

## Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the twenty-eighth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 7 April 2017 at 10.00 a.m. in the Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.

**Present:**

- Mr. Gordon Clark (Chair)
- Dr. Padraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Ms. Therese Masterson (Secretary)
- Dr. Barbara Brittingham (Items 1 – 12, 17-19)
- Ms. Una Buckley
- Ms. Mary Danagher (Items 1 – 11)
- Ms. Joanne Harmon
- Mr. Thomas McDermott
- Mr. James Moore

**Apologies:**

- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan
- Mr. Jack Leahy

**In attendance:**

- Ms. Caitriona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
- Mr. Vincent Teo (Item 8)
- Mr. Ultan Tuite (Item 7)

### INTRODUCTION

The Board agreed the agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same.

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 FEBRUARY 2017

The *Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting* held on 10 February 2017 were **confirmed and signed**.

#### 2. NOTE OF THE MEETING OF 10 FEBRUARY 2017

The Board **approved** the *Note of the Meeting of 10 February 2017* for publication on the QQI website.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

All matters arising were covered within agenda items and were discussed during the course of the meeting.

### 4. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

The Board noted the **Draft June Board Agenda**.

The Board noted the current draft agenda for the next Board Meeting scheduled for 16 June 2017.

### 5. ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW OF QQI (ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS)

Items omitted from this note.

The Board noted that, following the Chairperson's letter of 3 March to the Secretary General of the Department, six members of the Board, including the Chairperson and the Chief Executive, had met with the Deputy Secretary General and other officials of the Department on Thursday, 6 April 2017. The Chairperson provided a verbal update of the meeting.

The Board welcomed the outcomes of the meeting.

The Board and the Department agreed to work in partnership to follow up the Review.

The Board **agreed** that, as a first step, a Steering Group should be established in the near future comprising representatives of the Executive, the Board and the Department, initially in order to finalise the terms of reference for the selection of a Change Management Consultant and advise on the selection of that Consultant. The Board Chairperson would be happy to chair the Steering Group until the Consultant is appointed at which point the Consultant would chair the Group. The Board **agreed** that the Consultant should report to and support the Chief Executive of QQI and keep the Board and the Department fully informed.

The Board **agreed** that the key recommendations of the Review Report should be used to inform the framework for the terms of reference for the work of the Steering Group and the Change Management Consultant.

The Board emphasised that, once the Consultant is appointed, the appropriateness and feasibility of the key recommendations should be assessed by the Steering Group.

In this context, the Board encourages the active engagement with staff, and also with the recognised trade union, to keep them fully informed of the follow-up to the Organisational Review and obtain their feedback.

The Board **approved** the establishment of a HR and Organisation Committee of the Board to reinforce its own governance and oversight in these areas.

The Board **agreed** that the Chairperson would forward for information the draft minutes of this discussion to the Deputy Secretary General of the Department.

The Executive left the meeting for the remainder of the discussion.

## **6. HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Board noted the **Update on Human Resources**.

### **6.1. Staffing**

The Board noted that interviews had taken place for the contract position of Assistant Principal Officer supporting the validation and external QA activities for apprenticeships and an offer has been made to the recommended candidate.

## **7. AUDIT AND RISK**

The Board noted the documents relating to **Audit and Risk**.

The Board noted the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 3 March 2017 and noted the recommendations of the Committee in relation to the material presented to the Board for its consideration.

### 7.1. Items for Approval

The Board discussed and **approved** the following documents:

- Annual System of Internal Financial Controls (SIFC) – Internal Audit Report – approved subject to an implementation date of 1 April 2017 for all actions;
- QQI Protected Disclosures Policy – approved subject to the minor corrections outlined at the meeting;
- Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2016;
- Principal Risks;

### 7.2. Minutes of Audit Committee Meetings

The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 11 November 2016.

The Board noted the recommendation of the Audit Committee in relation to the publication of minutes/notes of this Committee and **agreed** that the notes of the Audit Committee should not be published on the QQI website.

### 7.3. Insurance: Directors' and Officers' Liability

The Board requested an update on the Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance for its next meeting.

The Board noted that it was the final meeting of the Board which the Director of Governance and ICT, Mr. Ultan Tuite, would attend prior to his retirement. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr. Tuite for his work and commitment to the organisation and wished him well for the future. Mr. Tuite thanked the Board, the Audit Committee and its Chairs for their assistance since QQI's establishment.

