

Minutes of Board Meeting held on 14 May 2020

Location	Present	In Attendance
By video conference	A White (Chair) J Beckerleg M Bottomley D Bray S Brookhouse Emeritus Professor T Crook W Freeman A Kershaw L Male E Marco S McCusker	Emma Matthews Simon Howard Marc Stoner Brian James Teresa Graham (Minutes)
Note		Action

1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

2 Members' Interests

There were no declarations relevant to the open session agenda items.

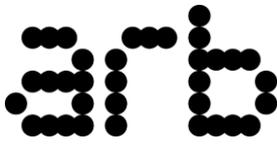
3 Update from the Chair

The Chair gave a very warm welcome to the second Board meeting of May.

Before providing an update to the Board the Chair started by welcoming Brian James, the new Head of Registration to his first Board meeting and asked if he would like to give an introduction to the Board.

The Head of Registration began his introduction by saying that he had 15 years of regulation experience, his most recent role as Head of Fitness to Practice at the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), and prior to that as Head of Business Support and Development, at the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The Head of Registration confirmed that he had experience in providing leadership, working within similar regulation frameworks, managing a large team and budget, and to deliver on a number of large improvement projects within Fitness to Practice and across both wider organisations in HCPC and the NMC. He also confirmed that prior to his role at the NMC he had 12 years' experience in the NHS where he implemented, monitored and evaluated best practice to improve clinical care outcomes, working with a range of stakeholders.

The Chair thanked the Head of Registration for his introduction and asked that he come back to the Board at its next meeting to feedback on how he intends to take the



Registration Department forward.

The Chair then provided an update to the Board.

The Chair began by providing an update on the current lockdown developments and how she was observing the first tentative steps to restarting the economy with interest. The Chair confirmed that the organisation remained one which was able to work from home and would continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

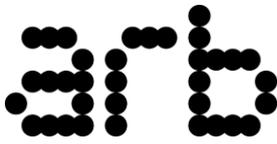
The Chair noted that it seemed likely that whatever the “new normal” looked like the way in which we were used to living and working previously will have changed in some ways, perhaps forever. The Chair further noted that the Board would have to consider in due course whether it’s possible to retain some of the remote working that it has become used to.

The Chair confirmed that the organisation was now working entirely remotely in accordance with a plan which the Board had approved, to conduct its regulatory functions and as much as possible, its business plan. It was noted that the Board would hear more about the progress the Executive was making in the course of the meeting.

The Chair then moved on to the agenda and confirmed that the Board would have reports about its financial situation, which as it was already aware had been affected by the hiatus of those who might in normal circumstances wish to join the Register, but were currently unable to do so. The Chair noted the need to conserve resources at the present time until it was in a better position to understand how the economic situation of the country played out, and its impact on ARB, remained paramount. The Chair said she was pleased to note the Executive were making balanced decisions to hold recruitment until ARB’s financial situation became clearer.

The Chair recognised that the agenda was another challenging one. She noted that there were over 5,000 pages of material embedded in the prescription items for the meeting. The Chair also noted that whilst it would be impossible for the Board to engage with that amount of material, it was important that the Board took account of sufficient material so that it could make unfettered decisions about prescription matters. The Chair confirmed that she would be discussing what could be done to ameliorate this issue with the Executive as a matter of urgency. It was noted that the Chair appreciated the work the Board had done to try to brief itself as well as possible on these issues.

The Chair went on to matters of policy. It was noted that the Board would be asked to make important new policy decisions and the first would be investments and remuneration. The Chair explained that it was critical to good governance that the



Board oversaw the development of a body of policy material which guided the way in which the organisation worked both in terms of its organisational processes and its regulatory model. The Chair further noted that the first meeting of the Policy Committee had been convened and that this Committee would meet regularly to oversee the development of policy work in all areas of ARB's business and to commission expert reviews where required to inform the Board's approach. The Chair explained that the Board would be required to note the recommendation to commission an expert review of total reward and other elements of organisational design (it was noted that policy development would be overseen by the Remuneration and Appointments Committee).

