

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the thirty second Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 3 November 2017 at 2.00 p.m. in the Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.

Present:

- Mr. Gordon Clark (Chair)
- Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Ms. Therese Masterson (Secretary)
- Dr. Barbara Brittingham
- Ms. Una Buckley
- Ms. Mary Danagher
- Ms. Joanne Harmon
- Mr. Oisín Hassan (Items 1-11)
- Mr. Thomas McDermott

Apologies:

- Mr. James Moore

In attendance:

- Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
- Ms. Laura Carrigan (Item 8)
- Mr. Eamonn Collins (Item 9)
- Dr. Anna Murphy (Item 7)
- Mr. Shaun Quinn (Item 2)
- Ms. Mary Sheridan (Item 11)

INTRODUCTION

The Board agreed the agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same subject to some changes to the order in which the items were discussed.

1. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board noted that no conflicts of interest were declared.

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

The Board noted the document entitled **Organisational Review of QQI and Related Matters**.

Items omitted from this note.

2.1. Vacancy – Director of Corporate Services

The Board noted that the position of Director of Corporate Services had been advertised on the Public Jobs website. The Board noted that there had been a strong response to the advertisement and the first round of interviews for shortlisted candidates took place on 2 and 3 November 2017. The Board noted that the second round of interviews was scheduled for 13 November.

2.2. IR Forum

The Board noted that two meetings of the Industrial Relations Forum had taken place on 4 and 23 October 2017.

2.3. Organisational Review Steering Group/HR and Organisation Committee

The Board noted the draft minutes of the most recent meetings of the Organisational Review Steering Group (meeting of 6 September 2017) and the HR and Organisation Committee (meeting of 22 September 2017).

2.4. Organisational Review

Following the Board's request at its meeting of 22 September, the Change Management Consultant joined the meeting. He briefly outlined his findings to date and the Board noted that an important aspect of the change management process was the inclusion of the Board's perspective on matters. This meeting provided an opportunity for the Board to hear first impressions and receive an update on the process undertaken so far.

The Board noted that the Consultant had met with the EMT and Managers within QQI, with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Board Members who

are members of the Organisational Review Steering Group. The Consultant had also chaired the two recent IR Forum meetings. The Board noted that the Consultant had not yet chaired a meeting of the Organisational Review Steering Group as the last meeting, scheduled for 5 October had been postponed by the Department to 13 November.

The Consultant elaborated on a number of points and answered Board Members' questions.

The Executive is exploring options to gather/garner regular feedback/monitoring of external stakeholders.

The Board thanked the Consultant for attending, confirming that it had found the discussion very useful and informative and looked forward to supporting and endorsing future measures.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2017

The *Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting* held on 22 September 2017 were **confirmed and signed**, subject to a minor amendment.

4. NOTE OF THE MEETING OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Board **approved**, subject to a minor amendment, the *Note of the Meeting of 22 September 2017* for publication on the QQI website.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1. Action Tracker

The Board noted the update on the **Action Tracker**.

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

6. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

The Board noted the **Draft February 2018 Board Agenda**.

The Board requested the Executive to include a presentation on Apprenticeships on the agenda for a Board meeting in early 2018.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS FOR QQI SINCE ESTABLISHMENT

The Board noted the document entitled **Achievements for QQI since Establishment**.

The Board noted the document detailing some of QQI's main achievements in the period 2012-2017 and the topic provided Board Members with an opportunity to reflect on their and the organisation's work completed since its establishment on 6 November 2012. The Board noted achievements such as the development of QQI's policy programme to date, implementation of robust QA processes, implementation of a new validation process, validation of apprenticeships, Protection for Enrolled Learners and compliance with the Codes of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Board noted that current and future projects for the organisation include the review of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), follow up on the recent Conference on the Digitalisation Agenda, commencement of a review of existing and the development of new policies, amendments to the 2012 Act and the drafting of the next QQI Strategy Statement.