## 8. **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

The Board noted the documents relating to **Budget and Finance**.

### 8.1. Financial Statements 2016

The Board noted the draft Financial Statements for the 12 months ended 31 December 2016 which had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2017 and recommended to the Board for its approval. The Board noted that the draft Financial Statements had been prepared under the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies published in 2016.

The Board **approved** the Financial Statements for 2016 subject to:

- there being no material changes and
- to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

### 8.2. Operational Budget 2017

The Board noted the draft Operational Budget for 2017. The Board requested that in future the draft Budget be presented to the Board for consideration prior to the start of the calendar year.

The Board requested, in future, the draft Budget be presented in a different/clearer format and inclusive of a full list of Income and Expenditure.

The Board noted that a significant amount of budget analysis had taken place since the beginning of the year/commencement of the financial analyst and this had resulted in more accurate Income predictions.

The Board **approved** the Operational Budget for 2017.

## 9. **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Board noted the documents entitled **Strategic Planning**.

### 9.1. Corporate Plan 2017 – Quarter 1 Progress Report

The Board noted the overview Progress Report for Quarter 1 of the 2017 Corporate Plan. The Board noted that all deliverables scheduled for completion in Quarter 1 had been completed. The Board requested full progress reports for each of the

remaining Quarters of the year and also requested the Executive to provide details in relation to any delays on deliverable targets etc. should they occur.

#### 9.2. Annual Report 2016

The Board noted the initial draft Annual Report for 2016 and noted the Executive was continuing work on the document with a view to circulating a further draft to the Board in May prior to the presentation of a final draft at the Board meeting on 16 June.

The Board noted the approach taken by the Executive in developing the draft Annual Report for 2016 and requested the Executive to focus on a more outcomes based report.

### 10. GOVERNANCE

The Board noted the documents relating to **Governance**.

#### 10.1. Appointment of Board Members 2017

The Board noted the Chair's verbal update in relation to the appointment/reappointment of Board Members at the end of the current five-year term of office in November 2017.

The Board noted that the Chairperson had discussed the matter with the Department of Education and Skills and that a Public Appointments Service (PAS) booklet was currently being drafted by the Department. The Board noted that any Board Members willing to be reappointed will be required to reapply through the PAS system.

#### 10.2. External Evaluation of Board and Committee Performance 2016

The Board noted that the Chairperson had received an initial draft of the Report of the External Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Board and Committee Performance which was conducted by Mazars in the first quarter of 2017. This external review is a requirement under the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Board noted a verbal update from the Chairperson including some of the draft Report's specific recommendations, the implementation of which could be progressed in the near future:

- The Board should be provided with an additional opportunity to consider and approve the method by which CEO performance is appraised and the associated appraisal criteria;
- The Board minutes should include an action tracker which records the specific direction or request and the associated status;
- The Board should seek greater involvement from the members of the Executive team at Board meetings.

The Board noted that the final report may be completed in time for presentation to the Board at its June Meeting.

#### 10.3. Appointments to QQI Committees

The Board noted the Executive's recommendations for the filling of a number of positions on QQI Committees.

The Board **approved** the appointment of Ms. Mary Sheridan to the Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC). Ms. Sheridan replaces Dr. Trish O'Brien who resigned from QQI in September 2016.

The Board noted the request of the ARC Chairperson to consider additional appointments of external experts to the Committee. The Board noted that the Executive undertook to present nominations in this regard to the Board for approval at its June Board Meeting.

The Board **approved** the appointment of Mr. Paul Lyons and Dr. Ken Carroll to the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC). Mr. Lyons and Dr. Carroll replace Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan and Dr. Sarah Ingle whose terms of membership have been completed.

## 11. RELATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

The Board noted the first MFA review meeting of 2017 between the senior management of QQI and the Department had taken place on 30 March and the Board noted a verbal update on the meeting.

## 12. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Board noted the documents entitled **Comprehensive Policy Development Programme**.

The Board noted and discussed the draft Procedures for Focused Reviews by QQI of the Implementation and Effectiveness of Provider QA Procedures which had been considered by the Policies and Standards Committee and published for public consultation. The Board noted that the Executive had received legal advice during the drafting of the procedures.

The Board **approved** the *Procedures for Focused Reviews by QQI of the Implementation and Effectiveness of Provider QA Procedures*.

## 13. REVIEWS

The Board noted the documents entitled **Reviews (Withdrawal of Validated Programmes at Named Provider following Section 46 Review)**.

