

POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (PSC)

Tuesday, 6th May, 2014 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2

Present: James Moore (Chair) - Board Member and Committee Chair
Margaret Cullen (Vice Chair) - Board Member and Committee Vice Chair
Jan S Levy - International Expert
Ewart Keep - International Expert
Aidan Mulkeen - National Expert
Anne Marie Ryan - National Expert
Marie Bourke - National Expert
Bryan Maguire - QQI Executive Member
Peter Cullen - QQI Key Executive

In attendance: Ann Graves - QQI Secretary
Andrina Wafer – QQI (for Item 6.2)
John O’Connor – QQI (for Item 7.2)
Orla Lynch - QQI (for Item 7.1).

1 Minutes of Meeting of PSC of 20 March 2014

The Minutes of the Meeting of 20 March 2014 were APPROVED and signed by the chair.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes

The Chair NOTED that the Board had discussed the question raised by the PSC about the evaluation of its work as well as the alignment of the processes around committees. He advised that this would form part of future discussions by the Board as the PSC and other committees evolve.

3. Reports on Routine Standards Determinations submitted to PAEC (Programme and Awards Executive Committee)

Arising from the agreed action at the 20 March meeting of the PSC that reports on standards would be seen by the Committee for the time being so that the PSC is aware of what it will not be seeing under the process. The PSC NOTED the following reports presented by the executive to the PAEC at its meetings on 5 February and 2 April 2014 and AGREED that it does not need to see such reports in future.

FSG Activity Report

Tracking of Adjustments to Published Standards

CAS Restatement of Policy and Guidelines Working Draft

FSG Procedures Manual working draft

4. Standards Determinations

At the outset the executive, at the committee's request, clarified the QQI standards determination function, the purpose of awards standards. The PSC DISCUSSED its approach to making standards determinations and the information it required from the executive. The PSC NOTED that determination of standards is a function of QQI, and that following the development process (overseen by the executive) the role of the PSC is to determine standards after it is satisfied that they have been validly and reliably developed. The PSC NOTED its oversight role relating to the development of awards standards. It NOTED that awards standards are used when programmes leading to awards are validated by the bodies that make the awards concerned. The Members further NOTED that it needed to satisfy itself that the process for the development of standards was sound. It also AGREED that any contentious points would be well flagged in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the standards document.

In order to help engage all members actively in the in the deliberations, selected non-executive PSC members were requested to take a special interest in one or two documents from the agenda and presentation to the meeting on these documents for the purpose of leading off the discussions. All members were still required to read and consider all the documents on the agenda.

Presentations concerning proposed awards standards were to included observations on

- Soundness of the case for establishing a new standard
- Consistency with QQI's strategy
- Clarity for stakeholders of the new standard
- Suitability of the development and consultation process as described
- Questions about the proposed standard that warrant discussion at Committee

4.1 Awards Standards – Counselling and Psychotherapy

The PSC NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new awards standards for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

4.2 Awards Standards – English Language Teaching

The PSC NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new award standards for English Language Teaching. The PSC NOTED that the handbook would be developed by the sector and agreed by QQI.

4.3 Awards Standards – Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Maths for STEM

The PSC NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new award standards for Maths for STEM. The PSC further NOTED that adoption of standards is the first step, and that it is intended that the standards development group will remain in place with an implementation oversight role to consider some pilot assessments and to participate in liaisons with the HEIs.

4.4 Awards Standards – Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Supervisory Management for Manufacturing

The PSC NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new award standards for Supervisory Management for Manufacturing. The PSC NOTED the experimental element of inclusion of a cap-stone component specification and welcomed the model.

4.5 Awards Standards – Level 6 Component Award in Milking Process Routine

The PSC NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new award standards for Milking Process Routine. The PSC also AGREED that justification for the NFQ Level alignment should be explicitly presented in proposed standards. It further NOTED the difficulty in determining an NFQ Level for small quanta of learning such as would be certified by a minor award.

4.6 Award Type Descriptors - (Award Class: Professional) For the Alignment of Professional Awards at NFQ Levels 7, 8 and 9 Translated for Use in the Alignment of Professional Qualifications in Accountancy

The PSC NOTED the award type descriptors presented and considered the observations made. The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the descriptors for use in the Alignment of Professional Qualifications in Accountancy. The PSC NOTED that guidelines referenced in the documentation would be developed in participation with the profession.

The executive outlined the alignment process under the recently adopted QQI policy.

4.7 The PSC DISCUSSED the format and content of material presented by the executive to inform its standards determinations. It AGREED that this information is necessary and sufficient subject to the observations made concerning the presentation of Item 4.5. The PSC NOTED that a flavour

of topics raised during consultation could be included in the Explanatory Memorandum, in cases where they impacted on the development of the standard(s)

5. Policies

Selected non-executive PSC members were requested to take a special interest in one or two documents and make a presentation to the meeting on these documents for the purpose of leading off the discussions. All members were still required to read and consider all the documents on the agenda.

The green/white paper presentations by PSC members included observations on

- Soundness of the case for a white/green paper
- Consistency with QQI's strategy and policy framework and
- Clarity of the green papers—will they lead to the important issues being aired during consultation
- Clarity of the draft policy, procedures and criteria in white papers—is this ready for recommendation to the Board now noting that minor changes may be made following public consultation
- Questions about the paper that warrant discussion at Committee

The PSC NOTED the current policy development schedule. This working document will remain a standing item on the Agenda for future meetings.

6. Green Papers

6.1 Green Paper on QQI Relations with Professional Bodies

The PSC NOTED the Green Paper presented and considered the observations made. The Committee did not consider the paper suitable for issue as a green paper because it considered it too open-ended and exploratory and therefore that it would be difficult for professional bodies to respond to it. The Committee AGREED that the paper could be reworked and published as a background paper on issues without an invitation for written responses but to help inform bilateral meetings between the executive and selected professional bodies. The PSC AGREED that the consultation process should progress in the form of bi-lateral meetings with Professional Bodies and the planned Conference.

6.2 Outline Green Paper on Information on Programmes and Awards

The PSC NOTED the Outline Green Paper presented and considered the observations made. They NOTED the reservations expressed by the Department of Education and Skills about publishing

the paper in its current form. The PSC PROPOSED to refer the paper to the Board for discussion at their next meeting and NOTED that it will not be published in its current form.

7. White Papers

7.1 Consultation feedback on white papers approved at PSC meeting of 20 March 2014.

The PSC NOTED that the white papers approved at the March meeting had been published for public consultation. Consultation events are currently being held with a focus on suggestions on implementation of policy. The PSC further NOTED that the online consultation process is currently open. The next steps will be to finalise policy in June and publish, followed by a plan for implementation.

7.2 Authorisation to use the IEM

The PSC NOTED the White Paper presented and considered the observations made. Following discussion the PSC AGREED to recommend the White Paper on Authorisation to use the IEM to the QQI Board and therefore it can now be published for consultation subject to the requirement for a five-year track record being reviewed for its impact on start-up providers in different sectors...

8. Any Other Business

The PSC NOTED that it is satisfied with the process used for selecting members to present the papers.