The Board noted that the document would form part of the induction material to be given to new Board Members on appointment. The Board suggested circulating the document to staff as an opportunity to express its thanks for all the work accomplished to date.

The Board also suggested an early start to the strategic development process for the next Strategy Statement may be helpful.

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board noted the documents related to **Strategic Planning**.

8.1. Corporate Plan 2018

The Board noted the draft Corporate Plan for 2018 and an outline of the development process used. The Board noted that the Executive had produced the draft plan earlier in Quarter 4 than normal due to the timing of the end of the Board's term of office.

The Board noted that the Corporate Plan is linked to the Risk Register through the internal planning and reporting system, PRoMISe.

The Board noted that the Executive would continue populating PRoMISe based on the 2018 Corporate Plan and the Plan itself would be published in January 2018.

The Board **approved** the 2018 Corporate Plan.

8.2. Corporate Plan 2017 – Quarter 3 and 4 Progress Reports

The Board noted the Quarter 3 and Interim Quarter 4 Progress Reports for the Corporate Plan 2017.

8.3. Accommodation Plan 2017-2023

The Board noted a verbal update on progress in relation to the optimisation of the use of QQI office space.

9. BUDGET AND FINANCE

The Board noted the update on **Budget and Finance**.

Items omitted from this note.

9.1. Finance Report to 30 September 2017

The Board noted the Finance Report for the nine months ended 30 September 2017.

The Board noted that the Board Chairperson and the Chair of the Audit Committee

had met with the Manager of HR, Employee Engagement and Finance before the Board Meeting.

The Board noted that the Department had requested further information on foot of the Executive's request for additional funding for 2017. Following the provision of this information, the Department now understands that the shortfall is not due to overspend but to significant drop in fee income combined with the reduction in the State Grant allocation over the last four years. The Board noted further discussion is due to take place with the Finance Unit in DES during the week of 6 November.

The Board noted that a portion of certification income was still due to be received before year end.

9.2. State Grant 2018

The Board noted that the Executive had been informed by DES that the Department had submitted a Grant request of €4 million (the same as the 2017 allocation) for the 2018 Estimates. The Board noted that the Executive is awaiting confirmation of the allocation but believes that an amount of €4 million would place QQI in a similar financial situation again next year.

9.3. ICT Contract Resources 2018

The Board **approved** the procurement of contracts for ICT contract resources and/or services for six months to end of July 2018 in accordance with QQI's Purchasing and Procurement Policy, subject to contract and the purchase of services in MS Azure in accordance with QQI's Purchasing and Procurement Policy, subject to contract.

10. **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The Board noted the document relating to **Student Engagement**.

The Board noted the background to the establishment of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) programme and noted its progress to date. The Board noted that the pilot programme in April 2016 had been expanded from an initial five institutions to now accommodating 23 HEIs including a number of independent HE providers. The programme

has become embedded very quickly in the sector with benefits noticed within a short space of time by the participating providers.

The Board noted that the programme is not sustainable in its current format. It needs its own governance structure and while it is currently based at USI's premises, it is not a function of USI. The programme has also generated a heavy workload and it now needs to be managed and funded on a more structured basis. The Board noted that the founding partners (HEA, USI and QQI) were due to meet with the Department shortly to discuss the next phase of the programme/project.

11. AUDIT AND RISK

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

The Board noted a report of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 29 September 2017 together with a verbal update on the meeting of 3 November 2017 (a.m.).

11.1. QQI Risk Register and Risk Management Policy

Following its discussions, the Board **approved** the QQI Risk Register.

The Board **approved** the QQI Risk Management Policy subject to an amendment to the Risk Appetite Statement and subject to further work being completed on the Risk Categories diagram on page three of the policy.

11.2. Internal Audit Reports

a. Payroll and Personnel Cycle

The Board **approved** the Internal Audit Report on the Payroll and Personnel Cycle.

b. Status Update on Previous Revenue Internal Audit Report Recommendations

The Board noted the Status Update on Previous Revenue Internal Audit Report Recommendations.

