Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the eleventh Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 11 April 2014 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. Claire Byrne (Secretary)
	Dr. Barbara Brittingham
	Ms. Una Buckley
	Dr. Margaret Cullen
	Ms. Mary Danagher
	Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan
	Ms. Joanne Harmon
	Mr. James Moore
	Ms. Cat O'Driscoll
Apologies:	No apologies
In attendance:	Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
	Mr. Eamonn Collins (Items 9 and 10)
	Dr. Bryan Maguire (Item 5)
	Ms. Trish O'Brien (Item 6)
	Mr. Ultan Tuite (Item 8)

INTRODUCTION

Following discussion, the Board agreed to consider item 13, Human Resources alongside item 9, Budget and Finance. The Board agreed that otherwise, the Agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 14 FEBRUARY 2014**

   The Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting held on 14 February 2014 were confirmed and signed.

2. **NOTE OF THE MEETING OF 14 February 2014**

   The Board approved the Note of the Meeting of 14 February 2014 for publication on the QQI website.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

   3.1. Approvals and Reviews Committee

   The Board noted that Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan had been appointed to the QQI Approvals and Reviews Committee.

   3.2. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK (QAA)

   The Board noted that a teleconference between QQI and QAA had recently taken place and noted that Deirdre Stritch, Provider Relations, had been selected as the point of contact within QQI for its dealings with QAA. A number of current issues were discussed during the teleconference and the Information Sharing Agreement between the two agencies was formally activated. The Board noted that the Executive was satisfied with how the relationship between the two agencies was working to date.

4. **BOARD PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

   4.1. The Board noted the document entitled **Board Performance Evaluation**. The Board noted the summary of outcomes discussed by the Board at its meeting in February 2014. The Board noted that the outcomes would be reviewed by the Board and the Executive approximately every six months. The Board agreed to revisit the matter again at its meeting scheduled for 28 November and again early in 2015. The Board thanked the Executive for facilitating what proved to be a very beneficial exercise. The Board approved the Board Performance Evaluation Outcomes 2012/2013.

   4.2. The Board noted, that in relation to the outcome referring to the Board's interaction with stakeholders, work is underway on developing a timetable of events and

contacts. A Board member suggested the possibility of providing business cards for Board Members and the Executive agreed to progress the request.

5. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Board noted the documents relating to the **Comprehensive Policy Development Programme.**

5.1. Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)

The Board noted the Report of the first meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee which was held on 20 March 2014. The Board noted that the Committee had discussed and recommended the Terms of Reference of the Policies and Standards Committee to the Board and had agreed to revisit the Terms of Reference as the Committee's work develops over time and it has an opportunity to review its activity.

The Board noted the Committee's discussion on its relationship with and how it communicates with the Board. The Board agreed to consider its input in guiding and integrating Committees' activities with its own objectives and those of QQI and how best to articulate them for Committees. The Board noted the Committee had determined new Awards Standards for the award entitled Professional Master of Education and had recommended the following Green and White papers to be published for consultation:

- Green Paper on Recognition Advice
- White Paper on Re-engagement with Legacy Providers: Overarching Policy
- White Paper on Policy and Criteria for Further Education and Training Legacy Voluntary Providers Continuing Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards
- White Paper on Policy and Criteria for Higher Education and Training Legacy Voluntary Providers Continuing Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards

The Board noted that the four Papers had been published for consultation until 9 May 2014.

The Board noted that in relation to the Comprehensive Policy Development Programme process, following publication of White Papers for consultation, where the Executive receives major feedback resulting in significant changes to the White Papers/draft Policy; the papers are placed before the Policies and Standards Committee for further discussion. In cases where there would be little change arising from the consultation process, the draft Policies are referred directly to the Board for its decision.

