

Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)

Tuesday 25 June 2019

Engineers Ireland (Boardroom), 22 Clyde Road, Dublin 4. (11:am – 1:30pm)

Present: Anne Walsh - Committee Chair
Barbara Kelly - QQI Executive Member
Bryan Maguire - QQI Executive Member
Aileen Ponton - International Expert
Bryan Fields - National Expert
Lucien Bollaert - International Expert
Daire Keogh - National Expert

In attendance: Peter Cullen – Head of Research and Standards (QQI Key Executive for the PSC)
Paula Gaffney - QQI Secretary
Mairead Boland - QQI (Item 6)

Apologies: Niamh O'Reilly - Board Member

In opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed all members to this Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) meeting. The Chair expressed her thanks to Engineers Ireland for use of their facility for this meeting.

The Chair brought to the attention of members a change in order of business in that Item Explanatory Memorandum and Roles, Responsibilities and Codes of Conduct for Reviewers/Evaluators would be taken following Matters Arising from Minutes to facilitate for longer discussion on item 6 Green Paper on Qualifications.

1 Declaration of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest expressed by any member.

2 Minutes of Meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) of 21st Meeting, 13 March 2019

The Minutes of the Meetings of the 21st Meeting, 13 March 2019, were **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes

Organisational Chart

The committee thanked the executive for the presentation of the organisational chart and noted the updates.

Policies and Guidelines

Explanatory Memorandum, QQI Policies and Guidelines Listing

The committee welcomed the QQI Policies and Guidelines Listing. They advised that it should be publicly available on the QQI website. The chair recommended that document be presented to the QQI Board at its next meeting.

QQI Executive indicated that the QQI website was due for a complete update and that the document would need some further work prior to publication.

4. Policy update

The committee received a verbal update on the progress of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018*.

5. Green Papers

Explanatory Memorandum, Draft Green Paper on Qualifications

The Committee commended the QQI executive on a comprehensive paper noting that the QQI executive proposed to undertake further work on it to finalise it before publication (including, for example, the addition of an executive summary). The Committee also noted that the QQI executive intends to send pre-publication drafts to some key stakeholders such as the Department of Education and Skills, Solas and the HEA.

The Committee considered and discussed the draft. It provided detailed feedback to the QQI executive on the content of the draft and on opportunities for enhancing its clarity and readability e.g. adding a list of abbreviations at the start. Some members felt that there was a disjoint between Part 1 and the other parts. It was suggested to place a set of principles at the end of Part 1 that would cover the remainder of the document—spelling out the implications of Part 1 for the other parts.

The Committee noted that now is an opportune time for this document—especially in the further education and training context.

The Committee **APPROVED** the issue of a Green Paper on Qualifications substantially based on the draft considered. The Committee also decided that the final version of the Green Paper should be brought back to it for noting after publication.

6. White Papers

Explanatory Memorandum, Roles, Responsibilities and Codes of Conduct for Reviewers/Evaluators
The committee considered the document Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators, and the amendments to that document proposed by the Executive, i.e. that:

- the document be amended to reflect changes brought about by QQI's Statement of Strategy 2019-2021;
- a clause in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion be inserted into the document; and
- the document's scope of application be extended and its title revised.

The committee agreed to the proposed changes and suggested that the document be further amended to include:

- a definition of 'expert' – and that the focus of the document be adjusted to place emphasis on the 'expert' rather than simply the 'reviewer/evaluator';
- reference to international experts and the competences expected of them (e.g. proficiency in the English language);
- details of the process post-publication of report and in the event that a provider appeals a recommendation not to grant validation (and extension of the requirement to maintain confidentiality in both cases);
- reference to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (in particular standards 2.4 – peer review experts; 2.6 – reporting; 3.3 – independence; 3.6 – professional conduct);
- reference to the personality/character required of a panel of experts – e.g. open-mindedness; a panel of 'critical friends'.

All changes were **noted** and **accepted** by the committee.

7. Any Other Business

QQI Activity update /ETB Dialogue meeting paper

The Committee welcomed the update.

**Green Paper on Assessment Update/Stakeholder Feedback
Explanatory Memorandum Draft Report**

The Committee discussed the draft report entitled: *QQI Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning: Stakeholder Feedback*.

New Publications since last PSC meeting

The Committee noted several new publications from QQI since its previous meeting:

- White Paper Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards
- Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland
- Corporate Plan

PSC Meetings Schedule:

Agreed Meeting Dates:

- 3rd October (QQI, Denzille Lane)
- 28th November (QQI, Denzille Lane)
- Date for 1st meeting 2020, Mar/Apr, Doodle Poll to be sent Sept 2019

The date of the next meeting is 3 October 2019 QQI Denzille Lane.

In closing, the Chair thanked the members of the Committee and the QQI Executive for their contributions and participation in the meeting and thanks to Engineers Ireland for use of their venue.