The Board noted that there is scope to review the current schedule of fees. The Executive is examining the figures and noted the Board's opinion that the figures should reflect QQI's costs.

11.3. Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 21 July 2017.

12. **APPRENTICESHIPS**

The Board noted the update on **Apprenticeships**.

Following discussions at an earlier meeting of the Board and Committee Chairs, the Board suggested that the Executive should include a presentation on Apprenticeships as an agenda item for a Board meeting early in 2018. (Apprenticeships and professions and how they are being positioned as an alternative to higher education)

The Board noted an updated list of Apprenticeship programmes (details as at 29 August 2017) tabled at the meeting by the Executive.

13. **GOVERNANCE**

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

13.1. Appointment of Board Members 2017

The Board noted that 80 applications had been received by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) following the recent advertisement of four Board Member (including Chairperson) vacancies on State Boards.ie. The Board noted the shortlist would be forwarded to the Department for consideration by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The Board noted that it is entitled to request expert advice where it feels there are gaps in its expertise.

13.2. External Evaluation of Board and Committee Effectiveness 2016

The Board noted the update on the progress on recommendations arising from the External Evaluation. The Board noted that all the recommendations had been progressed.

13.3. Appointments to QQI Committees

The Board **approved** the appointment of Dr. Bryan Fields to the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC). Dr. Fields replaces Ms. Catherine MacEnri on the Committee.

14. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

The Board noted the document entitled **Communications and Information**.

14.1. Communications and Information

The Board noted the update on communications activities. The Board noted that the Executive was continuing to build its online community. The Board noted the very positive feedback and success of the recent Digitalisation Agenda conference held on 24 October and the Going to College' series of podcasts, produced in association with the Irish Independent.

The Board noted that the Executive was continuing work on the removal of references to legacy agencies which continue to persist in some sectors.

15. ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

15.1. Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee held on 28 July 2017. The Board also noted the Annual Report of the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee for 2016.

15.2. Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)

The Board noted the reports of the meetings of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 4 and 28 September 2017.

15.3. Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Approvals and Reviews Committee held on 13 October 2017.

15.4. Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events

The Board noted the Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events (from 26 September – 27 October 2017).

The Board noted a recent article on a provider which had featured in the Sunday Times dated 15 October 2017.

15.5. Rolling Board Agendas 2017 and 2018

The Board noted an update on the Rolling Board Agenda for 2017 and a draft Rolling Board Agenda for 2018.

16. NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday, 16 February 2018** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1. Expressions of Thanks

The outgoing Chairperson took the opportunity to thank Board Members and staff of QQI for their support, collective teamwork and commitment over his term of office.

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Executive for his close co-operation and constant support and for their healthy and open working relationship. He also thanked the Corporate Services Directorate, particularly the current and former Board Secretaries and the Recording Secretary for their considerable work, efficiency and expertise

over the previous five years in assisting both him in his role as Chairperson and the Board as a whole and in contributing to the Board's effective governance.

The outgoing Board also expressed its thanks to all staff for their work and co-operation in and for QQI.

Outgoing Board Member Una Buckley expressed her thanks for the support received during her time on the Board and for the opportunity it had provided her to meet and work with everyone involved.

The Board again paid tribute to the late Ann Louise Gilligan, Board Member, who passed away in June 2017.

The Chief Executive thanked the outgoing Chairperson and Members for their contribution and work over the previous five years. He acknowledged the Chair's dedication and his role in the functioning of the Board in its formative years. The Chief Executive paid tribute to the contributions and the benefit of the experience and roles of Una Buckley and Jim Moore.

The Chairperson, read a message of thanks and appreciation from outgoing member, Jim Moore who had been unable to attend the meeting due to a commitment in his role as the new Chairperson of the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.