The Chair stated that one of the most important items on the Policy Committee agenda would be to consider how the output of the two focus groups (on climate change and fire and life safety) could be taken forward. The Chair explained that whatever the Board decided, it would need to answer to the challenges of sufficiency, timeliness and impact, quickly enough and in a manner which made a measurable difference to standards and behaviour. The Chair said that it was her view that these tests would need to be met.

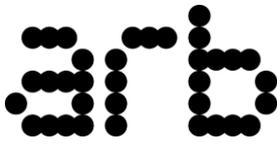
The Chair went on to highlight to the Board that it was her intention to start a review of a suite of metrics to cover all areas of the organisation's business, especially its regulatory processes, to build understanding of current state and to later move towards building a methodology for targetry. The Chair said it was her view that this would not be possible this year, as the Board would need to build an understanding of the current state before thinking about target setting. The Chair further noted that she hoped to bring some initial proposals for the Board to consider at its June meeting.

The Chair also confirmed that she was planning to launch this year's annual review process within the next couple of weeks, so that she could complete everyone's annual reviews during the next couple of months.

Finally, the Chair thanked her colleagues for completing the Board Effectiveness Review survey and confirmed that the Executive was collating responses to preserve anonymity. The results would be discussed and any improvements needed at the next meeting. The Chair noted that the next meeting would be a "normal" Board meeting rather than a development day that was planned.

The Chair then invited comments or questions about her report.

A Board member commented on the duplication of paperwork that went to the Prescription Committee and then to Board and whilst it was important that the Board was able to scrutinise the papers, there needed to be some proportionality with



approach.

The Head of Qualifications and Governance thanked the Board and the Prescription Committee for their feedback and explained that staff were working to embed processes to underpin the revised Prescription procedures which had been brought in last November, including the development of new Board templates.

A Board member reiterated that work with the Executive was underway to develop a streamlined reporting structure to improve the prescription-related papers and that a template had been introduced to schools to make the process more standardised.

A Board member commented on the good work of the Executive to keep things moving, dealing with increased workload and that it was time for reflection on the benefits of working from home.

4 **Matters Arising Report**

The Board noted the matters arising report.

5 **Agenda item removed**

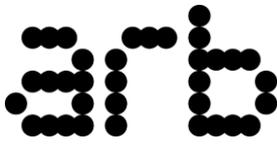
This agenda item was removed owing to the agenda being re-ordered.

6 **Prescribed Examination- International English Language Testing System requirement**

The Registration Executive introduced this paper in which the Board was being asked to make a short term adjustment in light of the IELTS testing centres suspending tests around the world due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

It was confirmed that the online process was robust and gave enough assurance that it was secure and it provides an interim solution for Candidates who might be ruled out of making an application without an IELTS certificate.

The Chair commented that this paper should be considered in the context of the ARB's current approach to its statutory functions. The examinations had been suspended and the Executive had not sought approval from the Board for the process to be conducted remotely. It had been agreed that the Board would consider this if the lockdown was extended for more than three months.



The Chair sought clarification from the Registration Executive on numbers involved and also to confirm that those seeking to use the IELTS Indicator certificates were doing so to be in a position to apply and to join the waiting list for examination. It was confirmed that the numbers were likely to be very low and that those currently in the system held the “normal” IELTS certificates.

A Board member highlighted the risk of impersonation that there currently is with the existing IELTS system and the Board would need to be mindful of this and seek the assurances required.

The Chair noted that she agreed this in principle, but asked that the Executive came back with a specific proposal about how this might fit into the proposed approach to delivery of statutory function.

The Board approved the recommendations to:

- **Accept the IELTS Indicator Test as valid provided it meets the same standards as required within the present IELTS test (Academic level testing, no band score below 6.5 in each of the four sections of the test).**
- **Accept that the IELTS Indicator certificates will be valid for the same two year period as the mainstream IELTS certificate.**

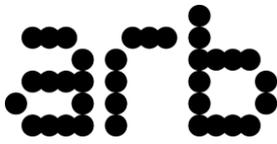
The decision was unanimous.

7 Operational Activities Report

The Chair introduced the report and explained that the Executive would update the Board on anything that had arisen since the paper was written and take any questions the Board had.

