

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the forty-fourth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Monday, 10 June 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in the Nash Suite, Finnstown Castle Hotel, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

Present:

- Ms. Joanne Harmon (Chair)
- Dr. Padraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Ms. Cliona Curley (Secretary)
- Dr. Barbara Brittingham
- Ms. Mary Danagher
- Mr. Oisín Hassan
- Mr. Blake Hodkinson
- Mr. Thomas McDermott
- Ms. Niamh O'Reilly
- Prof. Irene Sheridan (Items 1-13)
- Dr. Anne Walsh

Apologies: No apologies

In attendance:

- Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
- Mr. Andrew Bridgett (Item 12)
- Mr. Liam Butler (Item 8)
- Mr. Eamonn Collins (Item 7)
- Ms. Barbara Kelly (Item 7)
- Ms. Fiona Joyce (Item 7)
- Ms. Gráinne McAuley (Item 7)
- Dr. Bryan Maguire (Item 7)

INTRODUCTION

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

1. PRESENTATION BY THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION (IUA)

Following a request by the Board, Mr. Jim Miley, the Director General of the Irish Universities Association and its Director of Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs, Mr. Lewis Purser, delivered a presentation to the Board. As the organisation representing the seven universities, the Director General outlined the body's role and core priorities. The presentation updated the Board on the recent IUA impact report 'Independent Assessment of the Economic and Social Impact of Irish Universities'.

The presentation was followed by a questions and answers session.

The Board noted that the IUA had made a submission in relation to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018 and noted that a meeting between the Executives of the two organisations would be held during the week of 10 June to discuss the matter further. The Board noted that the IUA welcomed the expected introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM). Mr. Miley and Mr. Purser also welcomed the recent roll out of the Cinnte Review process to the University sector.

The Board noted that both Executives look forward to continuing engagement between QQI and the IUA in the future.

The Board noted an update from the Chief Executive of QQI confirming a visit from the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) would take place in October as they have expressed interest in the level of engagement which exists within the HE sector in Ireland.

2. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board noted that no conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING

The *Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting* held on 12 April 2019 were **confirmed and signed**.

4. NOTE OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING

The Board **approved** the *Note of the Meeting of 12 April 2019* for publication on the QQI website.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Board noted the documents circulated as QQI/A44.5, **Action Tracker**.

5.1. Action Tracker

The Board noted and discussed the Action Tracker. The Board noted that, as a dedicated resource for the Procurement area was unlikely to be appointed in the short term, an action listed in the Tracker would be progressed by the Director of Corporate Services and the Finance Manager in the meantime.

The Board noted that formal notification had been received confirming the positive outcome of the IBEC Keepwell Mark assessment.

The Board noted that, as requested by the Board at its April 2019 meeting, an occasion marking the successful ENQA and Keepwell Reviews would be held for staff in early July.

5.2. Review of the Action Tracker

The Board noted the Review of the Action Tracker and **agreed** to continue to maintain the current format.

6. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

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

The Board noted that the Executive had scheduled a presentation from the ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland) for the November 2019 meeting and work was continuing on confirmation of a presenter for the September Board Meeting.

The Board noted that a verbal overview of the Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) would feature on the September Agenda.

The Board noted that the revised Legislation is expected to be presented to the Dáil before the summer recess.

7. ORGANISATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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

Item omitted from this note.

7.1. Update on Human Resources

The Board noted an update on Human Resources.

7.2. Update on Workforce Planning

The Board noted a brief outline of the process and outputs involved in the Workforce Planning exercise. The Board noted that the process had commenced in late January/early February and it had included a skills gap analysis, facilitated workshops and meetings with the EMT.

The Board noted the slight overrun on timelines for presentation of the report, this was due to extra work required in order to expand on new functions that will arise under the revised Legislation.

The Board discussed some options to proceed with the next stage of the process. The Board noted that the Executive was required to present a report to the Department of Education and Skills which would also most likely be presented to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for further consideration.

