Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the thirty fourth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 27 April 2018 at 1.20 p.m. in the QQI Meeting Rooms, 10 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2.

Present:	Ms. Joanne Harmon (Chair)
	Dr. Padraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
	Ms. Cliona Curley (Secretary)
	Dr. Barbara Brittingham
	Ms. Mary Danagher (Items 1-9)
	Mr. Blake Hodkinson
	Mr. Thomas McDermott
	Prof. Irene Sheridan (Items 1-10)
	Dr. Anne Walsh
Apologies:	Mr. Oisín Hassan
	Ms. Niamh O'Reilly
In attendance:	Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
	Mr. Eamonn Collins (Items 6-8)
	Dr. Anna Murphy (Item 9)

INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson welcomed Members recently appointed to the Board and in attendance at their first QQI Board Meeting. The Board noted that the meeting had been preceded by an Induction Session.

Following confirmation that a quorum was in place, the Board agreed the agenda for the meeting was acceptable and proceeded to the first item.

1. **POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

    The Board noted that no conflicts of interest were declared.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 23 FEBRUARY 2018

The *Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting* held on 23 February 2018 were **confirmed and signed**.

3. NOTE OF THE MEETING OF 23 FEBRUARY 2018

The Board **approved** the *Note of the Meeting of 23 February 2018* for publication on the QQI website.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1. QQI/M33.6 – Accommodation Update

The Board noted that the update on the Accommodation Plan due to be presented to the Board at the April 2018 meeting had been deferred until the meeting scheduled for 22 June 2018. The Board noted that to facilitate the half day Induction Session for Board Members which preceded this meeting, the Chair and the Executive had deferred a number of items from the Agenda which were for noting or did not require an immediate Board decision. Following a query by a Board Member, the Board noted that work was progressing in the accommodation area and a full update would be provide at the next meeting.

4.2. QQI/M33.6 – Review of ICT

The Board noted that the Review of ICT arising from the Organisational Review had been completed and the review would be considered at the next meeting of the Organisational Review Steering Group which was scheduled for 4 May 2018.

4.3. Action Tracker

The Board noted the **Action Tracker**.

The Board noted that the Executive had yet to progress the Review of Quality in Higher Education which features in the Department of Education and Skills' (DES) Action Plan for 2018. The Board noted the Executive's intention to discuss and clarify the review with the Department's newly appointed Assistant Secretary General at an upcoming meeting.

The Board noted that the Executive had developed a proposal in relation to the establishment of Relationship Fees for the Education and Training Board sector which may help to put more stable and predictable income in place.

5. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

The Board noted the **Draft June 2018 Board Agenda.**

5.1. Organisational Review

The Board noted and discussed the initial draft Agenda for the Board Meeting scheduled for 22 June. The Board noted that the Agenda would include an update on the Organisational Review. The Chairperson requested that the Change Management Consultant attend the next Board Meeting to present a review of progress to date. The Board noted that the Organisational Review Steering Group was scheduled to meet on 4 May, the first meeting of the group in 2018.

5.2. Funding Model Overview

The Board noted the Executive's intention to present an overview of the QQI Funding Model at the next Board Meeting.

5.3. Strategic Planning

The Board noted that a Board Strategy Workshop had been scheduled for 28 May 2018. The Board noted that, under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016, a copy of the draft Strategic Plan should be provided to the Minister for Education and Skills for views prior to the Board finalising and adopting the plan. The Board noted that there is a 12 week period within which the Minister may consider the plan before making a submission.

The Board noted that the Executive had progressed the development of a new strategic statement as much as possible in the absence of a fully populated Board and with a vacancy in the Chairperson role and further noted that the timeline for completion of the Strategy will be tight as a result.

5.4. Apprenticeships

The Board noted that the requested presentation on Apprenticeships would take place at the Board Meeting scheduled for 22 June.

5.5. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Chair and Board Members requested an update on progress in relation to GDPR.

The Board noted that the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee would take place on 12 June 2018 and would consider draft associated documentation.

5.6. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

The Board noted that the Executive would make the necessary arrangements for the Chief Executives of SOLAS and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to attend part of the Board Meetings which will be scheduled for September and November/December respectively.

