

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the fourth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Monday, 22 April 2013 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, QQI Office, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.

Present:

- Mr. Gordon Clark (Chair)**
- Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)**
- Ms. Claire Byrne (Secretary)**
- Ms. Una Buckley**
- Dr. Margaret Cullen**
- Ms. Joanne Harmon**
- Mr. James Moore**

Apologies:

- Dr. Barbara Brittingham**
- Ms. Mary Danagher**
- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan**
- Mr. John Logue**

In attendance:

- Ms. Caitriona Lawless (Recording Secretary)**
- Dr. Bryan Maguire (Items 9, 10, 11)**
- Ms. Karena Maguire (Items 9, 10, 11 and 12)**
- Dr. Anna Murphy (Item 8)**
- Ms. Trish O'Brien (Items 6, 7, 9 and 10)**
- Mr. Ultan Tuite (Item 13)**

Introduction

The Chairperson and Executive thanked the Board for its patience and graciousness in dealing with the volume of business placed before it at this meeting. Following discussion, the Board agreed to deal with item 16 alongside items 6 and 9. The Board agreed that otherwise, the Agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 21 March 2013

The Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting held on 21 March 2013 were confirmed and signed subject to a typographical correction to item 8, Budget and Finance.

2. Note of the Meeting of 21 March 2013

The Board noted the Note of the Meeting of 21 March 2013 which was approved for publication on the QQI website, subject to the correction outlined at item 1 above.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

The Board noted, following a query from a Board Member, the Executive's clarification regarding providers currently holding registered status with QQI which was mentioned at the previous Board Meeting held on 21 March 2013. The Board noted that all currently registered providers will be transitioned into QQI registration through their review cycles associated with the legacy agencies; these reviews are usually scheduled for every five years.

The Board noted the Executive had met with officials from the Department of Education and Skills regarding the provider recognition system which the Executive is currently developing. The Board noted that Department officials were advising the relevant Ministers of the timeline set out by the Executive.

4. Annual Reports

The Board noted the Annual Reports of the Legacy Agencies, FETAC, HETAC and NQAI. The Board noted the requirement under Section 77(4) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, that:-

‘The Authority shall prepare a final report for each dissolved body and shall submit the report to the Minister within 6 months of the establishment day.’

The Board noted that the reports of the legacy bodies, which cover the period 1 January to 5 November 2012, followed the format of the previous reports of those bodies and each contained a common section on the amalgamation process and establishment of QQI.

The Board noted the QQI Report 2012. The Board noted the requirement under Section 25 of the 2012 Act, that:-

‘The Authority shall, not later than 30 June in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister a report of its activities in the immediate preceding year’.

The Board noted that the Executive had prepared a QQI report for 2012 covering the period 6 November to 31 December 2012 and this report will also include statistics, currently being compiled, on FETAC certification which was awarded under QQI’s remit.

The Board noted that all of the reports contained information on Board/Council Members’ attendance at meetings, expenses and CEO salary as required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Board agreed the 2012 reports for FETAC, HETAC, NQAI and QQI.

5. Reserved Functions

The Board noted the Reserved Functions of the Board and noted that following the Board’s request at its meeting held on 1 March 2013, the Executive had sought legal advice on the matter and had developed a list of reserved functions on foot of that advice; the discussion at the meeting on 1 March and with regard to good practice under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Board noted that this list of reserved functions did not preclude the Board from delegating at a future date. The Board emphasised that any proposal for the possible future delegation of a reserved function should be clearly justified in a detailed memorandum showing the full impact of a decision in that regard.

The Board noted that as outlined in the Code of Practice, the Executive will provide external expert advice for the Board should it be required at any time.

The Board adopted the schedule of Reserved Functions as outlined in the document presented.

6. Committees Structure

Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations was present for this item.

The Board noted the document entitled Initial Proposals for a Committees Structure for QQI, together with a presentation by Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations. The Board noted the proposed Committees Structure together with the working titles for each Committee.

The Executive requested the Board's agreement in principle on one proposed Committee – the Programme and Awards Executive Committee. Agreement on this Committee would assist the Executive in addressing governance issues likely to arise following the final meeting of the Interim Advisory Group scheduled for 25 June and while the remainder of the proposed Committees structure was still being developed. The Board noted that the Terms of Reference for this Committee would be presented to the Board for its consideration at its next meeting scheduled for 10 June 2013.

The Board noted that the Executive was continuing to consider matters such as resources, the combination of committees dealing with further and higher education and training business and the mix of membership expertise required in developing and furthering its proposed structure. The Board noted the Executive's hope to build a flexible structure which will be periodically reviewed for functionality. The Executive's process took account of the fact that the Board needed to retain strategic oversight of policy decisions.

