

**POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (PSC)  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 – 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m.  
Boardroom, QQI Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2**

Present: James Moore - Board Member and Committee Chair

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

Barbara Kelly - Director of Qualifications, QQI

Roisin Sweeney – Head of Awards Standards, QQI

Paul Brady, Awards Standards, QQI

Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Projects, QQI (Item 6.2)

Deirdre Stritch, Regulatory Projects and IEM Development Unit Manager (Item 6.2)

Apologies: Jan S Levy - International Expert

In opening the meeting the Chair welcomed the members of the PSC and QQI Executive in attendance.

The Chair noted that Marie Burke, National Expert, had stepped down following the September meeting of the PSC. Marie has moved to a new area, of economic analysis, competitiveness, climate change and the enterprise and science surveys within the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Marie wishes to immerse herself in the new areas of policy responsibility.

The Chair also noted that this would have been the final meeting for Jan Levy, International Expert, who has also stepped down from the Committee and noted that Jan had sent his feedback on the policy area suggested to him.

The Chair, on behalf of QQI and the members of the Committee, thanked both Marie and Jan for their important input into the work of the Committee to date and wished them the very best for the future.

The Chair noted that the order of the agenda had been changed.

**1 Minutes of Meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) of 28/29 September 2015**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 28 and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

## 2. Matters Arising from Minutes

2.1 The PSC NOTED the report of the QQI sub Board Committee Structure and the PSC Governance Structure including amended Terms of Reference for the PSC which were approved by the QQI Board at its meeting on 27 November 2015.

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

## 3. Policy

Selected non-executive Committee members are requested to take a special interest in one or two documents and make a presentation to the meeting on these documents for the purpose of leading off the discussions. All members are still required to read and consider all the documents on the agenda.

The green/white paper presentations by Committee members include observations on

- Soundness of the case for a white/green paper
- Consistency with QQI's strategy and policy framework and
- Clarity of the green papers—will they lead to the important issues being aired during consultation
- Clarity of the draft policy, procedures and criteria in white papers—is this ready for recommendation to the Board now noting that minor changes may be made following public consultation
- Questions about the paper that warrant discussion at Committee

### White Papers

#### 3.1 White paper on Suite of QA Guidelines

Explanatory Memorandum

Core QA Guidelines

Provider Map to Using QQI Statutory QA Guidelines

Suite of Sector Specific Guidelines

Designated awarding bodies:

Institutes of Technology;

Private Further and Higher Education and training;

Education and Training boards (ETBs)

Topic-specific QA Guidelines - Flexible Distributed learning

QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, December 2014 (amended December 2015)

The Committee NOTED the Suite of QA Guidelines presented. The Committee NOTED that the Guidelines rightly recognised the different relationships that exist and although inclusive had the right balance of controls and safeguards without being too prescriptive. The Committee agreed that the suite of Guidelines were comprehensive but noted the importance of the right architecture in signposting from the Core to the other branches to ensure clarity during consultation.

## **Note of PSC 11/12/15**

The Committee NOTED in relation to the Sector specific Guidelines that it is important to provide clarity in relation to collaborative arrangements with other providers. While the guidelines offer a range of QA tools to cope with problems it is important to ensure control in respect of those actually delivering the programmes.

Following discussion the PSC AGREED to APPROVE the Suite of QA Guidelines and the amended Policy on QA Guidelines which will be presented for public consultation. Following consultation both will come back to the Committee for approval.

### **3.2 Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum Policy and criteria for the validation of education and training programmes**

The Committee NOTED the Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI presented. The Committee NOTED that it is more sensible to have one model rather than separate processes for further and higher education. The PSC also NOTED that the criteria are demanding as is the extent of supporting material required, however the Committee agreed that this is a good thing.

The Committee NOTED that consideration will be given to monitoring and how this might be done, fees will also need consideration and may be risk based in the future. The Committee further NOTED that QQI will consult in parallel with the QA Guidelines including workshops and targeted sector consultations. An implementation plan will be drawn up for the introduction of the new policy and criteria. Particular attention will be given to ensuring a smooth well-coordinated transition for those sectors where the impact is greatest.

Following discussion the PSC AGREED to APPROVE the Policy and criteria for the validation of education and training programmes for consultation. Following consultation, it will come back to the committee for approval and recommendation to the Board.

## **4. Standards Determinations**

Awards Standards Strategy 2016-2018

The Committee NOTED the document circulated in the context of work for consideration by the PSC in the future. The Executive advised that there is a balance on maintenance of current award standards and review and that the focus would need to be concentrated on what the needs are for the future in a changing environment.

## **5. Proposed National Guidelines for Professional Development in Higher Education**

The Committee NOTED the document circulated as a flag on work which will commence in 2016.

**6. Any Other Business**

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED the response to feedback received on the White Paper on Review of Higher Education Institutions.
- 6.2 The Committee AGREED that an incorporeal meeting will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> January at 10am, this will include the current membership of the PSC as the Committee felt that it would be unfair on incoming members to be included pending an induction.

The Committee further AGREED that the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PSC will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> February, this will comprise two sessions with a morning meeting for an induction for new members and the full meeting in the afternoon, this is subject to availability of new members. If there is not consensus on the date then a doodle poll will circulate to the members.

- 6.2 The Chairman thanked the outgoing Executive for their work on the Committee, Peter Cullen and Ann Graves.

In closing the Chairman thanked the members of the Committee and the QQI Executive for their contributions and participation in the meeting.