

**Quality and Qualifications Ireland**

**Note of the third Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Thursday, 21 March 2013 at 11.15 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)**
- Dr. Barbara Brittingham**
- Dr. Margaret Cullen**
- Ms. Mary Danagher**
- Ms. Joanne Harmon**
- Mr. John Logue**
- Mr. James Moore**

**Apologies:**

- Ms. Una Buckley**
- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan**

**In attendance:**

- Ms. Caitriona Lawless (Recording Secretary)**
- Dr. Bryan Maguire (Item 4)**
- Ms. Trish O'Brien (Item 5)**
- Mr. Ultan Tuite (Item 7)**

**Introduction**

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

**1. Minutes of the Meeting of 1 March 2013**

The Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting held on 1 March 2013, were confirmed and signed.

**2. Note of the Meeting of 1 March 2013**

The Board noted the Note of the Meeting of 1 March 2013 which was approved for publication on the QQI website.

### **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

The Board noted that the EU Presidency Conference on Quality Assurance in Qualifications Frameworks hosted by the Department of Education and Skills and QQI had taken place in Dublin Castle on 12 and 13 March and had proved to be a very successful event. The Chairperson on behalf of the Board, requested the Chief Executive, to express the Board's thanks and congratulations to all staff on the success of the conference.

### **4. Policy Co-ordination and Development Programme**

*Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services was present for this item.*

The Board noted the document entitled Policy Co-ordination and Development Programme, together with a presentation by the Chief Executive which outlined the approach proposed by the Executive for the development and formulation of QQI policy.

The Board noted that the Executive proposed to present 'Green (Issues) Papers' on policy areas to the Board in the first instance and following feedback and consultation, 'White (Policy) Papers' will then be developed by the Executive before going through a further consultation process and subsequently, being presented to the Board for approval. The Board noted that a Policy Co-ordination Group together with four Policy Development Groups (each dealing with different Policy areas) had been established consisting of the Executive and members of senior staff. The Board noted that the initial phase of policy development would focus on policies required to re-open the provider registration process. The Board noted the timeline proposed and agreed that in order to facilitate progressing this matter, the Board would hold an additional Board Meeting in late July. The Board noted that the Executive was meeting with the Department of Education and Skills within the next week to update officials and to outline the proposed way forward regarding the provider registration process. The Board noted that all currently registered providers will eventually have to go through a re-evaluation process to retain their registered status.

The Board noted the Executive's intention to conduct its consultation process through both the QQI website and other electronic means. The Board noted the importance of flagging the publication of consultation material in advance with relevant stakeholders. The Board noted that the Executive would be in contact

with Board Members with a view to arranging a date for a July Board Meeting, most likely to take place the week of 29 July. The Board noted and approved the approach and the timeline outlined by the Executive.

The Board noted the presentation entitled 'A Perspective on the Qualifications System' by Dr. Bryan Maguire, Head of Qualifications Services and noted that the Executive had developed an internal discussion paper on the possible ways forward for the qualifications system. The Board noted the Executive's intention to build on the outcomes and experience gained from the legacy agencies' work in this area and internal discussions to date on some of the fundamental issues had proven to be very helpful. The Board noted that the Executive is continuing work on this area, which will also assist in informing the policy suite currently being developed and the matter will be brought back to the Board for its consideration at a later date.

#### **5. Approach to QQI Consultation**

*Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations was present for this item.*

The Board noted the document on draft Consultation Framework prepared by Marie Gould (Governance Business Unit) and presented by Trish O'Brien, Head of Provider Relations. The Board noted that the Executive had examined national and international practices as well as different mediums through which consultation can take place. The Board agreed that the Executive should proceed according to the approach outlined.

#### **6. Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, 2009**

The Board noted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, 2009, a copy of which had been included in the Introductory Reference Pack which Board Members had received in advance of their first Board Meeting. The Board noted that the Code sets out a corporate governance best practice framework which the Government has put in place for State Bodies and also noted that the QQI Chairperson is required to affirm to the Minister for Education and Skills that the Code of Practice has been adopted by the Board.

The Board adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies as part of its corporate governance system.

## **7. Audit and Risk**

*Ultan Tuite, Head of Audit & Procurement was present for this item.*

The Board noted the update on Audit and Risk. The Board noted that the first meeting of the QQI Audit Committee had taken place on 15 March 2013 and noted the report of that meeting by the Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

The Board noted that the Audit Committee had adopted the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee subject to a number of changes and the revised Terms of Reference would be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting scheduled for 22 April 2013. The Board noted that the Audit Committee had adopted an Internal Audit Charter and had discussed the provision of internal audit services.

The Board noted that following its consideration of the draft NQAI Cessation Accounts 2012, the Committee recommended the Financial Statements to the Board for its approval to be signed by the Chairperson and Chief Executive, subject to there being no material changes. The Board noted that the draft HETAC and FETAC Financial Statements for 2012 will be considered by the Audit Committee at its next meeting scheduled for 27 March before being presented to the Board at its April 2013 Meeting.

On foot of the Audit Committee's recommendations on the provision of internal audit services, the Board approved the appointment of an internal staff member who has the relevant qualifications and experience as internal auditor of QQI supplemented by outsourcing certain internal audit services where it is not appropriate for that person to carry out audits, areas such as where that person has direct line management responsibility, or for technical IT audits or where it is in the interest to obtain an external view of QQI internal financial controls.

## **8. Budget and Finance**

The Board noted the update on Budget and Finance. The Board noted the draft NQAI Cessation Accounts for 2012 which were presented to the QQI Audit Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2013 and noted that the audit of these accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office was scheduled to commence on 19 March.

The Board approved the signing by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive of the NQAI Cessation Accounts 2012, following clearance by the Comptroller and Auditor General and subject to there being no material changes. The Board agreed to the Executive's request to open a QQI credit card account and instructed the Executive to proceed with the matter.

#### **9. Interim Advisory Group**

The Board noted the Recommendations made by the Interim Advisory Group, which included the draft minutes of the Interim Advisory Group meeting which had taken place on 21 February 2013. The Board noted the Chairperson's declaration of interest with regard to a one-year progress report arising from an Institutional Review on which he had been the Panel Secretary.

The Board noted the minutes of 21 February and the recommendations proposed by the Group to the Chief Executive at this meeting.

#### **10. Board Rolling Agenda 2013-2014**

The Board noted the update on Board Rolling Agenda 2013-2014. The Board noted that as the Executive continues to advance and revise its timelines on policy development, this document will continue to change. The Board noted that an updated version which will include the newly scheduled July Board Meeting will be presented at the April Board Meeting.

#### **11. Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events**

The Board noted the document entitled Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events. The Board noted that the Executive will be hosting several international delegations at its offices in Denzille Lane over the next few months.

#### **12. Next Meeting**

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on 22 April beginning at 10:00 a.m.

#### **13. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.**