

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

**Note of the fifth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Monday,
10 June 2013 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, QQI Office, 26/27 Denzille Lane,
Dublin 2.**

Present:

- Mr. Gordon Clark (Chair)**
- Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)**
- Ms. Claire Byrne (Secretary)**
- Ms. Una Buckley**
- Ms. Mary Danagher**
- Ms. Joanne Harmon**
- Mr. John Logue**
- Mr. James Moore**

Apologies:

- Dr. Barbara Brittingham**
- Dr. Margaret Cullen**
- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan**

In attendance:

- Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)**
- Mr. Eamonn Collins (Items 4, 9 and 10)**
- Ms Marie Gould (Item 7)**
- Dr. Bryan Maguire (Item 7)**
- Ms. Karena Maguire (Items 7 and 8)**
- Dr. Anna Murphy (Item 5)**
- Ms. Trish O'Brien (Item 7)**
- Mr. Ultan Tuite (Item 9)**

Introduction

The Board agreed that the revised Agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 22 April 2013

The Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting held on 22 April 2013 were confirmed and signed.

2. Note of the Meeting of 22 April 2013

The Board noted the Note of the Meeting of 22 April 2013 which was approved for publication on the QQI website.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

The Board noted that the Executive had decided to defer the presentation of the draft Terms of Reference for the Programme and Awards Executive Committee which was due to be discussed at today's Board meeting until the next meeting scheduled for Monday, 29 July 2012. The matter was deferred as work pertaining to the Policy Development Programme had taken precedence over the last number of weeks. The Board noted that the Executive was progressing in identifying suitable individuals to populate the Committee.

The Board noted that the vision paper entitled Qualifications Systems and Related Concepts – Background Paper which had been presented to the Board at its meeting on 22 April had been revised, with a portion of the paper having been published as a contextual document alongside the Green Paper portfolio and the remaining aspects being built into a number of the Green Papers themselves.

4. Human Resources

Eamonn Collins, Corporate Business Manager was present for this item.

The Board noted the documents relating to QQI's Human Resources. The Board noted the briefing on the Human Resources policy development process provided by Eamonn Collins, which began with the appointment in late 2011, of a HR Project Team consisting of staff members from the legacy agencies, which reviewed the existing policies and procedures of each agency. The Board noted that a Staff Consultative Forum was established in 2012 to consider the draft policies and procedures developed by the Team. The Board noted that the majority of the Human Resource policies in the portfolio are statutory based and include circulars originating from the Department of Finance regarding Leave entitlements etc. The Board noted that the QQI Flexible Working Hours policy had been referred to the Labour Relations Court as part of the amalgamation process. The Board noted that QQI has an Employee Assistance Programme in place for its staff. The Board approved the QQI Human Resource Policies and Procedures.

The Board noted the Internal Audit Report on the Payroll and Personnel Cycle (May 2013), presented to the Audit Committee at its meeting of 23 May and the Management Response contained therein. The Board noted that an Absence Management Policy was being drafted to enhance the management of sick leave. Management will continue to report to the Audit Committee on the management of sick leave.

The Board noted the letter of 2 May 2013 from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the Employment Control Framework Ceiling (ECF) 2013 and noted the newly assigned allocation which now applies to QQI in 2013 as well as an update on the current staffing level/situation within QQI. The Board noted the effect which ECF has on contracts pertaining to staff members who avail of a work-sharing arrangement. The Board noted that the matter had been raised as part of the Internal Audit Report on the Payroll and Personnel Cycle (May 2013) presented to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2013 and the Audit Committee had recommended the Executive issue a letter on behalf of the Board to the Department outlining its concerns at how the new ceiling will impact on QQI's ability to deliver on its functions. The Board noted that QQI had taken a disproportionate reduction with its total staffing numbers reduced by approx. 25% over the last 5 years. The Board agreed that the Chairperson would write, on its behalf, to the Department of Education and Skills expressing its concern at the further reduction in QQI staffing contained within the most recent communication.

5. Mission, Vision and Values

Anna Murphy, Head of Strategic Analysis, was present for this item.

