

**Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)**  
**Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 (10:30am – 1:00pm)**  
**CDET B Finglas Training Centre, Dublin**

**Present:** James Moore - Board Member and Committee Chair  
Anne Marie Ryan - National Expert  
Bryan Maguire - QQI Executive Member  
Lucien Bollaert - International Expert  
Ewart Keep - International Expert  
Barbara Kelly - Director of Qualifications, QQI  
Roisin Sweeney – Head of Awards Standards, QQI

**Conference Call:** Joanne Harmon – Board Member

**In attendance:** Paul Brady - QQI Secretary  
Andrina Wafer - QQI (Item 6.2)

**Apologies:** Catherine MacEnri – National Expert  
Daire Keogh - National Expert

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

**0. Matters Arising**

Chairperson report on general activities of interest to the PSC.

- 0.1 The Chair noted that this would have been the final meeting for Catherine MacEnri. Catherine has stepped down as she has moved to a new Division within the Department. QQI executive will follow due diligence in securing a suitable replacement from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The Chair on behalf of QQI and the members of the Committee thanked Catherine for her important input to the work of the committee and wished Catherine the very best for the future.
- 0.2 The Chair reported on the very sad passing of Dr Ann Louise Gilligan. Ann Louise brought wide experience of adult and community education and teacher education to the QQI board. She was a member of the PSC

from 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and the Chair wished to acknowledge her commitment, contribution and input which were of valuable importance to the work of the committee. The Chair on behalf of the committee would like to extend their deepest sympathies to Ann Louise's family and friends

**1 Minutes of Meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee (PSC) of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

The Minutes of the Meetings of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**2. Matters Arising from Minutes**

A verbal update was provided on actions arising from the Department of Education and Skills organisational review report on QQI.

**3. Standards Determinations**

**3.1 FET Award Standards**

Revised Award Standards – Non-Domestic and Domestic Gas Safety

- Explanatory Memorandum
- Non-Domestic Gas Safety
- Domestic Gas Safety

The Committee NOTED the standards presented and considered the observations made in relation to Non-Domestic and Domestic Gas Safety. The members recognised the work involved in the review process, the breadth of expertise in the Standard Review Group (SRG). The Domestic Gas sector is regulated by the Commission of Energy Regulation (CER) through the Register of Gas Installers (RGII) and the Non-Domestic Gas sector is expected to be regulated post legislation due in 2019. Discussion by members covered the change in award type for Non-Domestic Gas Safety from a Supplemental award to a Special Purpose award, the new component specifications and the appropriateness of learning outcomes. The members also NOTED the title change from Commercial to Non-Domestic, the consultation process and the feedback received from same.

The PSC **AGREED to ADOPT** the new Special Purpose award standards at NFQ Levels 6 for:

Level 6 Special Purpose Non-Domestic Gas Safety

Level 6 Supplemental Specification Domestic Gas Safety

**3.2 Awards Standards Update**

The members of the committee received an update on Award Standards activity. This ranges from feedback on the consultation on review of FET and HET standards; reviews which are currently in progress, standards reviews expected to commence from Q3 2017; development of new standards being prioritised from Q3

2017 and the ongoing review of levels 1 to 3. In tandem, research has been commissioned into trends and developments in further education structures, qualifications and certification, the output of which will be a report due Q4 2017. The standards review process has identified some challenges for QQI notably systems issues linked to award structures, certification and validation of programmes, and the challenge in communicating efficiently and effectively the impacts the review may have on providers, learners and other stakeholders.

#### 4. Policy Development

##### 4.1 Award Titles

- Explanatory Memorandum
- Award Titles arising from New Apprenticeship Programmes
- Introduction of 'Education' award stem in Higher Education award titles

The QQI Executive requested a derogation on the "Policy and Criteria for Making Awards" to introduce new award stem titles as follows:

1. Introduce titling of awards arising from new apprenticeship programmes which rely on the Professional Award Type Descriptor (PATD) standards. The aim is to facilitate the validation of the apprenticeship programmes based on the Professional Award Type Descriptors (PATD) <sup>1</sup> and the making of these awards at levels 6 (Higher Certificate) 7,8 and 9.
2. The introduction of a new stem titled 'Education' at ordinary bachelor degree, honours bachelor degree, postgraduate diploma and master's degree. The aim is to facilitate particular provider requirements at level 8 but also to build in progression options at other levels that facilitate continuous professional development in the education sector.

