropriate procedures will be maintained so that all students/candidates undertaking a prescribed qualification are fully informed of the extent of the application of that qualification to entitlement to registration as an architect in circumstances in which the student/candidate lacks a required antecedent qualification, e.g. Part 2 without Part 1.

e. Following each and every set of examinations, the institution shall be required to submit to the Board its pass lists of graduating cohorts who have received the prescribed award.

13.2 Where it deems appropriate, the Board may vary any of the Standard Conditions and make prescription of a qualification subject to other conditions.

13.3 If, as a result of the information provided in accordance with Section 13.1.c above or from any source at any time (see also Appendix 5), the Board considers that:

a. The application or any material relied on by the institution in support (including explanations given) was untrue and/or was misleading in a material respect, as a result of which the Board might not have accepted the application; or

b. Criteria or the relevant requirements set out in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] are not being met by students/candidates awarded the prescribed qualification; or

c. The institution does not have the resources stated in its application and/or its resources are not adequate; or

d. The institution has not complied with any of the conditions set out in Section 13.1 above or any other condition made in accordance with Section 13.2 above;

then the Board may notify the institution that it is of the opinion that prescription should be revoked in whole or in part, together with its reasons for that opinion.

The institution will have three weeks (or such period as the Board allows) to make any representations in writing to the Board as to why it should not so act.

On receipt of such representations (and taking account of any representations submitted to it by any other body, whether or not the Board shall be obliged in law to consult it), the Board will decide within four weeks whether or not to revoke prescription of the qualification in whole or in part.

If it does so, the revocation will not affect the validity of the qualification awarded prior to the revocation.

The institution may make an application in accordance with these Procedures for prescription of the qualification from which prescription has been revoked.

13.4 The above provisions will not prevent the Board from entering into discussions with the institution in order to avert the need for a decision to revoke prescription.

13.5 Where it considers it necessary and appropriate, the Board may require an institution to provide additional relevant information. This may be through the submission of documentation and/or during the course of a visit to the institution by representatives nominated by the Board.

13.6 Where any of the events set out in Section 13.3 above have occurred or are present and the circumstances require urgent action, the Board may by notice to the institution revoke prescription with immediate effect.

Appendix 1

14.0 Application Process Flow Charts

Comment [SaH1]: *To be updated*

14.1 Application for the Prescription of a New Qualification

14.2 Application to Renew Prescription

Appendix 2

15.0 Annual Monitoring

15.1 Annually and by a date set by the Board, the institution must provide the Board with information of the nature set out in Section 15.2 below to enable the Board to see that:

a. All its Criteria and the relevant requirements set out in Article 46 (or Article 47) of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] have been attained by all students/candidates awarded the prescribed qualification;

b. Adequate systems are in place to ensure that all the Board's Criteria will be met by students/candidates for the period of prescription;

c. The institution's resources remain as set out in its application and are adequate; and

d. All of the factors referred to in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 (new qualifications)/Sections 10.2 and 10.3 (renewed qualifications) above continue to be demonstrated, and any conditions of prescription continue to be met.

In addition, the Board will need to be assured that any changes made to the programme specification reflect normal course development and have not materially changed the content and/or structure of the qualification.

15.2 In order to maintain the Board's confidence, an institution awarding prescribed qualifications must submit the following to the Board annually:

a. External examiners' reports and the institution's response(s);

b. Any relevant reports from external bodies and the institution's response(s);

c. Any relevant reports from internal review panels, including student feedback;

d. Student/candidate progress information, including numbers of students/candidates in each cohort and pass/failure rates, with an explanatory commentary where necessary;

e. An updated list of all staff involved in the delivery of the prescribed qualification;

f. Details of any changes to resources (space, facilities, IT etc) in the last year;

g. Details of any changes to the title and/or content of a prescribed qualification, including the rationale for these changes (see Appendix 3); and

h. Any other information indicating that any condition of prescription may not have been met in some material respect.

Further guidance on annual monitoring can be found in the Good Practice Handbook.[1]

15.3 The Board can change the annual monitoring submission date of an institution at any time. In such cases, the Board will notify the institution and provide its reasons. The institution will have the opportunity to make any representations in writing to the Board before the Board makes a final decision.