The Board noted the document entitled Mission, Vision and Values - Draft Strategic Statement and noted the update on developments provided by the Executive. The Board noted that the Executive had met with officials from the Department of Education and Skills on 31 May to discuss the likely strategic directions for QQI. The Board agreed to the Executive's proposal, on foot of the Departmental meeting, to adjust the proposed time period for the strategy to address the period 2014-2016 (instead of the original period of 2013-2016); this adjustment allows the Executive to fully develop its Operational Plan for 2014 alongside the Strategic Plan. The Board noted that the Executive now intended to develop and present the Strategy Statement 2014-2016 as part of the QQI

Strategic Plan. Following its discussion on the draft Statement, the Board requested the Executive to revisit Goals no.3 and 4 in order to make them more explicit and to reword the values and principles without losing their essence.

The Board agreed the draft Strategic Statement subject to the amendments suggested and agreed that the Executive should use this as a basis for consultation with external stakeholders. The Board agreed the modified timetable for the completion of this project. The Board noted the Executive intends to present a draft Strategy Statement to the Board for its approval at the Board meeting scheduled for 9 September 2013.

The Board noted that there will be a need for a performance contract between QQI and the Department of Education and Skills in line with current government department-agency relations and that the Executive would keep the Board informed on developments in this area.

6. Communications Strategy

The Board noted the document relating to QQI's Communications Strategy. The Board noted that a communications strategy covering both internal and external elements is currently being developed. The Board noted that the media management company appointed to assist the Executive in developing its communications strategy had met with QQI staff to help inform the piece. The Board noted the Executive's intention to develop a rolling strategy to deal with QQI's immediate needs initially but which would be flexible enough to work long-term. The Board noted that the Executive hopes to present the draft Communications Strategy to the Board at its July meeting.

7. Policy Co-ordination and Development Programme

Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services, Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services, Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations and Marie Gould, Provider Relations were present for this item.

The Board noted the Update on the Comprehensive Policy Development Programme, together with a presentation by Marie Gould, Provider Relations, in relation to the rollout of the QQI Consultation Framework process and on the Green Paper Consultation Events held in Dublin and Cork on 20 and 28 May. The Board noted the 2 reports, Consultation Events Evaluation Report and

Consultation Events Feedback Report (Dublin and Cork) which were tabled at the meeting and which detailed the feedback received from participants at these events. The Board noted that these 2 reports would be published on the QQI website.

The Board noted that the deadline for submission of feedback on the initial batch of Green Papers (Provider Access to Programme Accreditation, Protection for Enrolled Learners and Fees for QQI Services) had been Friday, 7 June and noted a significant number of responses had been received. The Board discussed key aspects of the three Green Papers. The Board noted the Executive's intention to publish all feedback responses received in full and noted that the feedback received would assist the Executive in the development of the White (Policy) Papers. The Board noted that the Policy Development Group was meeting on Tuesday, 11 June to examine the feedback submissions and to begin work on the next stage of Policy Development. The Board noted that the Executive will present the White Papers for Provider Access to Programme Accreditation, Protection of Enrolled Learners and Fees for QQI Services to the Board at its meeting scheduled for 29 July for approval to proceed to the second phase of consultation.

The Board noted that the consultation process for the second batch of fourteen Green Papers remains open until 13 September 2013.

The Board noted that QQI intends to host a number of events for stakeholders around July focussed on the Protection for Enrolled Learners topic/area.

8. Reviews

Karena Maguire, Head of Quality Assurance Services was present for this item. The Board noted the update on Reviews provided by the Executive. The Board noted the Terms of Reference for the System Review: Review of Reviews, a QQI review of the models used by the legacy agencies (IUQB, HETAC and NQAI) for reviewing the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures for higher education institutions and their impacts. The Board noted that the Terms of Reference had been published on the QQI website and circulated to higher education institutions for consultation. The Board noted that the Terms would be finalised and

published later this month with the Review Team to be appointed and commencement of the Review shortly after that.

The Board noted the Institutional Review Reports for University College, Cork which was the last of the former IUQB reviews to be completed. The Board approved the Reports for publication by the Executive.

The Board noted the Terms of Reference for the Institutional Review of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) and noted that, as RCSI was an independent body with quite a unique status within the higher education sector, the Executive intended to review the College using a combination of the IUQB and HETAC review models. The Board also noted that a key element is to support the institution in meeting its responsibility for quality assurance arrangements in collaborative and transnational provision. The Board noted that the review is scheduled to take place in October 2013 with the Board scheduled to receive the Review Report for its consideration, in Spring 2014.