6. **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Board noted a verbal update on Human Resources**.**

Items omitted from this note.

6.1. Staffing

The Board noted that the sanctioned posts below which the Board was advised of at its February 2018 Meeting had been advertised and offers made to successful candidates:

- APO – Finance Manager
- APO – Stakeholder Engagement Division (Communications Manager)
- Grade VI – Finance Unit

The Board noted that an acting up position at Grade V had recently commenced in the QA – Regulation Section.

The Board noted an update on recent retirements and resignations and noted that the Executive was in discussions with the Department in relation to sanction to fill these positions.

6.2. IR Forum

The Board noted that a meeting of the IR Forum had been held on 12 April 2018.

The Chair thanked the Manager of HR, Employee Engagement and Finance for managing both the Finance and HR functions simultaneously over the last number of years.

7. **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

The Board noted the update on **Budget and Finance**.

7.1. Finance Report to 31 March 2018

The Board noted the Financial Report to 31 March 2018. The Executive updated the Board on the financial situation during the first Quarter of 2018. The Board noted that the Executive Management Team (EMT) continues to keep a close eye on expenditure and noted that the Executive expects to be in a better position to predict the financial likelihood for the remainder of the year towards the end of Quarter 2.

The Board noted that the Department had invited the QQI Executive to submit to the 2019 Estimates Budget by the end of May 2018. The Board noted that the drawdown of the State Grant for 2018 is currently on target.

8. **AUDIT AND RISK**

The Board noted the documents relating to **Audit and Risk**.

The Board noted a report of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 27 February 2018 together with the verbal report of the meeting of 26 April 2018 provided by the Audit and Risk Chair.

8.1. <u>Internal Audit Reports</u>

The Board noted and discussed a number of Internal Audit Reports.

The Board noted that there is an existing consolidated document retention system in place since the establishment of QQI and work is underway to revise it to reflect upcoming changes in the area of records management.

The Board noted that work is ongoing on updating recently agreed job titles in various existing HR policies.

The Board noted that Protection for Enrolled Learners forms part of the Validation process.

The Board **approved** the Internal Audit Reports for:

- Human Resources Policy
- Records and Document Management System
- Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)

8.2. <u>Review of System of Internal Controls (SIC) 2017</u>

The Board noted that the Report of the Review of the System of Internal Controls was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting held on 26 April 2018 and the Chair of the Committee provided a verbal update on the matter.

The Board noted the Committee's disappointment that a number of items were re-occurring in the recommendations arising from the Review. The Board noted the Audit and Risk Committee Chair's request that the recommendations outlined in the Review be resolved by their June meeting with no extensions to the timelines. The Board noted the Executive's intention that a revised Procurement Plan would be completed by June.

The Board noted that in relation to the ongoing implementation of devolved budgeting, the Board and Executive would wish to see the financial/budgetary

situation resolved in the first instance, before establishing and embedding devolved budgeting in the organisation.

The Board suggested that the Executive should be cognisant of considering links between its strategy statement and the risk register during the strategy development process.

The Board **approved** the Review of the System of Internal Controls for 2017.

8.3. Financial Statements 2017

The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee considered the draft Financial Statements for 2017 at its meeting on 26 April 2018 and the Chair of the Committee provided a verbal update on the matter.

The Board noted a number of minor amendments. The Board noted that the Committee raised a number of its queries directly with the QQI Accountant who was present at its meeting.

The Board **approved** the Financial Statements for 2017 subject to the resolution of the Audit and Risk Committee's queries, receipt of the Management Letter in respect of the 2016 Audit from the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), their audit by the Office of the C&AG and there being no material changes.

The Board noted the Audit and Risk Committee had agreed to write to the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General inviting its representative to attend an upcoming meeting of the Committee to discuss the format for the recording of certain material in the Financial Statements following revisions arising from the Code of Practice 2016.

8.4. Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2017

The Board **approved** the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2017.

8.5.	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 3 November 2017.

9. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board noted the update on **Strategic Planning**.

9.1.	Corporate Plan 2017

The Board noted the Q1 Progress report on the 2018 Corporate Plan.