15.4 If an institution is finding it difficult to regularly submit its annual monitoring by the set deadline, it can make a request to the Board to change this date. Such a request must be

made in writing, and include an explanation as to why it wishes to change the date. The institution should also provide an alternative submission date for the Board to consider. The Board is entitled to approve or reject such a request, or to set a different annual monitoring submission date to that requested by the institution. The institution will be notified in writing of the Board's decision and, where relevant/appropriate, reasons will be given.

15.5 Where an institution submits its annual monitoring late and/or incomplete, this will be noted by the Board. In some cases, this may affect the Board's confidence in an institution, its qualification(s) and its ability to meet the Standard Conditions of prescription; and may have an impact on the length of future periods of prescription.

[1] www.arb.org.uk/good-practice

Appendix 3

16.0 Changes to Prescribed Qualifications

16.1 The Standard Conditions of prescription (Sections 7.1 and 13.1 above) state that 'no change may be made to the title of any qualification, or material change to the content so defined within a programme specification (allowing for normal course development) without first obtaining the written permission of the Board'.

ARB's Qualifications Team can offer guidance in relation to notifying qualification changes.

16.2 Examples of proposed material changes that must be notified to the Board include:

a. The reorganisation of programme content;

b. A change to the number of years of study and/or mode;

c. The introduction of a new specialisation;

d. A change to the qualification title;

e. A change of awarding body.

16.3 Any changes which are not material and which do not fall within Section 16.2 above – e.g. evolutionary changes to project briefs – do not need to be notified to the Board.

16.4 Changes to a qualification falling within Section 16.2 above must be notified to the Board at the earliest opportunity. If the timing is appropriate, changes can be notified within an institution's annual monitoring submission.

16.5 In line with the Standard Conditions of prescription, the Board's approval should be sought before any such change becomes effective.

Once aware that a change is being made, the Board will monitor the progress of the change as it moves through the institution's own quality assurance mechanisms.

16.6 When being notified of a proposed change, the Board will typically expect to receive clear and concise details outlining the nature of and rationale for the proposed change. Institutions should submit the following details:

a. The rationale for the proposed change;

b. An explanation of the scope and nature of the proposed change to the qualification;

c. An explanation of the impact that the proposed change is likely to have on meeting the Board's Criteria – where relevant, institutions should submit a revised mapping document to assist the Board in determining whether the qualification will continue to meet the Criteria;

d. Clarification as to whether the proposed change will have any impact on the resourcing of the qualification;

e. Clarification as to whether the proposed change has institutional approval; and

f. Any other information which may assist the Board in its consideration of the proposed change.

16.7 Changes to prescribed Part 2 qualifications may also need to be notified to the European Commission (see Appendix 6).

Appendix 4

17.0 Extensions to Prescription

17.1 Where exceptional and unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g. the departure of the head of school, the timing of the introduction of a new qualification), an institution may request an extension of typically no more than one year to its period of prescription.

In such cases, an institution is advised to contact ARB's Qualifications Team in the first instance to discuss the circumstances and the procedure to be followed.

17.2 The institution must provide the Board with a detailed rationale for the requested extension in writing. The institution must also explain to the Board how it will ensure that it will continue to meet the objectives set out in Section 2.2 (new qualifications)/Section 10.2 (renewed qualifications) during the extended period sought.

17.3 The granting of an extension to a period of prescription is at the discretion of the Board, and the Board reserves the right to request any additional information it deems appropriate to enable it to continue to be confident that the Standard Conditions of prescription will be met, e.g. an internal review or validation report.

Appendix 5

18.0 Causes for Concern Process

18.1 The Board has established a Causes for Concern process to deal with any serious issues or allegations to which it is alerted or becomes aware of in relation to a prescribed qualification, and which may affect its prescribed status.

18.2 The Causes for Concern process is not intended to replace or be a substitute for an institution's own processes for reporting concerns and allegations. Neither is the Board responsible for the regulation of institutions or the control of funding.