The Board noted the draft Terms of Reference for a Research Validation Review of Institute of Technology, Tralee (ITT). The Board noted that on foot of the receipt of a report from the Institute into a MA Degree awarded in 2008, the Executive decided to initiate a statutory review of ITT's validation processes for postgraduate research degrees under Section 46 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The Board noted that the Executive would circulate the final version of the Terms of Reference to Board Members once finalised.

9. Audit and Risk

Ultan Tuite, Head of Audit & Procurement and Eamonn Collins, Corporate Business Manager were present for this item.

The Board noted the documents relating to Audit and Risk. The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 27 March 2013 together with a report of the Audit Committee Meeting of 23 May 2013 presented by a member of the Audit Committee.

The Board noted and approved the Internal Audit Work Plan 2013-2016 and the Internal Audit Report – Payroll and Personnel Cycle. The Board noted that the

legacy agencies had submitted their respective Superannuation Schemes to the Department of Education and Skills for approval a number of years ago and the Board requested the Executive to continue its contact with the Department in progressing these Schemes for approval.

The Board was briefed on the policy development process for the Audit and Procurement Section. The Board noted that the following policies were considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 May and were recommended to the Board for its approval subject to comments and suggestions made by the Committee which have since been reflected in the documents:

- Draft Purchasing and Procurement Policy;
- Draft Corporate Procurement Plan;
- Draft Confidential Disclosures (Whistleblowing) Policy and the
- Risk Management Framework.

The Board adopted the recommendations of the Audit Committee and approved the policies listed above. The Board noted that QQI is required to adopt a number of these Policies under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Board noted the Executive would now compile (in consultation with the Board) a QQI Risk Register with a view to presenting it to the Audit Committee in the Autumn, the current version in existence is based largely on an amalgamation of those belonging to the legacy agencies.

10. Budget and Finance

Eamonn Collins, Corporate Business Manager was present for this item.

The Board noted the document relating to Budget and Finance. The Board noted and approved the Draft Finance Policies and Procedures which were recommended to the Board by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 25 May.

The Board noted that this document had been developed during the amalgamation process by a Finance and Risk Team comprising of staff from the legacy agencies.

The Board noted the First Quarter Budget Report – Variance Analysis for Quarter 1, 2013 and the briefing provided by the Executive on the current financial situation.

The Board noted the Management Accounts for the period 6 November 2012 -31 March 2013.

11. Board Rolling Agenda 2013-2014

The Board noted the update to the QQI Rolling Board Agenda 2013-2014. The Board noted the change to the schedule for the presentation of the Appeals Policy to the Board and noted that the Executive had met with officials from the Department of Education and Skills on the matter and the Department hoped to have a process in place by September 2013.

12. Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events

The Board noted the document entitled Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events. The Board noted that the Chairperson had arranged to meet with a number of Chairs of other State Agencies which fall under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills on Tuesday, 11 June to discuss common areas and issues.

13. Next Meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, 29 July 2013 beginning at 10:15 a.m.

14. Any Other Business

The Board noted the document entitled European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Review of QQI 2014. The Board noted that as part of Ireland's membership of the Bologna process, external quality assurance agencies such as QQI are evaluated on a 5 year basis against the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. As three of the legacy agencies were members of ENQA, the Board of ENQA agreed in September 2012 to transfer the full membership status of HETAC and NQAI to QQI as their legal successor. The Board noted that ENQA policy on the amalgamation of agencies requires that newly established agencies undergo an external ENQA co-ordinated review within 2 years of amalgamation and as such,

this requires QQI to have completed its review by ENQA by October 2014. The Board noted the letter of 1 May 2013 issued by the Executive to the President of ENQA formally requesting an ENQA co-ordinated review against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The Board noted that the Executive had requested that the site visit of the review take place in May 2014 and noted that the Executive was in the early stages of planning for this review.

The Board noted the information provided on QQI's Office Accommodation. The Board noted the background to the release in 2012 of some of the office premises of the legacy agencies and the retention of Denzille Lane and office space in 10 Lower Mount Street to form the location of QQI. The Board agreed the Executive's proposal to maintain the current level of space for a further twelve months.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, thanked John Logue, outgoing President of the Union of Students in Ireland, (USI) for his contributions during his term of office as a QQI Board Member and wished him every success in his future endeavours.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____