The Board also clarified its expectations regarding the noting of the Minutes and draft Minutes of QQI Committees as the Committee meeting dates fall within the Board Meeting Schedule. The Board agreed that good practice would be to see the draft minutes/report (of attendance and decisions) and that the final version of Minutes once approved would be published for Board Members' attention on their QQI Webpage. The Board requested the Executive to implement the same approach across the Committee structure and noted that the Audit Committee, by its nature, was likely to be an exception to this practice resulting in both the meeting Report and the confirmed Minutes being brought to the Board's attention. The Board agreed that it was important that the Executive emphasise any issues raised at Committee level for its attention.

5.2. Draft Policy and Criteria for the Delegation of Authority to the Institutes of Technology to make Higher Education and Training Awards [including Joint Awards]
The Board noted that the two policy documents on the agenda for its consideration were the last policies developed by the Executive before the establishment of the Policies and Standards Committee. The Board noted that discussions had taken place with Institutes of Technology Ireland (IoTI) and the Institutes of Technology (IoTs) themselves on various aspects of this policy and the Executive had added a variation on delegated authority for Research Masters as a result of these consultations. The Board noted that at this point, the only authority not delegated to the IoTs/retained by QQI is that of complete delegated authority for Level 10 PhD awards and for further education and training awards. The Board noted that a number of IoTs have delegated authority for PhDs with specific research fields. The Board noted that QQI and the HEA are working together on a Doctoral Framework Policy for the sector

arising from the recommendations of the National Policy on Doctoral Awarding (Hunt Report). The Board **adopted** the *Policy and Criteria for the Delegation of Authority to the Institutes of Technology to make Higher Education and Training Awards [including Joint Awards]*.

5.3. <u>Draft Policy and Criteria for Recognising Professional Awards within the National Framework of Qualifications</u>

The Board noted that the draft Policy had not needed significant alteration as a result of the feedback garnered through its consultation process. The Board noted that new professional awards standards had been determined by the Policies and Standards Committee at its meeting on 20 March 2014 and that specific Guidelines for Professional Awards in Accountancy were also progressing.

The Board noted that under the Policy proposed, the applicant for recognition is required to arrange and manage the external assessment process and the Executive would provide guidance on the process including on the composition of the panels involved.

The Board adopted the *Policy and Criteria for Recognising Professional Awards within the National Framework of Qualifications*.

The Board noted the Executive's intention to try and process any applications for the recognition of professional awards in a co-ordinated manner by profession, where possible and at the request of Board Members, outlined the areas which are likely to produce applications in the next two to three years. The Board noted that the Executive was planning to produce a Green Paper on Engagement with Professional Bodies in Autumn 2014.

6. **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

The Board noted the document entitled **Governance Structure**.

6.1. <u>Accreditation and Co-ordination of English Language Services (ACELS)</u>

The Board noted the Governance of ACELS Recognition Process which had been discussed by the Board at its meeting on 14 February 2014. The Board agreed, following further consultation on the matter, to retain the existing governance arrangements for ACELS recognition for applications received up to and including 31 January 2014. The Board noted these governance arrangements consisted of a Recognition Panel which makes decisions regarding the granting, refusal, renewal and withdrawal of the ACELS recognition function. Any appeals arising from the decision of the Recognition Committee are addressed by referral to an independent moderator. The Board noted that it would be kept informed of the decisions taken by the Recognition Committee.

6.2. Consultative Forum

The Board noted the first meeting of the Consultative Forum had been held on 1 April 2014 and that a number of Board Members had been in attendance as observers on the day. The Board noted the oral update on the outcomes of the meeting and noted that a Report of the Forum would be provided at the next Board Meeting scheduled for 24 June 2014. The Board noted the feedback from Board Members regarding the event tallied with the outcomes collated by the Executive and these together with delegates' feedback would be analysed and would assist in developing further options for utilising this group (e.g. Sub-Forums, Steering Groups etc.) for discussion with the Forum delegates.

The Board noted among the concerns raised by Board Members on foot of their attendance at the Consultation Forum were communications with stakeholders, how the information from the Forum is collected and acted upon; the challenge of the diversity of stakeholders and how to deal with that, the management of expectations of stakeholders, additional use of press and photographs of these events to raise QQI's profile and suggestion that the Consultative Forum Members should have input into setting the Forum's agenda.

