

POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (PSC)

Thursday, 20 March 2014, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2

Note of the first meeting of the QQI Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) held in QQI Boardroom 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2

Present: James Moore (Chair) - Board Member and Committee Chair
Margaret Cullen (Vice Chair) - Board Member and Committee Vice Chair
Jan S Levy - International Expert
Ewart Keep - International Expert
Aidan Mulkeen - National Expert
Anne Marie Ryan - National Expert
Marie Bourke - National Expert
Bryan Maguire - QQI Executive Member
Peter Cullen - QQI Key Executive

In attendance: Ann Graves - QQI Secretary
Orla Lynch - QQI (for Item 5).

Observer: Deirdre Miller - QQI (for the Informal agenda)

Informal Agenda (10:00 – 11:30 am)

Each member of the PSC made a brief presentation based on their area of expertise

1. About QQI and its context
 - a. Legislation; qualifications system; education and training system
 - b. Governance; executive; policy framework; Qualifications; Quality Assurance; standards framework
2. Strategy
3. Thinking around VET and qualifications policies internationally
4. FE strategy aligned with labour market; Springboard; Modern apprenticeship model
5. HE strategy
6. OECD AHELO project
7. Professional Qualifications and Professional Directive

Formal Agenda (11.45am – 2:00pm)

1. Terms of Reference –

The Members considered the Terms of Reference for the Policy and Standards Committee and NOTED that as the work of the PSC and QQI Board evolves it may be necessary to revisit and amend, it further NOTED that members are appointed in their personal capacity and do not represent their organisation at the PSC. The PSC agreed to RECOMMEND the Terms of Reference to the Board. It observed that further feedback on the terms of reference may be warranted following a period of experience implementing them.

The PSC NOTED the following documents

- 1.1 Code of Practice for Committees of QQI
- 1.2 Role of a Chairperson of a QQI Committee
- 1.3 Committee Key Executive
- 1.4 Committee Secretary
- 1.5 Committee Coordinator
- 1.6 Conflict of Interests
- 1.7 Declaration Form – Conflict of Interests [For signature]

2. Information

2.1. Indication of what's coming - Detailed Table of Policies

The PSC DISCUSSED the table and requested the executive to include the Detailed Table of Policies as a standing item for future meetings.

2.2. Policy Development Process Summary

The PSC NOTED the process and observed that its role in policy review has not yet been determined.

2.3. Indication of what PSC members would like to see discussed at future meetings

- The PSC considered the documents circulated and DISCUSSED the process for developing policy, it further NOTED that several policies had been developed in advance of the PSC being established. The PSC NOTED that Draft Policy derived from White Papers go the Board following consultation but REQUESTED that a summary of consultation feedback should always be provided to the PSC for its information.
- The PSC DISCUSSED how its work ought to be evaluated. It questioned how can it evaluate its own effectiveness or determine whether or not it is meeting expectations? The PSC AGREED that a structure should be developed to integrate its work with that of the Board and further AGREED to refer this to the Board for discussion through the two Board members of PSC.

- The PSC AGREED that policy and standards must be communicated in a way that they can be readily understood by all stakeholders.
- The PSC AGREED that a framework for developing, presenting and communicating policy; reflections on communications challenges; and effectiveness of QQI policy are topics that should be discussed at future PSC meetings.

3. Standards determinations

3.1. Summary report on routine standards determinations approved by PAEC

The PSC AGREED the process for routine standards determinations. It was AGREED that PAEC (Programme and Awards Executive Committee) reports on standards would be seen by the PSC for the time being so that the PSC is aware of what it will not be seeing under the process.

3.2. Standards Determination Roadmap

The PSC NOTED the Roadmap document. In the ensuing discussions it was NOTED that the list of standards to be reviewed includes the FET standards at NFQ Levels 1 to 3. It AGREED that a strategic approach should be taken to review of published standards. The PSC AGREED that consideration should be given to the matters identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) in scheduling sectorial reviews. It was SUGGESTED that the QQI executive meet with a representative of EGFSN to discuss development needs.

3.3. New standards to be determined – Professional Master of Education

The PSC noted the standard presented and considered the scope and special validation requirements associated. The Committee AGREED to determine the new award standard for the award entitled Professional Master of Education.

4. Green papers

4.1. Green Paper on Recognition Advice

The Committee NOTED that recognition is a vital service for high level skilled people gaining employment and REQUESTED the QQI executive to investigate whether the recognition process had been considered from the employer perspective.

The PSC AGREED that the Green Paper on Recognition Advice be published for consultation.

5. White Papers

5.1. Re-engagement with Legacy Providers: Overarching Policy

- 5.2. Policy and Criteria for Further Education and Training Legacy Voluntary Providers Continuing Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards
- 5.3. Policy and Criteria for Higher Education and Training Legacy Voluntary Providers Continuing Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards

The PSC NOTED the documents circulated in relation to re-engagement. The Committee NOTED the need for an emphasis on clear communication and explanation of what is needed and the purpose of the re-engagement process. It further NOTED the possibility of providers meeting the new criteria through the formation of consortia. The PSC NOTED the value in QQI having discussions with SOLAS and the ETBs particularly in relation to the Community/Voluntary Sectors.

Following discussion the PSC AGREED to recommend the three White Papers on Re-engagement with Legacy Providers to the QQI Board and therefore they can now be published for consultation.