The Board noted that Fees, Appeals and Corporate/Audit Committees are being dealt with outside of the model proposed. The Board noted that the Executive was meeting with officials of the Department of Education and Skills on Friday, 26 April, to discuss among other matters, the establishment of an Appeals panel and the Board's proposed Committees structure.

The Board requested the Executive to develop a diagram depicting how it envisages the various Committee meetings would fall/occur within the Board Meeting schedule.

The Board agreed the elements set out in the structure proposal and requested the Executive to continue to develop same. The Board agreed to the concept of

a Programme and Awards Executive Committee (working title) and requested the Executive to draft Terms of Reference and Membership/Criteria for this Committee for the Board's consideration at its June Meeting. The Board agreed that the Executive should draft generic criteria for membership of the remaining QQI Committees and proceed to seek expressions of interest for participation as members of/in the QQI Committees structure. The Board agreed that the Executive would identify and seek interest from other suitable individuals as considered appropriate. The Board noted that the Executive would continue to present material and update on the Committees Structure at its June and July meetings.

7. Interim Advisory Group

Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations was present for this item.

The Board noted the Recommendations made by the Interim Advisory Group, which included the draft minutes of the Interim Advisory Group meeting which had taken place on 11 April 2013.

The Board noted the minutes of 11 April and the recommendations proposed by the Group to the Chief Executive at this meeting.

The Board noted, on foot of the conversation relating to this item, that applicant providers will not/cannot become a relevant provider without having a programme validated by QQI.

8. Mission, Vision and Values

Anna Murphy, Head of Strategic Analysis, was present for this item.

The Board noted the Progress Report on Mission, Vision and Values. The Board noted that workshops of a similar format to that which the Board participated in at its meeting on 21 March, had been held for the participation of QQI staff. The first, involving Heads and Managers took place on 26 March and others involving the remainder of QQI staff have been scheduled to take place during the period 17-23 April.

The Board agreed to the request by the Executive to revise the previous timetable for preparation and delivery of the Strategic Statement to incorporate the opportunity which the additional Board Meeting in July presents. The Board

noted that this revision does not have a significant impact on the overall timelines for the completing the drafting of the strategic statement or the external consultation period. The Board noted that the Executive would present the draft Strategic Statement to the Board at its June meeting for agreement to proceed to public consultation.

9. Qualifications Framework

Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services, Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services and Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations were present for this item.

The Board noted the document entitled Qualifications Systems and Related Concepts – Background Paper, a concept paper which presents the conceptual framework for thinking about the qualifications system and illustrates its application. The Board noted the Executive's intention to publish this paper alongside the Green Papers on policy issues and options in May 2013.

10. Policy Co-ordination and Development Programme

Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services, Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services and Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations were present for this item.

The Board noted the Update on the Policy Development Process, together with a presentation by Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services, in relation to the Policy Development Groups. The Board noted the 17 Outline Green Papers setting out high level issues associated with each of the policy areas which are for Board and internal use only.

The Executive outlined the process it intends to follow in developing these policies. Following the Board Meeting, the Executive will commence drafting Green Papers on the policy areas outlined, developing the earlier concepts, these papers will be circulated to the Board mid May as well as being published and used as the basis for consultation with external stakeholders. Following this consultation process, White (Policy) Papers for the first six key policy areas will be drafted and presented to the Board at its July meeting before progressing to consultation with external stakeholders. The finalised White Papers will be submitted to the Board at its September meeting for adoption/approval. The Board noted the first consultation period will run from 13 May to 7 June with

some large regional stakeholder meetings being arranged (most likely in Dublin and Cork with the possibility of a third depending on demand). The Board noted that the Executive will provide an update on the consultation process at its meeting scheduled for 10 June. The update will include progress on the development of White Papers for the priority areas with the drafts being presented to the Board for its consideration at its July meeting before being issued for further consultation. An update on the Policies will be provided to the Board at its September meeting prior to the Executive opening the Accreditation/Registration and External Quality Assurance process in early Autumn. The Board noted that stakeholders will receive full details of the upcoming process and publication of papers in an e-zine to be issued following the Board meeting

The Board noted that the Executive had, following a tendering process, appointed a media management company to assist with developing QQI's communications strategy to reach all key stakeholders.

The Board agreed that the Executive should proceed with the drafting of Green Papers and the consultation process outlined. The Board noted that the Executive intends to circulate the draft Green Papers to Board Members around 10 May.