9.2.	Draft Annual Report 2017

The Board noted a working draft Annual Report for 2017. The Executive undertook to incorporate the feedback received from the Board into the draft document.

The Board noted that the final draft Report would be circulated to the Board for comment circa 18 May with a deadline for receipt of feedback around 28 May. The final version of the Report would be presented to the Board for approval on 22 June prior to submission to the Minister for Education and Skills by 30 June.

9.3.	QQI Strategy Statement 2019-2021

The Board noted the update on the process for the drafting of QQI's next Strategy Statement. The Board noted that a number of meetings with key Stakeholders had taken place in addition to several meetings with the Executive Management Team (EMT) and managers within the organisation. The Board noted initial feedback was encouraging to move the organisation beyond where it is currently. The Board noted the outline of the next steps and the proposed timeline for the remainder of the process.

The Board noted the challenge to finalise the strategic statement and work to meet statutory deadlines particularly considering that there was a vacancy in the role of Chairperson and the Board was not fully populated for approximately 6 months of the development phase. The Board noted the statutory deadline of 5 August 2018

and the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies for a 12 week consultation period with the relevant Minister.

The Board noted the next immediate step was the Consultative Forum on 10 May which would be utilised to gain an idea of that group's expectations over the period covered by the Strategic Statement. The Board noted that a Board and EMT Strategy Workshop was scheduled for the afternoon of 28 May and the Executive was working on preparing material for consideration at the workshop. The Board also requested that the Executive assemble some material for it outlining the interrelationships between key stakeholders.

The Board suggested finding a method of measuring the success of Strategy (implementation) during its life span, for example, gathering status quo from stakeholders at beginning and end of the Strategy period on priority areas. The Board also suggested that the Executive should include any naturally occurring metrics in the next phase of development.

The Board acknowledged the amount of work completed to date and noted that the process was moving to further consultation with core stakeholders and moving to the next phase of meetings. The Board noted the intention to present a final draft strategy to the Board at its meeting scheduled for 22 June.

The Chief Executive delivered a presentation on the current priorities arising from the strategy development and deliberations. The outline priorities referenced included:

- Demonstrate credible impact on the quality of education and training and on the learner experience;
- Develop, promote and protect the integrity of the National Framework of Qualifications;
- Support the development of Quality Assurance and Qualifications policies through the mutually beneficial strategic partnerships;
- Build internal capacity to sustain, improve and communicate QQI's performance.

The Board noted the Executive's gratitude to the Senior Strategic Advisor, the EMT, the Change Management Consultant and the Strategic Design Group for all the work completed to date.

The Board suggested including consideration of QQI as a reactive or proactive organisation in the strategy deliberations. This strategy for the period 2019-2021 may provide the first opportunity since QQI's establishment in 2012 to consider where it can add value.

10. **GOVERNANCE**

10.1. Appointments to QQI Committees

The Board noted that the Chairperson had discussed QQI Committee participation with each of the newly appointed Board Members and thanked them for their co-operation and accommodation of the requests.

The Board **approved** the following committee appointments:

- Anne Walsh – Policies and Standards Committee Chairperson
- Blake Hodkinson – Audit and Risk Committee Member
- Irene Sheridan – Approvals and Reviews Committee Member
- Niamh O'Reilly – Policies and Standards Committee Member

11. **RELATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

The Board noted the document entitled **Relations with the Department of Education and Skills**.

The Board noted the final signed Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight Agreement for 2018. The Board noted that the first PDA Review Meeting of 2018 had taken place on 21 March 2018.

12. **ITEMS FOR NOTING**

The Board noted the **Items for Noting**.

12.1. <u>Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC)</u>

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee held on 21 September 2017.

12.2. <u>Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)</u>

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 7 February 2018.

12.3. <u>Recent QQI Publications</u>

The Board noted the recent publication of:

- Quality Assurance Guidelines on Blended Learning Programmes
- Green Paper on Assessment
- Report on 'Levels 1-3 Awards Standards Review'.

12.4. <u>Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events</u>

The Board noted the Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events (from 28 February – 27 April 2018).

12.5. <u>Rolling Board Agenda 2018</u>

The Board noted an update on the Rolling Board Agenda for 2018.

13. **NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday, 22 June 2018** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.