The Head of Professional Standards confirmed that two virtual Professional Conduct Committee hearings had now taken place and that they had been successfully concluded. He also confirmed that his team was exploring all options for other listed hearings which included looking at external venues which could ensure social distancing could be adhered to.

A Board member noted that the Stakeholders Research, as referenced under section four of the report, should provide further insight on the commissioning of high rise buildings. It was further noted by a Board member that the two main things that



stood out in the Stakeholder engagement survey were the public awareness of ARB and competence.

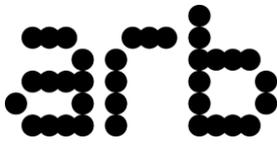
The Chair confirmed that all available papers from the Stakeholder Engagement Survey were on Diligent. The communications team was still working with the research company, and all outcomes would be presented in due course.

A Board member queried if the ARB pursued those who misuse the title 'architect' on their CVs. The Head of Professional Standards confirmed that this was a breach of Section 20 of the Act and that the title cannot be used unless the individual was registered with ARB. The Head of Professional standards advised that each case was considered and action is taken if it was in the public interest to do so.

A Board member raised concerns that ARB was not present at the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture virtual Forum on 1 May 2020 when the RIBA discussed its proposals for a separate set of Criteria. It was confirmed by the Head of Qualifications and Governance that although ARB had been invited and did attend the meeting, the timeslot that had been allocated was after the RIBA's and as a result, ARB had not been present when the RIBA presented their proposals regarding the Criteria.

The Chair thanked the Board member for bringing this matter to the attention of the Board and expressed that it had come as a surprise that the RIBA were developing separate Criteria given that ARB had been assured by the RIBA that they were committed to holding the Criteria in common, an assurance which had been given in writing to ARB at the request of the Registrar and Chief Executive. The Chair confirmed that she had written to the Acting President of the RIBA seeking clarification on their position regarding the common Criteria and would keep the Board up to date on any response.

In light of the Hackitt Review and competencies, a Board member asked if the ARB was considering annotations to the Register that would identify skills over and above the minimum level that could be recorded against an architect's record. The Chair confirmed that this was not within the vires of the Act. It was also confirmed by the Head of Professional Standards that whilst this cannot be noted for skills, it may be possible to annotate records for those who have disciplinary findings.



8 Management Accounts and Outturn for Financial Year Ending 2019

The Chair invited the Head of Finance and Resources to provide a verbal update on the outturn for the financial year ending 2019 and an update on the forecast outturn for 2020.

The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that the accounts were complete and would be included in the revised annual report which would be presented to the Board at its June meeting.

A Board member noted that an underspend had been identified at section five of the paper. The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed this was because some recruitment which had been budgeted for in 2019, did not actually occur until early 2020.

The Board noted the paper.

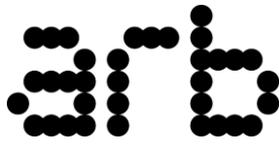
Forecast Outturn for 2020

A Board member raised concerns about the decrease in numbers of architects joining and rejoining the Register and the impact it might have. The Head of Finance and Resources agreed that there could be some financial impact and the Board might need to reduce expenditure or increase the annual retention fee to account for that. It was further noted that there were sufficient reserves for 2020/21 and possibly 2022.

The Chair noted that the situation would have to remain under review and conserving resources and large investments would need to be considered, and the Board would also need to consider withholding recruitment.

A Board member also suggested that the Board look at the demographic of the Register once COVID-19 and the UK's departure from the EU were over.

A Board member asked how it was possible to forecast the Board expenditure increase. The Head of Finance and Resources explained that it was based on previous pattern and that new Board structure, Committee structures and the increase in Board days had all been factored in.



Note

Action

The Board noted the paper.

9 Minutes

The Chair asked the Board to note the minute of the Remuneration and Appointments Committee meetings held 15 April 2020 and 22 April 2020.

The minutes were noted.

10 Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

11 Dates of Future Board Meetings:

19 June 2020

10 July 2020

2 October 2020

20 November 2020

3 December 2020