

## Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the forty-third Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 12 April 2019 at 10.00 a.m. in the Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.

**Present:**

- Ms. Joanne Harmon (Chair)
- Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Ms. Cliona Curley (Secretary)
- Ms. Mary Danagher
- Mr. Oisín Hassan
- Mr. Blake Hodkinson
- Mr. Thomas McDermott
- Ms. Niamh O'Reilly
- Prof. Irene Sheridan
- Dr. Anne Walsh

**Apologies:** Dr. Barbara Brittingham

**In attendance:**

- Ms. Caitriona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
- Mr. Andrew Bridgett (Item 11)
- Mr. Liam Butler (Item 12)
- Mr. Eamonn Collins (Item 13)

### INTRODUCTION

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

#### 1. PRESENTATION BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (THEA)

Following a request by the Board, Dr. Joseph Ryan, the Chief Executive of THEA (the Technological Higher Education Association), delivered a presentation to the Board. The presentation updated the Board on developments in relation to Technological Universities (TUs) and the Quality agenda in the Institute of Technology sector.

## 2. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest noted in relation to the meeting agenda items.

## 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **confirmed and signed**:

*Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting held on 15 February 2019* and

*Minutes of the Incorporal QQI Board Meeting held on 8-11 March 2019.*

## 4. NOTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

The Board **approved** the following notes for publication on the QQI website:

*Note of the Meeting of 15 February 2019* and

*Note of the Incorporal Meeting of 8-11 March 2019.*

## 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Board noted the **Action Tracker**.

### 5.1. Action Tracker

The Board noted that a Board Member had requested at the February Board Meeting that a draft Budget for 2020 be prepared and presented to the Board at its April Meeting. The Board noted that the Executive had begun drafting a budget, however, as the Workforce Planning exercise currently underway is likely to impact on the (pay) expenditure next year, it was decided to defer presentation of the draft budget until the June Board Meeting in order to incorporate the outcomes of the Workforce Planning exercise. The Board noted that the Workforce Planning report was also expected to be presented to the Board at its meeting scheduled for 10 June.

The Board briefly discussed a number of the items contained within the Action Tracker.

## 6. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

The Board noted the **Draft June 2019 Board Agenda**.

The Board noted the current draft Agenda for its June Meeting which will now take place on the afternoon of Monday, 10 June and noted that the meeting venue would be confirmed shortly.

The Board noted that, as requested, the Executive had scheduled a number of stakeholder presentations for upcoming meetings including with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) in June and with ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland) in September. Board Members noted that the Chairperson was open to suggestions for future presentations.

## **7. BOARD MEETS WITHOUT THE EXECUTIVE PRESENT**

The Chairperson updated the Board on CEO performance management which included an annual review for 2018 and setting performance goals for 2019. The HR and Organisation Committee reviewed and approved the performance management process as well as goals for 2019 at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

## **8. CEO REPORT**

The Board noted the **CEO Report**.

The Board noted the CEO's Report which provided an update on key developments since the February 2019 Board Meeting and which also included Current and Forthcoming Events (from 19 February to 12 April 2019).

The Executive responded to Board Member queries in relation to certification statistics and consultation on the Green Paper on the Assessment of Learning and Learners. The Board noted a brief update on progress on the development of the Irish Register of Qualifications which was previewed by the Consultative Forum at its meeting on 28 March and is expected to go live in the coming months.

The Board noted updates which were published on the QQI website the previous day and tabled by the Chief Executive at the Board Meeting. The updates related to the 'Notice of Intention to Deactivate Unused and Little Used CAS Awards (Common Awards System)' and 'Changes on the Way for Standards in Early Learning and Care'. The Board noted that the first item related to a project to remove long established but unused or little used CAS awards and noted opportunities for providers

and other stakeholders to notify QQI of instances where withdrawals of any of the proposed awards present a problem.

The second item related to a notification in relation to the upcoming publication of new draft awards standards for Early Learning and Care (ELC) which will replace the current Early Childhood Care and Education Standards published in 2011. It was noted that the consultation period will run from mid-April until the end of September 2019 and spans awards standards for Levels 5-8. The Board noted that feedback received from DES and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs during the standards development process had been very positive.

## **9. ITEMS FOR NOTING**

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

### **9.1. Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)**

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 7 February 2019. The Board noted the clarification provided by the Executive on a query raised by a Board Member in relation to a Level 2 Programme.

### **9.2. Rolling Board Agenda 2019**

The Board noted an update on the Rolling Board Agenda for 2019.

## **10. ENQA REVIEW**

The Board noted the update on the **ENQA Review**.

The Chairperson thanked the Board Members and Committee Chairs who had been involved in the ENQA Review Panel site visit held 4-6 March 2019. The Board noted that participating Board Members and the Executive had found meeting with the Review Panel to be a very positive experience. The Board noted the process and the number of stakeholders who attended sessions with the Review Panel during the site visit.

The Board noted the Panel had provided positive feedback to the Executive during the final debriefing meeting with the EMT and noted that the Executive was awaiting receipt of a draft Review report for a factual accuracy check. The Board noted the timeline for the remainder of the process with the final Review report expected to be considered by the ENQA Board in late June.

## 11. AUDIT AND RISK

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

### 11.1. Note of the Meeting held on 25 March 2019

The Board noted a note of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 25 March 2019.

### 11.2. Review of System of Internal Controls 2018

The Board **approved** the Review of the System of Internal Controls for 2018 and requested that the medium recommendations outlined in the report be addressed within the next six months.

### 11.3. Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2018

The Board noted the Annual Report of the Committee for the year ended 31 December 2018 and also noted the verbal update/synopsis provided by the Committee Chair on the work of the Committee.

