

Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)
Wednesday, 8th November 2017
Denzille Lane, Dublin (10:30am – 1:00pm)

Present: Bryan Maguire – QQI Executive Member and Acting Committee Chair
Anne Marie Ryan - National Expert
Lucien Bollaert - International Expert
Daire Keogh - National Expert
Bryan Fields – National Expert
Roisin Sweeney – Head of Awards Standards, QQI

In attendance: Paul Brady - QQI Secretary
Peter Cullen - QQI (Item 5.1)

Apologies: Joanne Harmon – Board Member
Ewart Keep - International Expert
Barbara Kelly - Director of Qualifications, QQI

The committee noted the resignation of the Chair Jim Moore. The members of the committee agreed with the Executive proposal to appoint Dr Bryan Maguire to act as Chair for this meeting. The Chair welcomed all the members including new member Dr Bryan Fields of Solas, a new appointee, who gave a brief account of his background and experience.

1 Minutes of Meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) of 29th June 2017

The Minutes of the Meetings of 29th June 2017 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes

Matters Arising

0.1 The Chair on behalf of QQI and the members of the Committee expressed their thanks and gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Jim Moore, for his dedication and leadership of the Policy and Standards Committee since his appointment in March 2014. The Chair wished Jim every success for the future in his new appointment by The Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Richard Bruton, T.D., as Chairperson of the Governing Body of the Waterford Institute of Technology.

0.2 The Chair updated the Committee on recent activities at Board level. The 5-year term of office of the current Board expired on 5 November 2017. As a result there are some reappointments and the process of appointing new members is underway. The Board will appoint new Committee Chairs at its next meeting and in the meantime those Committees will continue with their current remit.

0.3 A verbal update was provided on QQI's 'The Digitalisation Agenda' conference held on 24 October 2017. The event was a great success with over 300 stakeholders in attendance. The theme of the International Conference was '**Re-thinking the Role of Qualifications and Skills**' and explored the implications of digitalisation on the demand, delivery and recognition of skills and qualifications.

0.4 With reference to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) the committee were informed that QQI will undergo review for continued membership in 2019. The last review was completed in 2014. The review will also serve as the basis for QQI's continued listing in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

3. Standards Determinations

3.1 FE Award Standards

3.1.1 NFQ Level 5 and 6 standards in Dance and Music

- Explanatory Memorandum
- Level 5 Dance Studies
- Level 6 Dance
- Level 5 Music
- Level 6 Music

The Committee NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made in relation to the Dance and Music Awards. The members recognised the work involved in the review process,

the breadth of expertise in the Standard Review Group (SRG) and that the completion of the suite of awards will facilitate learner progression to further education or entry in to the workforce. Other issues discussed by the members included the importance of quality work placement for learners; whether protection of the vulnerable person is within the component and perhaps the need to add a new competence to reflect this. Also, discussed was the apparent lack of references in the 'Supporting Documentation' section and whether mentioned should be made to the 'Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'. The executive will discuss these issues with the Standard Review and Development Group and amend the awards if necessary before publication of the standards.

Following discussion, the PSC **AGREED to ADOPT** the new Major award standards at NFQ Levels 6 for:

Level 5 Dance Studies, Level 6 Dance, Level 5 Music, Level 6 Music

3.2 Awards Standards – Response to consultation

- Explanatory Memorandum
- Consolidated Feedback on Review of QQI Award Standards

The committee noted the commitment to publication of feedback received from the consultation on the QQI document titled '*Review of QQI Awards Standards: Approach & Schedule Discussion Paper*'. The members noted the broad range of issues mentioned and questions raised in the feedback document and acknowledged the extensiveness of the consultation process. The members concluded that the findings from the consultation process will inform QQI's future approach to the Review and Standard Review Groups in their deliberations and planning for the review of award standards. The executive informed the members that it will bring to the next PSC meeting a paper covering non-performing awards and how QQI will endeavour to identify and deal with awards that have little or no certification or provider programmes validated.

4. Policy

No business

5. Green Papers

5.1 Assessment

The members noted the Green Paper on Assessment of Learners (working draft version 1.09). The members noted the complexity of Assessment of Learners and the challenges and issues at macro-, meso- and micro-levels. The paper addresses all sectors and is currently aimed at 'champions' of assessment. It is expected that the paper will provoke discussion and will inform the development of future white papers on assessment to be published by QQI. Members suggested adding references to the European Qualifications Framework and the EHEA qualifications framework. It was noted that too often in the field of education sciences when one starts with learning outcomes, the immediate link is made to assessment without due reference to the importance of programme content and associated teaching and learning. Other discussion points related to the role of assessment as formative, summative or feedback and in particular situations learning may not need to be assessed. The members acknowledged the considerable effort made by QQI in producing such a useful and thought-provoking draft discussion paper. The members also discussed the title of the paper and suggested alternatives being 'Assessment of Learning' or 'Assessment of Learners and Learning'. The executive noted the wide-ranging comments and feedback, will encompass as much as possible in the next version which will be published for consultation.

6. White Papers

No business

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Governance: Annual Self-Evaluation of Committee Performance

The members were informed that under section 4 of the code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (Revised August 2016) the Board is required to undertake an annual Self-assessment evaluation of its own performance and that of its committees. The members were notified that

- The PSC Secretariat will circulate a short survey to members in the coming weeks. This should take no more than 8 minutes to complete;
- It is intended to present a brief analysis of the responses to the survey to the Committee at its next meeting (date to be confirmed) at which point members will have an opportunity to discuss the findings;

- A report of the findings, conclusions and any recommendations resulting from the evaluation process will be presented to the Board at one of its meetings scheduled for 2018.

The date of the next meeting will be agreed preferably when a new chairperson has been appointed by the Board but should be held end of February/early March. A Doodle Poll for all meetings for 2018 will be circulated in due course.