

**POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (PSC)**  
**Thursday 11 June, 2015 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2**

Present: James Moore - Board Member and Committee Chair

Jan S Levy - International Expert

Ewart Keep - International Expert

Aidan Mulkeen - National Expert

Anne Marie Ryan - National Expert

Bryan Maguire - QQI Executive Member

Peter Cullen - QQI Key Executive

In attendance: Ann Graves - QQI Secretary

Orla Lynch – QQI (for Item 6.1)

Roisin Sweeney – QQI (for Item 6.2)

Apologies: Marie Bourke - National Expert

In opening the meeting the Chair welcomed the members.

**1 Minutes of Meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) of 16 April 2015**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 16 April 2015, amended to include a footnote in relation to minute 5.2 and 7.1 as follows “Item 5.2 and 7.1 (presented by Jan S Levy) were taken together along with input from the executive on the implications of a recent High Court ruling against QQI ”, were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**2. Matters Arising from Minutes**

2.1 The PSC NOTED that QQI is still awaiting a response from the Department of Education and Skills on how to deal with the legal impediments to recognition within the framework uncovered in the wake of January’s judicial review.

2.2 Any other matters arising will be dealt with under the relevant items on the agenda.

### **3. Standards Determinations**

In order to help engage all members actively in the in the deliberations, selected non-executive PSC members were requested to take a special interest in one or two documents from the agenda and present those documents to the Committee for the purpose of leading off the discussions. All members were still required to read and consider all the documents on the agenda.

Presentations concerning proposed awards standards were to include observations on:

- Soundness of the case for establishing a new standard
- Consistency with QQI's strategy
- Clarity for stakeholders of the new standard
- Suitability of the development and consultation process as described
- Questions about the proposed standard that warrant discussion at Committee

#### 3.1 Awards Standards – NFQ Level 6 minor awards in Newswriting and Editing and Sub-Editing

The Committee NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made.

The Committee NOTED the use of acronyms and specialised terms in the documents and agreed that for the purposes of clarity and style that acronyms should be spelled out in awards standards.

The Committee AGREED to ADOPT the new awards standard for Newswriting and Editing and Sub-Editing at NFQ Level 6.

### **4. Policy Development**

#### 4.1 Policy Gantt Chart – Standing Item

The Committee NOTED that there was no change to the draft policy schedule since the April meeting.

### **5 Green Papers**

There were no Green Papers for presentation to the Committee.

### **6. White Papers**

#### 6.1 White Paper on Review of Higher Education Institutions

The Committee NOTED the White Paper presented and that it the proposed policy approach to cyclical institutional review for higher education. It articulates how QQI will conduct reviews in this sector under Section 34, 35, 37(3), 40 and 41 of the 2012 Act.

The Committee considered the observations made particularly in relation to the detail in relation to the two part visit and the size of the review teams in proportion to the size of the institution. The Executive will amend the paper to reflect the discussions.

Following discussion the Committee AGREED to recommend the White Paper entitled "*White Paper on Review of Higher Education Institutions*" for public consultation and to the QQI Board.

## 6.2 White Paper on Policy and Criteria for Programme Validation

The Committee NOTED the White Paper presented as the proposed QQI policy approach to and overarching criteria for the validation of Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) programmes.

The Committee considered the observations made and NOTED the advice to the Executive.

Following discussion the Committee NOTED that the document would be refined and a revised version would presented to the PSC at its September meeting.

The Committee further NOTED that there may be a need for a bridging interim policy for the validation of apprenticeships.

## **7. Any Other Business**

7.1 The Committee NOTED that item 7.1 – Minor amendments to awards and standards policies had been deferred.

7.2 The PSC NOTED that the Ministers for Justice and Equality and Education and Skills had announced regulatory reforms in relation to providers with programmes currently included in the Internationalisation Register (IR), with regard to the introduction of the regulatory reforms of student immigration and international education and the cessation of QQI's role in the administration. One of the reforms introduced is the introduction of an Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) which will be implemented by the Department of Justice and Criteria for the

ILEP and the IR.

Previously, the IR was administered by QQI on behalf of the Departments of Justice and Equality and Education and Skills. With immediate effect, the Department of Justice and Equality will now administer the IR and the ILEP.

7.3 Following discussion the Committee agreed that the Blue Skies meeting scheduled for 29 September could consider the following:

- The context for policy and standards, where the role of the PSC fits into the overall structure including the three year plan for the QQI Board and where policies fit into the QQI strategy
- QQI's overall approach to policy and standards development
- Opportunities for rethinking roles, relationships and approaches across the qualifications system and educational system
- The emergence of new apprenticeship models, the roles of and relationships between key stakeholders and how QQI can add value;
- How and where QQI can add value (considering the costs involved) and how can it identify when to disengage from fruitless or approaches that are excessively costly relative to their benefits;
- Legislative issues
- QQI's role in mobility.

The QQI executive will prepare some prompts for discussions in advance of the meeting.

Members of the Committee will notify the Executive of any further suggestions for the Agenda.

Following discussion it was suggested that the meeting would commence on the evening of 28 September and continue on 29<sup>th</sup> September. It was NOTED that the meeting on 29 September might take place in the Blackrock College of Further Education. (This would be subject to availability.)