The Board noted that as a result of the planning exercise and the new functions arising on foot of the revised legislation, the Executive had already flagged a significant increase in the outline draft budget figures for 2020 with the Department.

The Board **directed** the Executive to make a comprehensive case for the required resourcing for delivery of the Strategy including the new function areas which succinctly highlights the immense benefits and gains from implementing the proposed workforce plan.

8. BUDGET AND FINANCE

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

8.1. Financial Report to 30 April 2019

The Board noted the financial report for the four months ended 30 April 2019.

8.2. ICT Contract Resources

The Board noted the proposals outlined and **approved**:

- the procurement of contracts for ICT contract resources and/or services for six months, in accordance with the QQI Purchasing and Procurement Policy, subject to contract and
- the purchase of services in MS Azure for the period July 2019-June 2020 in accordance with the QQI Purchasing and Procurement Policy, subject to contract, as outlined in the proposal submitted.

The Board noted that an online fees calculator will be launched on the QQI website in the coming months.

8.3. Outline Draft Budget 2020

The Board noted the preliminary outline draft budget for 2020.

The Board noted that the draft outline was compiled based on estimates and that the Executive had also incorporated provisions and costings for the new functions and the workforce planning outcomes.

The Board noted that the draft outline budget included a stipulation for a revenue reserve. The Board noted that while the Executive still wishes to establish a reserves policy it may not be possible to factor it into the 2020 budget. The Board noted that the Executive had met with DES on 29 May to discuss the draft budget and indicated that seed capital would be required to support the roll out of the new functions as it is not expected that costs would be recovered in the first year of implementation of these functions.

The Board noted there was likely to be some changes to the current levels of Relationship Fee income as a result of the establishment of Technological Universities.

9. CEO REPORT

The Board noted the **CEO Report**.

The Board noted the CEO's Report which provided an update on key developments since the April 2019 Board Meeting and which also included Current and Forthcoming Events (from 15 April to 6 June 2019).

The Board noted that any providers raising queries relating to the deactivation of unused or little used CAS Awards will be contacted following the closing date of the consultation period.

The Board noted the CAO service level agreement had commenced.

The Board noted that the Executive had completed 13 out of 16 dialogue meeting visits to ETBs over the previous five weeks. The final three meetings were scheduled to take place by mid-June. The Board noted that the Executive had found the meetings to be a very helpful experience and noted a brief verbal update provided by the Chief Executive. The Board noted that an update would be provided at a future meeting.

The Executive elaborated on a number of points from the report raised by Board Members.

10. ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

10.1. Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC)

The Board noted the verbal overview of the work of the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee provided by its Chairperson. The Board noted the Committee has functioned extremely well to date. The Board noted that a verbal overview of the Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) would be provided at the September Board Meeting.

10.2. Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Approvals and Reviews Committee held on 13 December 2018.

10.3. Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee held on 13 March 2019.

The Board noted that the Committee had requested that the Executive map all published QQI Policies and Guidelines as an analysis of Policy development to date.

The Board also noted that the draft Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in the Education and Training Boards would be finalised shortly.

10.4. Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 11 April 2019. The Board noted the Committee had noted proposed changes to the Programme Review and Revalidation Process which would be shared at a later meeting.

10.5. Rolling Board Agenda 2019

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

11. **ENQA REVIEW**

The Executive provided a verbal update on the **ENQA Review**.

The Board noted that the Executive had received the draft Report of the ENQA Review Panel and had been provided with the opportunity to correct any factual inaccuracies. The Board noted that the draft Report will be considered by the Board of ENQA at its meeting scheduled for 20 June. The Executive will circulate the final report to Members once received.

12. **AUDIT AND RISK**

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

A brief verbal report of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 24 May 2019 was provided.

12.1 Internal Audit Reports

The Board noted three Internal Audit Reports.