The members NOTED the request and after deliberation and discussion the committee APPROVED the derogation on titling as outlined above.

##### 4.2 Policy Development

###### 4.2.1 Snapshot – QQI Comprehensive Policy Development Programme

The members were updated on the existing published policies, planned white papers and green papers. It was noted that there is a diminishing amount of new policy work. Consideration must be given to how QQI will review the generality of policies. Discussion covered areas such as possible approaches, identifying the areas where policies are still needed, the need for review, the impact of pending legislative amendments, effectiveness of existing policy, stakeholder fatigue and resources required to carry out reviews.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional\\_Award-types\\_PS3\\_2014.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf)

A green paper on assessment in FET is being developed which will explore a range of issues. These range from the role of QQI as an awarding body rather than assessment body, how far one goes in specifying assessment in standards, locally developed versus centrally development assessment.

#### 4.3.1 Update on Draft Guidelines under Development

The members were updated on the further development of QA Guidelines that were brought before the Committee in December 2017 PSC meeting.

- Statutory QAG's for Transnational Collaborative Provision have become part of a broader collaboration with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Department of Education and Skills and HE providers under the HEA/ QQI Forum. A joint conference is planned for December 2017.
- QA Guidelines on Gender Balance are no longer considered appropriate for QQI to develop. The members recognised and welcomed that QQI will consider gender balance within the procedural guidelines supporting QQI policy in QQI documentation such as guidelines (non-statutory), procedures linked to policies on validation, Annual Institutional Quality Reports(AIQRs) and other engagements.
- QA Guidelines on eLearning came back to the committee to be re-orientated as QA guidelines in Blended Learning. The draft Quality Assurance guidelines on blended learning will go for further consultation in 2017 as originally planned and agreed by the PSC.

## 5. Green Papers

No business

## 6. White Papers

No business

## 7. Any Other Business

### 7.1.1 Update on Recognition of Prior Learning Activity

The members were updated on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) activity. The paper on RPL was welcomed and covered current thinking on RPL, Legislation in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and proposed amendments to the Act which will involve providers more centrally in the application process for RPL and with QQI support through the provision of related quality assurance guidelines. The members were also informed of international and national perspectives. Ireland has a community of practice in RPL which, despite the current lack of national policy is seen as being progressive in European terms. The [RPL Practitioners Network](#) was set up in 2016 and provides a forum for exchange of experiences across both FET and HET. In addition, a research project to provide a current overview of RPL in FET has been commissioned by QQI and Education and Training Boards Ireland. This follows similar research methodology used for similar research in HET. Recent initiatives in RPL with the ETBS/Defence Forces and an Erasmus+ project, 'VISKA, Making Skills Visible' were discussed. The members

recognised and welcomed the various activities and initiatives which stakeholders, including QQI, are currently engaged in developing and the difficulties and challenges RPL poses for all involved.

## 7.2 EU Key Competences

- Explanatory memorandum
- QQI Submission
- QA and the EU Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (presentation)

The members were updated on the recent European Commission's consultation to review the current Key Competences Framework for Lifelong Learning. EU key competences are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes which individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. Members noted the QQI submission which was made after holding its own consultation in May 2017. A presentation was then given on 'The new transversal competences of the future', taking a global view of the use and importance of transversal skills. For example, in a parallel to the EU, UNESCO and OECD are revising their transversal competencies. It was noted that the Irish NFQ is focused on knowledge, skills and competence and this lends well to the inclusion of transversal skills both overtly and implicitly. The presentation also noted the new competences needed and their role in how one engages in the world.

The members welcomed the presentation and the challenges associated with promotion of the key competences.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

A Doodle poll will be circulated in Q3 to determine a date for the first meeting of 2018.

In closing, the Chairman thanked the members of the Committee and the QQI Executive for their contributions and participation in the meeting. He further thanked the Principal and staff of CDET B Finglas Training Centre for their hospitality and tour of facilities.