The Board noted that, on foot of deliberations at its meeting of 10 February 2017, the Board approved the proposed withdrawal of validation of specific programmes leading to QQI Awards offered by Named Provider. The Board's decision was communicated to the provider on 10 February and under Section 47(2) of the 2012 Act, the provider had one month from receipt of the formal notice of the proposed withdrawal of validation in which to make observations on the reasons for the proposed withdrawal. The Board noted that the Executive had received confirmation from the provider that it would not oppose the withdrawal of validation.

The Board **confirmed** their decision to withdraw validation of specified programmes leading to QQI awards offered by Named Provider.

The Board considered and discussed the proposals presented in relation to the timing of withdrawal. The Board **confirmed** that withdrawal of validation will take place in January 2019, this allows for the teach out to conclusion of the current cohorts of learners, based on normal progression. The Board noted that the panel report would be published on the QQI website shortly.

The Board noted that Named Provider has requested an opportunity to partake in the re-engagement process at an early date. The Board noted that the Executive had been notified of a number of improvements and recommendations which have been put in place by the provider since the review had been completed.

#### **14. WITHDRAWAL OF VALIDATION**

The Board noted the documents relating to **Withdrawal of Validation**.

The Board noted that the Executive had received notification from Kimmage Development Studies Centre (KDSC) that it was collaborating with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM) as a linked provider to NUIM. The Board noted that NUIM has accredited KDSC's new programmes leading to a Master of Arts and a Postgraduate Diploma in International Development. The Board noted the provider's confirmation that it would no longer be offering QQI validated programmes. The Board **approved** the withdrawal of validation of the following programmes effective from the dates indicated:

- *Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies (7M15531)* from April 2017;
- *Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies (7M15524)* from April 2017;
- *Master of Arts in Development Studies (9M15527)* from April 2019 [teach out];
- *Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Development Studies (9M15525)* from April 2019 [teach out];
- *Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Drylands Policy and Climate Change Adaption (9M15530)* from April 2017;
- *Master of Arts in Drylands Policy and Climate Change Adaption (9M15529)* from April 2017;
- *Doctor of Philosophy (10M15528)* from April 2017;
- *Master of Arts by (research) (9M15526)* from April 2017.

The Board also **agreed** that:

- Learners enrolled on the *Master of Arts in Development Studies* programme who, due to extenuating circumstances, are unable to finish their final research dissertation within the academic year, be allowed defer for a maximum of two years and
- Learners who exit within the two year deferral period without having completed the dissertation but who have met the requirements for the *Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Development Studies*, may exit with that award.

The Board noted that the provider had confirmed that Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangements had been put in place to cover the circumstances referred to above.

## 15. RE-ENGAGEMENT

The Board noted the **Update on QQI re-engagement with Providers**.

The Board noted the update provided on re-engagement and **agreed** to defer discussion on the matter until its June 2017 meeting.

The Board briefly discussed apprenticeships and suggested that a communication may be required clarifying the timelines involved in validation of apprenticeship programmes and outlining the '10 step' process involved. The Board noted that this process is under the remit of the Apprenticeship Council and consultation with that body may be required. The Board noted that the Executive was considering adjustments to its validation policy, having taken account of the operation of the process to date. The Board noted a significant amount of time had been spent evaluating existing apprenticeship programmes.

## 16. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

The Board noted the document relating to **Communications and Information**.

The Board noted and **approved** the QQI Social Media Policy.

The Board noted some of the developments being planned in the Communications area. The Board discussed the need to appoint a Communications officer and noted that those

present at the meeting with the Department on 6 April had emphasised this point to the Department representatives.

## **17. ITEMS FOR NOTING**

The Board noted the **Items for Noting**.

### 17.1. Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee held on 13 December 2016.

### 17.2. Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 15 February 2017.

### 17.3. Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Approvals and Reviews Committee held on 15 February 2017.

### 17.4. Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee held on 24 February 2017.

### 17.4. Correspondence

The Board noted the letter of 21 February 2017 from the Minister for Education and Skills appointing the Chief Executive as a member of the National Skills Council.

### 17.5. Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events

The Board noted the Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events (from 13 February – 7 April 2017).

### 17.6. Rolling Board Agenda 2016 and 2017

The Board noted an update on the Rolling Board Agendas for 2016 and 2017.

**18. NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday, 16 June 2017** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

**19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board noted that the Chair would work with the Executive to develop a method of recording action items arising from Board meetings.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.**