11. Group C Alignment Process

Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services, Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services and Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations were present for this item.

The Board noted the document entitled Interim Arrangements for QQI Administration of Group C Alignment Processes. The Board noted that the alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) of the Awards of certain bodies from outside the State that make awards in Ireland, (referred to as the Group C Alignment process) is a process previously operated by the legacy agencies, NQAI, FETAC and HETAC. The Board noted that the Executive was bringing to a conclusion any applications which had remained open at the legacy agencies' dissolution date and was also continually updating the portfolio of information for any awards/bodies which have their qualifications aligned.

The Board noted that QQI would not be accepting any applications from new awarding bodies until such time as QQI develops and implements its policy on the recognition of awards within the NFQ.

12. Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU)

Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services was present for this item.

The Board noted the Update on Institutional Reviews of Irish Universities including the Follow-up Reports on the Institutional Reviews of Trinity College, Dublin and the University of Limerick. The Board noted that QQI had inherited the Institutional Reviews of Irish Universities from the IUQB and noted that the Executive had also inherited the upcoming review of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland from the NQAI. The Board noted that the Executive will conduct the review of RCSI using the existing IRIU process but will adapt it to suit the provider's unique status. The Board noted that the review was instigated by the NQAI on the recommendation of the Minister for Education and Skills.

The Board noted that prior to its dissolution, the IUQB had conducted Institutional Reviews of Trinity College, Dublin and the University of Limerick and the one year Follow-up Reports were presented to the Board. The Board noted the reports and approved them for publication by the Executive. The Board noted the first of the Annual Dialogue Meetings with Universities had taken place within the past week.

The Board noted the report of the Institutional Review of University College, Cork that took place in December 2012, will be presented to the Board at its June Meeting.

13. Audit and Risk

Ultan Tuite, Head of Audit & Procurement was present for this item.

The Board noted the documents relating to Audit and Risk. The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 15 March 2013 together with a report of the meeting of 27 March by the Chairperson of the Audit Committee. The Board approved the QQI Audit Committee Terms of Reference and the Internal Audit Charter as recommended by the Committee.

The Board noted that the FETAC Financial Statements 2011 are still awaiting clearance by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). The Board noted that the C&AG has advised that it is difficult to find a similar precedent in respect of the Lease impairment charge incurred in 2011 following the decision to vacate and sublease East Point. The relevant Accounting Standard (FRS 11) was applied to treat the impairment charge in the accounts. The C&AG has not formally raised the issue in writing and the clearance process remains open.

The Board noted that following its consideration of the draft FETAC and HETAC Cessation Accounts 2012, the Committee recommended the Financial Statements to the Board for its approval to be signed by the Chairperson and Chief Executive, subject to there being no material changes. The Board noted the Committee's discussion on the EQVET contract which features in the FETAC Cessation Accounts and the Executive's satisfaction that all is in order. The Board noted the note in the HETAC Cessation Accounts in respect of the HETAC Superannuation Scheme and noted that the Executive had the necessary undertakings in writing from the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board noted that following notification from the C&AG, the Executive expects the audit of the FETAC Cessation Accounts to commence towards the end of May 2013 with the HETAC audit scheduled to commence in early June.

The Board noted that the next meeting of the Audit Committee is scheduled for 21 May and among the items for consideration at the meeting are the QQI Risk Management Framework and Finance and Corporate Policies.

14. Budget and Finance

The Board noted the document relating to Budget and Finance. The Board approved the signing by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive of the draft FETAC and HETAC Cessation Accounts for 2012, subject to future clearance by the Comptroller and Auditor General and there being no material changes, which were presented to the QQI Audit Committee at its meeting on 27 March 2013.

The Board noted the document tabled at the meeting which was an update following the publication, by the Government on 17 April, of the revised Public

Estimates. The Board noted that the revised allocation to QQI included a further reduction of 3% on the figure communicated to the Board at its meeting held on 1 March and also noted that the Executive was awaiting final confirmation of the allocation from the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board noted the Executive's intention to present the Board with a revised indicative budget shortly and will bring a line by line update on income and expenditure compared to budget to each subsequent Board Meeting.

15. Board Rolling Agenda 2013-2014

The Board noted the update to the Board Rolling Agenda 2013-2014. The Board noted the large number of items currently scheduled for consideration at the June Meeting and the intention of the Executive to meet with the Chair to review the current draft agenda with a view to diverting some of the smaller items to the July Meeting.

16. Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events

The Board noted the document entitled Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events.

17. Next Meeting

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

18. Any Other Business

The Board noted the oral update provided by the Executive on a legacy matter involving a provider.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____