The Board noted that Board Members would be given an opportunity to attend a Consultative Forum meeting on an annual basis. The Board commended the work of the Executive and staff in the organisation of this event and looked forward to the

outputs from the Forum. The Board noted that the Executive tries to also consult with stakeholders through face to face options as well as electronic means. The Executive wants to help stakeholders get a sense that they are connected to one another despite the level of diversity. The Board noted the Executive was working on redeveloping the QQI website and hopes that it will now be reflective of the level of engagement between QQI and its stakeholders. The Board noted that the redeveloped website had been considered by several focus groups recently; representative of both providers' (FE and HE) and learner's view-points and the Executive had received the summary of feedback.

The Board noted that the Executive was continuing to devote time and resources to developing and publishing QQI's messages and this would develop further as more policies etc. are processed through its system and also noted that capacity at the moment is limiting this area to some degree. The Board noted a Board Member's suggestion of appointing one spokesperson for the organisation and requested providers do more to spread the message about QQI's role.

The Board noted that the next meeting of the Consultative Forum is scheduled for October 2014 and the Board would be kept informed of its outcomes.

7. REVIEWS

The Board noted the documentation relating to **Reviews.**

7.1. Review of Reviews

The Board noted the QQI **Review of Reviews - Report of the Independent Team** which conducted an examination of the institutional review systems employed by three of the legacy bodies (HETAC, IUQB and NQAI) during the period 2008-2012/2014 and the impact those reviews had on the sector. The Board noted that following its consideration, the Panel had reverted with options which would assist the Executive in developing a new review system for QQI. The Board noted that the report is very useful in that it contains an evaluation of all public and many private higher education institutes in Ireland and can be used as a snapshot of the sector. The Board noted that the Executive was looking at possible opportunities to launch

the Review of Reviews Report and was in contact with the Department of Education and Skills to discuss. The Board noted that the Executive felt that it was a very beneficial exercise producing a Report which struck the right balance of criticism and commendation of both agencies and providers, recognising how far the sector has come with regard to self-regulation. The Report would be a useful supporting document for the ENQA Review Team.

The Board welcomed the Report and the suggested launch as a way of raising QQI's profile and suggested QQI consider hosting annual conferences and other sectoral level events over the next few years.

The Board congratulated the Executive and staff on the Report and approved it for publication.

7.2. RCSI Institutional Review 2014

The Board noted the Institutional Review Reports for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and approved the Reports for publication by the Executive.

8. AUDIT AND RISK

The Board noted the document entitled Audit and Risk.

8.1. Audit Committee Meeting

The Board noted the Report of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 3 April 2014. The Board noted that the Audit Committee at its meeting considered both the ICT Controls and Security Internal Audit Report and the draft Risk Register. The Board noted that the Audit Committee had made some suggestions to the Risk Register and it would be re-submitted to the next meeting of the Audit Committee for its consideration prior to the submission of both documents to the Board for consideration at its June Meeting. The Board noted that the next meeting of the Audit Committee is now scheduled for 13 June.

8.2.   FETAC Financial Statements 2011 and 2012

The Board noted that the Audit Committee had been awaiting notification from the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office (C&AG) regarding the clearance of the 2011 and 2012 FETAC Financial Statements. The Board noted that the Executive had, at the request of the C&AG's Office, included a note in the 2011 FETAC Financial Statements in relation to the decision taken by the Interim Board to exercise the break clause in the lease on the former FETAC premises at East Point which is now sublet. The Board noted that the provision is now charged in full to the 2011 accounts and will be unwound annually over the remaining term of the lease to 2017. It was noted that this provision would have a knock on effect on the 2012 FETAC and 2013 QQI Financial Statements.