The Board **approved** the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2018.

The Board noted that the Executive is unable to include audited financial statements in the publication of its Annual Reports as the audit of its Financial Statements is generally not completed until Quarter 4 of the subsequent year and QQI is required by its legislation to complete its Annual Report by end of Quarter 2 of the subsequent year.

### 11.4. Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 January 2019.

The Chairperson thanked the Audit and Risk Committee for its work.

## 12. BUDGET AND FINANCE

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

### 12.1. Financial Report to 28 February 2019

The Board noted the financial report for the two months ended 28 February 2019. The Board noted, that following the request of Board Members at its February Meeting, the Executive had commenced work on a draft outline budget for 2020. However, the Executive had decided to postpone its presentation to the Board until its June 2019 meeting to facilitate the incorporation of the outcomes of the Workforce Planning exercise. The Workforce Planning exercise may yet have a significant impact on the pay budget for 2020 and its outcomes would need to be considered during the drafting process. The Workforce Planning exercise includes provisions for new functions arising under revised Legislation, namely the International Education Mark (IEM), Corporate Fitness and Protection for Enrolled Learners.

### 12.2. Draft Financial Statements 2018

The Board noted the draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 which had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting of 25 March and were referred to the Board for its approval. The Board noted that the draft Statements were amended on foot of a number of recommendations arising from the Committee's discussions.

The Board noted that the recategorisation of some items was still to be completed. The Executive also clarified any queries arising.

The Board **approved** the Financial Statements for 2018 subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and there being no material changes.

## 13. ORGANISATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The Board noted the document relating to **Organisation and Human Resources**.

### 13.1. Update on Human Resources

The Board noted an update on Human Resources and noted that a vacancy for an ICT Manager (Assistant Principal Officer) had been advertised and candidates had been shortlisted with interviews scheduled to take place on 30 April/1 May.

The Board noted that sanction had also been received for four Grade V posts; one of which was for a Communications Officer which had just been advertised; a second post within the Procurement area would be advertised shortly and consideration was being given to the allocation of the other two posts.

### 13.2. Keepwell Mark

The Board noted that the Executive had received verbal confirmation that QQI had attained the IBEC Keepwell Mark and noted it was currently awaiting the final report on the decision.

The Board congratulated the Executive on its success.

### 13.3. Update on Workforce Planning

The Board noted the verbal update on the Workforce Planning exercise. The Board noted that a significant amount of work had been completed to date which had recently been presented to the HR and Organisation Committee. The Board noted that a skills analysis was completed as part of the process.

However, the future demands arising from the revised Legislation had now slowed the process. In order to get an accurate estimation of the resources required in the new function areas of the IEM, Corporate Fitness and Protection for Enrolled Learners, further consideration was needed. It was noted that the Executive had established a Steering Group to further consider and analyse these areas and noted that several meetings had taken place with a deadline of 2 May for completion of this phase. The Board noted that the process had been paused as a result.

The Board noted that this will be a significant item on the agenda of the next Board Meeting with the report of the Workforce Planning exercise due to be presented to the Board at its meeting on 10 June. It was also noted that this work would feed into the development of the draft Budget for 2020.

#### 13.4. HR & Organisation Committee

The Board noted the minutes of the HR and Organisation Committee meeting held on 14 February 2019.

### 14. STRATEGIC PLANNING

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

#### 14.1. Corporate Plan 2019

The Board noted the Q1 Progress Report for the 2019 Corporate Plan. The Board noted the revised Corporate Plan for 2019, which had been updated on foot of receipt of the 2019 Budget confirmation from DES.

#### 14.2. Draft Annual Report 2018

The Board noted the update on the drafting of the Annual Report 2018 and noted the Executive expects to forward a draft to the Board for feedback in early May with a final report to be presented to the Board at its June meeting.

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

The Board noted the document relating to **Relations with the Department of Education and Skills**.

#### 15.1. Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) 2019

The Board noted the signed PDA for 2019 and noted some additional text had been included in the agreement on foot of discussions with DES on the funding issues. The Board noted that the Executive had received a letter from the Assistant Secretary acknowledging that new functions would require additional funding and resources.

#### 15.2. Update on PDA 2019 Q1 Review Meeting

The Board noted the Q1 Progress Report provided to the PDA 2019 Quarter 1 Review Meeting with senior management of the Department held on 27 March 2019, together with a verbal update on the meeting.



## 16. GOVERNANCE

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

### 16.1. Update on Legislation

The Board noted that the next stage of consideration of the revised Legislation had been deferred until after the Easter recess.

### 16.2. Protected Disclosures 2018

The Board noted the report on the Protected Disclosures received during the year ended 31 December 2018.

## 17. COMMUNICATIONS

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

### 17.1. Media Mentions

The Board noted the media mentions published since the February 2019 Board Meeting. The Executive noted the Board's suggestion to refine the material provided.

The Board noted that a recent conference 'Quality Assurance for Apprenticeship Programmes' had gone very well with positive feedback received from providers who had undergone the validation of Apprenticeship Programmes process. The Board noted that there also had been number of items raised with QQI by the sector.

## 18. NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Monday, 10 June 2019** beginning at **2:00 p.m.** The Agenda would include significant focus on Workforce Planning and the Budget for 2020.

The Board **approved** Friday, 27 September 2019 as the date of the September Board Meeting.

## 19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board noted that the next Cinnte Review Report (DCU) had been considered by the Approvals and Reviews Committee at its meeting on 11 April, with a further two reviews to be considered in the

coming months. The Board noted that the Executive planned to conduct a thematic analysis after the first six reviews were completed. The DCU report would be presented to the Board for its information at the June 2019 Board Meeting. A short discussion on the process followed.

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