PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Thursday 4 December 2014 at 2pm

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

Minutes of the third meeting of the QQI Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee held in QQI offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2 on **Thursday 4 December 2014 at 2pm.**

PRESENT:

Dr Barbara Brittingham (Chairperson)
Ms Liz Carroll
Ms Maureen Conway
Ms Karena Maguire
Ms Ann Mangan
Mr John Mulcahy

In attendance:

Ms Maria McLoughlin (Secretary)
Mr Walter Balfe (Key Executive)
Ms Róisín Sweeney (item 5.1, 6 and 7)
Ms Trish O'Brien (item 4 and 10)

APOLOGIES:

Ms Joanne Harmon
Dr Sarah Ingle
Ms Mary Danagher
*Mr Joe O'Connor
Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan
*Has completed his term as President of the Students Union and will not continue on this committee.

1. **Draft MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**
   The Minutes of the PAOC meetings held on 10 April 2014 and 25 August were CONFIRMED and SIGNED.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
   There were no matters arising

3. **NOTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING (FOR PUBLICATION ON THE QQI WEBSITE)**

   3.1   Note of Meeting 10 April 2014
   The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAOC meeting of 10 April 2014 for Publication on the QQI website.

   3.2   Note of Meeting 25 August 2014
   The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAOC incorporeal meeting of 25 August 2014 for publication on the QQI website.

4.   PAOC - TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1   Draft Terms of Reference

The committee NOTED the Draft Terms of Reference. A detailed verbal report was presented on the proposed amendments to the PAOC Terms of Reference, a copy of which was circulated to the Committee before the meeting. The revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the Board for approval in February. If approved, the amendments will mean that the PAOC will be required to meet after each Programme Awards Executive Committee meeting to review any PAEC refusals of validation. In time, PAOC will also review negative International Education Mark (IEM) decisions referred to it by the Approvals and Review Committee (ARC).

4.2   Boundaries to the Role of PAOC

The Committee discussed how providers could be supported in preparing programme submissions for validation. The Committee will seek to identify trends and common issues but it was agreed that training for providers is not the brief of QQI.

5.   PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND AWARD CERTIFICATION

5.1   Procedures and Guidelines supporting QQI Validation

The committee NOTED the documentation and the detailed verbal report presented by the executive.

5.1.1   Review of Validation and Revalidation Policy and Procedures

The Committee NOTED the ongoing review and revision of procedures for QQI programme validation process.

5.1.2   Devolved Responsibility for Validation Sub-processes- Independent Providers

The Committee NOTED the documentation on *Devolved Responsibility for Validation Sub Processes*. The committee AGREED the amendments proposed to the template Memorandum of Agreement and the template Quality Assurance Procedures.

5.1.3   Draft Guidelines on the Amendments Permitted within a Programme's Validation Lifecycle

The Committee NOTED the Draft Guidelines on the *Amendments Permitted within a Programme's Validation Lifecycle*. The Committee discussed the level of change permissible to an approved validated programme and noted the complexity and potential difficulty for providers deciding what constitutes a change which must be approved by QQI.

5.1.4.   Award Titles

In the document the Committee NOTED the list of Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) awards ranging from Level 1 to Level 10 and noted that Level 6 awards are available in both HET and FET.

5.1.5 Managing Peer Reviewers

The Committee NOTED the document *Managing Peer Reviewers*. This outlined the internal QA process introduced to manage the assignment of experts to panels. This new process is designed to enable better selection of experts and management of conflicts of interest.

5.2 Procedures and Guidelines supporting QQI Award Certification

5.2.1 Internal Audit Committee report on Award Certification

A detailed verbal report was submitted on the Internal Audit Committee report on Award Certification. The priority findings were brought to the attention of the Committee and it was confirmed that these issues would be addressed by the executive.

6. REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PAEC) ON ITS ACTIVITIES

6.1 Notes of PAEC meetings

The Committee NOTED the notes of PAEC meetings.
It was agreed that in future PAOC members would be directed to the web address where these meeting notes are published, instead of receiving copies of the notes.

6.2 Validation Applications presented to PAEC

The committee NOTED the Validated Applications presented to PAEC - June 14 to Nov 14. The summary statistics were reviewed.

6.3 Case Studies

The committee received a representative range of situations circulated as PAOC/A3/6.3.
The Committee expressed its appreciation for the detailed presentation and said that it had been very useful in giving members a fuller understanding of the processes and the decisions they, as a Committee, have to make.

7. NEGATIVE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PAEC ON PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION WITHIN THE NFQ FOR ENDORSEMENT OR REFERRAL BACK TO PAEC

Validation Refusals

The Committee ENDORSED the following PAEC refusals of validation:
- *The Catherine Treanor Safety and Health Environmental Services Ltd (FET)*
- *Portobello Institute* (7 applications)[1]
- *Mark Watch Security Training Services Ltd, correspondence course (FET)*

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[1] John Mulcahy abstained from this discussion due to his working relationship with Portobello Institute

8. OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATIVE FORUM AND OTHER CONSULTATION PROCESSES

8.1   No Business

9. IMPACT STUDIES

9.1   There were no suggestions

10. Negative decisions taken by the Approvals and Reviews Committee regarding granting the use of the International Education Mark (IEM)

10.1   **Outline of process for granting the use of the IEM**
The Committee NOTED the verbal report and the leaflet circulated at the meeting. The IEM policy suite will be presented to the Board on 8 January 2015 for implementation in 2015. However, no decisions on granting IEM are expected until late 2015/2016.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that incorporeal meetings would be required after PAEC meetings to consider programme validation refusals, at least until the committee members feel their process is sufficiently mature to carry out the work individually with consensus being achieved by email correspondence.

It was requested that members receive the meeting papers no less than a week in advance of the meeting to allow sufficient time for preparation

It was also requested that, where possible, the Committee should not meet in December due to high work demands at that time of year.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE
The next meeting of the PAEC will be held on 18 February 2015. The executive will poll PAOC Committee members in the New Year to provisionally book a date and time for an incorporeal meeting after the PAEC meeting to review any validation refusal decisions made.