The Board noted that there were also notes in the draft FETAC Financial Statements for 2012 in relation to early retirements and contingent liabilities. The Board noted that the Executive expects the Financial Statements for 2012 to be cleared shortly on foot of the sign off of the 2011 set.

The Board approved the FETAC Financial Statements for 2011, and 2012 in principle subject to there being no material changes, for signature by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

9. BUDGET AND FINANCE

The Board noted the documents entitled Budget and Finance which included the draft QQI Operational Budget for 2014. The Board noted the estimated increase in income expected during 2014 partly due to the charging of validation fees for the first time in further education and for certification of Level 4 awards. The Board noted that no fees are charged for awards made between Levels 1 – 3 and noted that the Executive continued to be in receipt of representations regarding fees.

The Board noted a Board Member's request that time should be given to the subject of accreditation of training at a future Board Meeting.

The Board **approved** the **QQI Operational Budget for 2014** and noted the information provided by the Executive in relation to devolved budgeting.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES

Caitríona Lawless, Padraig Walsh, Claire Byrne and Eamonn Collins left the meeting for all or various stages of this item.

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

Item omitted from this Report.

The Board **agreed** to defer its discussion on the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Change Management Programme until its meeting scheduled for 24 June 2014.

11. ENQA REVIEW

The Board noted the documents relating to the **ENQA Review**, which included the final version of the Self Evaluation Report.

The Board noted the draft schedule for the Review Site Visit on 22 and 23 May 2014 which was currently with the Review Team for its approval and the Executive expected to receive confirmation of the schedule in the coming weeks. The Board noted that the non-Executive Board Members were currently scheduled to meet with the Review Team on 22 May at 12:30 p.m. The Board **agreed** to meet prior to the Review Team Meeting at 11:00 a.m. that morning. The Board requested the Executive to provide it with a briefing note in advance of the visit of the Review Team.

12. QQI ANNUAL REPORT

The Board noted the **Draft QQI Annual Report**. The Board noted the draft Annual Report for 2013 and noted the requirement under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012; that QQI shall not later than 30 June each year, produce an Annual Report for the preceding year. Board Members **agreed** to forward any comments/suggestions on the draft Report to the Executive by e.mail.

13. QQI STRATEGIC AND CORPORATE PLANS 2014

The Board noted the **Progress Report on Strategic/Corporate Plans.** The Board noted the Dashboard and the demonstration of the database used by the Executive to plot the actions and objections of the Corporate Plan and produce quarterly progress reports. The Board noted the actions contained in the Corporate Plan link back to the objectives and goals in the Strategic Plan. The Board noted that the majority of actions are on track and the Board would be updated regularly on progress, with the next update now scheduled for the September 2014 Board Meeting.

14. ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

14.1. Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)

The Board noted the report of the Programme and Awards Executive Committee held on 2 April 2014.

14.2. Programme and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC)

The Board noted the oral report of the first meeting of the Programme and Awards Oversight Committee which had been held the previous afternoon (10 April). The Board noted that the Committee had requested that additional information be submitted for the next meeting of the PAOC and had decided to examine the length of time involved from receipt of application for validation to final decision by the PAEC.

14.3. Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection

The Board noted the statements presented by the Executive to the Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection on 19 February 2014 (Fees Charged by QQI for Community and Voluntary Providers) and on 26 February (The Role and Potential of Community Education and Voluntary Education).

The Board noted that the Executive had also made a submission that morning for the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Technological Universities Bill by the Education and Social Protection Committee due to take place the following week.

14.4. QQI Sub-brands

The Board noted the update on the development of a sub-brand for QQI Awards and a draft parchment template. The Board noted that there will be a sub-brand portfolio containing other sub-brands, dealing with areas such as Reviews.

14.5. Draft Board Agenda (June 2014) and Rolling Board Agenda

The Board noted the current draft agenda for the next Board Meeting scheduled for 24 June and the updated QQI Rolling Board Agenda 2014.

15. NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 24 June 2014 beginning at 10:00 a.m.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____