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# ebulletin

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## Chair's message

I am very pleased to report that since our last edition of the eBulletin, a number of initiatives have been implemented. We are constantly looking for efficiencies in our work of delivering the Architects Act, and one way of achieving these is to maximise use of our online facilities.

Chief among these e-resources is the [online Register](#). While this has been a searchable, online facility for many years, we have been working on a new and enhanced version. It is now a much more user-friendly and accessible resource, and importantly, every architect now has their own web page. This offers a number of opportunities for you. You can create a link with your own website so that your clients can see at a glance that you are a genuine, registered architect. By using the online facility to update your own details, you can also add your contact details, including your email and website addresses, to give your clients and potential clients immediate access to your services. The best way to demonstrate your registered status is to use ARB's [logo](#). You can download this to add to your website, business stationery and signage.

The new online Register and downloadable logo create an ideal platform for you to demonstrate your professionalism not only to members of the public but also to your non-registered and possibly unqualified competitors in the marketplace. I hope that as many of you as possible will use this opportunity for increasing your profile with the public, and helping to give them confidence in making an informed choice when they are looking for a professional to undertake their building project.

All good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Beatrice Fraenkel'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beatrice Fraenkel  
Chair, ARB



## Have your say – consulting with the profession on the Investigations Rules and Professional Conduct Committee Rules

Whenever we are considering a change to any of our rules, policies or procedures, we invite our stakeholders to contribute their ideas and views through an open consultation process. We are committed to a culture of openness and transparency, and we value the knowledge and expertise of our stakeholders. Their input into the decision-making process through consultation ensures that any decisions we subsequently take are informed by a wide range of people who all bring different experiences to the process. In this way, we can be confident that our policies are robust, and that they meet the needs of those who are affected by them.

The Rules set out the procedure for investigating complaints about architects both to ensure that an efficient, robust and fair procedure is followed and that the public and the profession can have confidence in the investigations process. The main proposed change to the Rules is to have an independent Investigations Pool made up of appointed non-Board members to investigate complaints, rather than a committee composed of Board members, as is currently the case. The role of this newly formed Investigations Pool would be to decide whether an architect in any particular case has a case to answer at the Professional Conduct Committee.

The proposal will help to ensure the timely investigation of complaints by appointed individuals with the relevant knowledge and experience, both for the benefit of the architects concerned and in the wider public interest. Given that one of the Board's functions is to issue guidance on professional conduct, it may be more appropriate if complaints about architects are not considered by Board members who have been involved in setting the standards.

However, it is important that the Board continues to have an oversight role. It is therefore proposed that an Oversight Committee, made up of Board members, is established to monitor both the effectiveness of the process and the overall quality of decision making. This Committee would not be involved in the decision-making process.

We are keen to hear from all our stakeholders who have an interest in helping us to maintain a fair, timely and proportionate complaints process. Your input will help to inform the development of the proposals, and their subsequent implementation.

If you would like to take part in this important consultation, you can contribute your views by visiting the [consultation](#) on our website. The closing date for submitting your comments is 29 June 2012.

### Keep in contact

Make sure that you keep in contact with ARB by ensuring that the contact details we hold for you are current and up to date.

You can update your own details by visiting our online resource – [Update your details](#). This is quick, straightforward and safe, and means that you will never miss any important mailings from us – the retention fee invoice for example.

You can also use this resource to add your contact details to your own webpage on our online Register. Including your telephone number, email and website addresses means that members of the public who are looking for an architect can get in touch with you direct from your ARB webpage, and in doing so, will know that they are dealing with a genuine architect, not someone masquerading as one.

## Conduct matters

### Professional Conduct Committee

The Professional Conduct Committee has sat four times since the last edition of the eBulletin was issued, making a finding of unacceptable professional conduct in three cases, and serious professional incompetence in a further case. In two cases, the architect was fined £1000, and in another, the Committee imposed a fine of £500. In the remaining case, the Committee handed down a reprimand. Details of these and other PCC cases are on our [website](#), along with the formal Decisions relating to each case.

### Complaints

Client complaints are part of every professional's life, but what should you do if a client complains about you?

Client complaints usually arise if the service they were anticipating doesn't meet their expectations. If a client complains to you, and you handle the complaint politely and professionally, they are far less likely to want to escalate their complaint to us, and you are more likely to retain your client's goodwill.

If a client complains, acknowledge it quickly and let the client know what your procedure is for dealing with complaints. You should also let them know when they are likely to receive a response from you. The following steps might be helpful:

- Make sure that you have a formal complaints handling procedure in place
- Tell your client who will be dealing with the complaint, and let them know how long it is likely to take.
- Make sure you keep your client up to date with the complaint's progress.
- Find out what the client expects from the complaints process, and whether their expectations are reasonable.
- If your client asks for a meeting, try to arrange one as quickly as possible.
- Open a complaint file, and keep a record of the steps you take to settle the matter.
- Finally, remember that dealing with complaints quickly helps to keep your client's goodwill, and is often the most cost-effective solution for you.

## Spreading the word

Back in March, ARB attended the Homebuilding and Renovating Show as an exhibitor. We are very keen to raise the profile of the Register with members of the public, and one of the ways we can do this is by attending these shows. We had around 400 visitors to our stand over the four days of the show, mostly members of the public, but also architects, students and sixth-formers interested in taking up architecture as a career. As with the past two years, we gave a presentation in one of the popular Masterclass seminars at the show. Aimed at members of the public, it focused on the importance of checking that someone is registered before engaging them to undertake a building project, and if they were looking for an architect in their area, using the Register to find a genuine architect.

We are booked to attend the Grand Designs show at Birmingham NEC in October, where we will be giving out the same message – if they're not on our Register, they're not an architect.

## Prescription of Qualifications

At its meeting of 11 May 2012, the Board considered an application from a Higher Education Institution wishing its qualification to be prescribed under the Architects Act 1997. In line with its Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications, the Board considered the response to the consultation it had undertaken, and decided that the following qualification should be prescribed until September 2016:

### **Arts University College at Bournemouth** Master of Architecture

As part of the regular cycle of reviews, the Board also considered applications from Higher Education institutions wishing their qualifications to remain prescribed by the Board under the Architects Act 1997.

The Board decided that prescription of the following qualifications should continue until September 2016:

### **Leeds Metropolitan University** BA (Hons) Architecture Master of Architecture

### **London Metropolitan University** BA (Hons) Architecture Professional Diploma in Architecture Postgraduate Certificate in the Examination in Professional Practice of Architecture

### **Oxford Brookes University** BA (Hons) in Architecture MArchD in Applied Design in Architecture Examination in Practice and Management

### **RIBA North West Region** RIBA Advanced Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture (RIBA Part 3)

### **University College London/The Bartlett** Part 3 Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture

### **University of Huddersfield** BA (Hons) Architecture BA (Hons) Architecture (International) Master of Architecture Master of Architecture (International) Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture

### **University of Lincoln** BA (Hons) Architecture Master of Architecture Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture

### **Newcastle University** BA (Hons) Architectural Studies Master of Architecture PG Diploma in Architectural Practice and Management

### **University of Portsmouth** BA (Hons) Architecture M'Arch Final Examination in Professional Practice

### **University of the West of England** Postgraduate Certificate Professional Practice and Management in Architecture

### **Queens University Belfast** BSc (Hons) Architecture Master of Architecture Certificate in Professional Practice and Practical Experience

The Board decided that prescription of the following qualification should continue until December 2016:

### **Leeds Metropolitan University** Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Professional Practice

For further details, please see the 'Qualifications' section of ARB's website, [www.arb.org.uk](http://www.arb.org.uk)