The Board's Causes for Concern process cannot be used to appeal academic decisions relating to marks, progression or awards. As such, the Board would only expect to consider any concerns or allegations once other relevant processes have been concluded.

18.3 ARB will determine the procedure to be adopted as appropriate for the concern raised/identified. This may include (though is not limited to) any/all of the following:

a. Inviting the institution to provide a written response to any allegations;

b. Inviting the whistle-blower to provide further information;

c. Representatives nominated by ARB visiting the institution to discuss the allegations and/or gather further information.

Any information received will be considered to the extent appropriate for the purpose of decisions arising under this process.

18.4 ARB will forward details of any credible allegation of impropriety and evidence gathered/provided to the appropriate officer of the institution involved, and/or any other relevant regulatory or public authority.

The Board will ask to be informed of the outcome of any enquiry or investigation relevant to the prescription of qualifications.

Appendix 6

19.0 Notifying the European Commission of a New Qualification and of Changes to a Prescribed Qualification[i]

Material to be Collated for Notification to the European Commission

19.1 Once a qualification has been prescribed by the Board for the first time, or where changes have been made to a qualification prescribed by the Board, such qualifications will be notified to the European Commission for listing in the UK's entry under Annex V of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC].

19.2 ARB's Qualifications Team will advise the institution on the relevant materials it must prepare for submission to the European Commission.

Notification of a Newly Prescribed Qualification to the European Commission

19.3 Once the relevant material has been collated, ARB will forward the application to the UK's National Co-ordinator to submit to the European Commission and to other European Co-ordinators for scrutiny.

The Co-ordinators Group consists of representatives from each Member State within the European Economic Area (EEA).

There will be a consultation period of two months, starting from the notification date.

The European Commission may raise queries with the UK's National Co-ordinator in relation to the application. European Co-ordinators may also raise queries, either through the Commission or directly to the UK but still informing the Commission.

The UK's National Co-ordinator will liaise with ARB in order to respond to any queries raised. Where appropriate, ARB will liaise with the institution in order to respond to any queries.

19.4 If any queries raised are resolved through correspondence within the two month consultation period, the Commission will notify the UK's National Co-ordinator.

The European Co-ordinators will be asked to approve the qualification, which will then be listed in the UK's entry under Annex V of the Directive once it has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

19.5 Where queries from the Commission and/or the European Co-ordinators remain unresolved after the consultation period, the Commission will automatically forward the application to its Architecture Sub-Group for further consideration.

The qualification will be considered at one meeting only.

Representatives of the UK and, where appropriate, representatives of the institution (who will be determined by the institution upon the invitation of the Board's staff) will attend the

Architecture Sub-Group meeting to respond to the queries raised by other European Co-ordinators and/or the Commission.

If any outstanding queries are resolved through correspondence and/or at the meeting itself, the European Co-ordinators will be asked to approve the listing of the qualification in the UK's entry under Annex V of the Directive either at their next meeting or by written procedure on the basis of a simple majority as principle.

19.6 The process outlined above is subject to alteration by the European Commission at any time.

19.7 ARB will ensure that the institution is informed of the progression of the application through the European Commission's processes.

19.8 For further advice and guidance, institutions should contact ARB's Qualifications Team.

Notification of Changes to the European Commission

19.9 Any institution which offers a qualification that is listed under Annex V of the European Commission's Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] will also need to be aware of the processes for notifying changes to qualifications to the European Commission.

19.10 Where an institution has made alterations that fall under the Commission's definition of 'significant change', the institution will be required to make a full notification of the relevant qualification to the European Commission through ARB. The notification process detailed as above will then be applicable.

19.11 Where an institution has made alterations that fall under the Commission's definition of 'minor change', the institution will be required to make a less detailed notification to the European Commission through ARB. This less detailed notification will only need to consist of information that relates directly to the change that is being made.

19.12 ARB's Qualifications Team can provide guidance on the process and the documentation required by the European Commission for the purposes of notifying an architecture qualification, and the Commission's definitions of 'significant change' and 'minor change'.

[i] At the time of approval of these draft procedures for consultation, uncertainty remains in relation to the UK's future relationship with the EU. In due course, further amendments to reflect the changing position are likely to be required.