In relation to the Internal Audit completed by the external internal auditor on the Legal Compliance Cycle – FoI and Protected Disclosures Acts, the Board noted that QQI was a prescribed body under the Protected Disclosures Act in relation to quality assurance, validation of programmes and the making of awards. The Board noted that to date all protected disclosures received have come from external sources in relation to QQI's capacity as a prescribed body.

There was also some discussion around areas for potential savings in relation to the Value for Money Audit e.g. Communications – online publishing versus physical copies, storage of same etc.

The Board **approved** the following Internal Audit Reports as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 24 May 2019:

- Legal Compliance Cycle – Freedom of Information and Protected Disclosures Acts
- Value for Money Audit
- Quality Assurance Improvement Cycle – Volume I (HE Review)

12.2. Terms of Reference

The Board **approved** the revised Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee on foot of review of same by the Audit and Risk Committee.

12.3. Internal Audit Charter

The Board **approved** the revised Internal Audit Charter following review of same by the Audit and Risk Committee.

12.4. Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee

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

12.5. Risk Register

The Board noted an update on the implementation of the Executive Action Plan on Risk and the revised Risk Register. The Board **approved** the Risk Register and due to time constraints, **agreed** to hold a further discussion on the item at its September Meeting.

The Board was satisfied that, as outlined in the Action Plan, the risks had now been aligned with the Statement of Strategy 2019-2021.

The Board **authorised** the Executive to proceed with the next steps in the risk process.

13. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board noted the update on **Strategic Planning**.

13.1. Corporate Plan 2019

The Board noted the interim Q2 Progress Report for the 2019 Corporate Plan.

13.2. Draft Annual Report 2018

The Board **approved** the draft Annual Report 2018 subject to a number of minor amendments suggested by the Board.

13.3. ICT Strategy

The Board noted that the draft ICT Strategy had been developed to support the delivery of the Statement of Strategy 2019-2021 as well as the new legislative functions which may be introduced in the coming months. The Board noted that the strategy development project looked at potential improvements in current business systems and the organisation's likely future needs.

The Board noted that the Executive would be establishing an ICT Steering Group and the appointment of an ICT Manager would be another critical aspect of this area.

The Board **approved** the ICT Strategy subject to the inclusion of a reference to the QQI Programme Board/ICT Steering Committee and their role in prioritising projects. The Board

noted consideration is given to adaptability when developing systems – it may be possible to adapt them to cover other business processes/areas of the organisation.

14. GOVERNANCE

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

14.1. Update on Revised Legislation

The Board noted the verbal update provided by the Executive. The Board noted that the draft Legislation was listed for discussion in the Dáil on 11, 12 and 13 June.

14.2. Review of Committee Structure

The Board noted that the Review of the Committees had been deferred from late 2018 for a period of 12 months, for a number of reasons, including providing new Board Members with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Committees and the review of QQI by ENQA. As a number of Committee functions had not yet commenced and the revised Legislation was not yet passed, the Board noted the Executive's intention to compile the areas of activity to date per Committee function. The Board noted that this measure may indicate if a review of the Committee structure is premature, particularly for some of the committees.

14.3. Committee Membership

The Board noted and **approved** a change of membership on the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee. Angela Lambkin, Head of Information Services, replaces Orla Lynch for a period of three years.

15. REVIEWS

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

15.1. Dublin City University Cinnte Review

Due to time constraints, the Board deferred discussion of this item to the September meeting.

16. COMMUNICATIONS

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

16.1. Media Mentions

The Board noted the media mentions published since the April 2019 Board Meeting. The Board suggested that the Executive consider employing a media monitoring service. The Board also requested that if possible, keywords are highlighted in the coverbooks.

The Board noted that social media training had been provided for a number of staff members.

17. NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday, 27 September 2019** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Board Members suggested, in view of environmental concerns, that consideration should be given to further extending the provision of electronic documentation for meetings. The matter would be revisited at the September Board Meeting.

As it was his final meeting as a QQI Board Member, the Chairperson, on behalf of members, wished Oisín Hassan well and thanked him for his active and informed participation during his membership term.