



Minutes

Board Meeting

Time and venue

08.00am by Microsoft Teams

Date

Thursday, 28 January 2021

Attendees

Board

Ian Bauckham	Interim Chair
Susan Barratt	
Delroy Beverley	
Lesley Davies	
Hywel Jones	
Simon Lebus	Chief Regulator
Dr Catherine McClellan	
Dame Christine Ryan	
Matt Tee	(until 192/20)
Mike Thompson	
Frances Wadsworth	

Ofqual

Beth Black	SRO VTQ 2021 Programme
Niamh Field	Board Secretary
Lorna Fitzjohn	Acting Executive Director, Vocational & Technical Qualifications
Daniel Gutteridge	Director of Legal
Michael Hanton	Director of Strategy and Markets
Matthew Humphrey	Director of Legal Moderation and Enforcement
Janet Holloway	Associate Director, Standards for Design, Development and Evaluation of General Qualifications
Cath Jadhav	SRO GQ 2021 Programme
Catherine Large	Interim Executive Director, Vocational & Technical Qualifications
Andy Lester	Private Secretary to the Acting Chief Regulator
Michelle Meadows	Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research
Jane Parsons	Director of Communications
Sean Pearce	Chief Operating Officer
Emma Scott	Interim Director of Operations, VTQs (item 191/20)
Julie Swan	Executive Director, General Qualifications
Lydia Waine	Associate Director of Legal Establishment

185/20 Welcome and apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

186/20 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

187/20 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from the Emergency Board Meetings held on 07 January 2021, 12 January 2021 and 13 January 2021 were approved subject to the following amendments:

- i. Revision of 171/20 paragraph two to read: Consideration was given to Non-Exam Assessment and internal assessments, and where internal assessment could continue, it should do so in accordance with the principles of the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework.
- ii. Revision of 171/20 paragraph three to be updated to read: The Board supported... delegation of the method of assessment replacement to Awarding Organisations which Ofqual would monitor and oversee
- iii. Revision of 177/20 paragraph one to read: The consultation would replicate the 2020 approach for Other General Qualifications similar in nature to GCSE and A levels.

The matters arising were noted.

188/20 Decisions taken by Electronic Business

The Board noted the following decisions taken by Electronic Business

- i. Arrangements for Transfer of Chief Regulator Powers, 17 December 2020 (approved 18 December 2020)
- ii. Legal advice regarding 2021 alternative arrangements, 12 January 2021 (for information)

189/20 Recovery Committee Assurance Report to the Board

The Board noted the Recovery Committee Assurance Report which summarised the Recovery Committee's business from 10 September to 15 December 2020.

190/20 2021 Committee Update

The Board had agreed to establish a temporary Committee, known as the 2021 Committee, to oversee and support the regulation of regulated qualifications and assessments for the 2020/2021 academic year. In making its decision to establish the Committee, the Board had anticipated that the Committee would take decisions related to the implementation of the policy announced by Ofqual and government in early December. The Board had determined that strategically material decisions on both strategy and implementation of these decisions would be referred back to it. However, following the government's announcements in early January 2021 to close schools and to cancel GCSE, AS and A level exams and certain other assessments, it was considered that, given the extraordinary nature of the alternative arrangements, all decisions required would be strategically material in the short-term and would likely remain strategically material in the medium-term. This therefore rendered the delegation made by the Board to the 2021 Committee redundant.

The Board therefore agreed with the proposal to wind up the 2021 Committee. Board members noted that given the need to put in place a comprehensive approach for 2021 awarding, alongside other workstreams, an agile and responsive approach to strategic decision-making would be required.

The Board Chair had spoken with the Independent Chair and independent members of the 2021 committee who also supported the proposal. Consideration would also be given as an alternative as to whether to establish a stakeholder group of MAT leaders and Head teachers up in an advisory capacity.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to agree:

- i. To wind up the 2021 Committee with immediate effect
- ii. That the Board directly consider all decisions related to the award of qualifications in 2021, rather than through any Committee structure
- iii. To approve the revised proposed schedule of Board meeting dates for the remainder of 2021

191/20 Update on the consultation on alternative arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2021

The Board received an update on the number of consultation responses received to date, a breakdown of broad categories of respondent, key headlines and risks associated with the consultation in relation to General Qualifications (GQs) and Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs). The Board noted that the now compressed timeline for an announcement on 22 February 2021 was challenging and the risks heightened. The Board would need to have sufficient time to enable it to carefully consider next steps in the light of the responses. Should there be an indication that the timeline could be compressed further, the Board agreed to delegate the negotiation of the detail to the Chair and the executive.

The Board noted that there would be a requirement to undertake a VTQ technical consultation before a new regulatory framework could be implemented. This would necessitate a further delay in settling all issues for VTQ students following the announcement on 22 February 2021. It would be important to ensure that further delays were minimised and timescales for finalising arrangements for VTQ students were clearly communicated.

The Board welcomed the update on Functional Skills (FSQ) and noted the issues raised. An update would be provided at a future Board meeting.

Board members would welcome receipt of the consultation analysis summary as soon as it was available.

192/20 VTQ Reform Programme

The Board was provided with an overview of the VTQ Reform Programme. Given the detailed programme of reform, updates would be provided to the Board at future meetings in more detail.

The Board congratulated Catherine Large on her appointment as Interim Executive Director of Vocational and Technical Qualifications.

193/20 Publication of papers

The Board agreed to the publication of all open papers.

194/20 Any Other Business

It was reported that the National Reference Test (NRT) 2021 was due to be administered in schools between 22 February 2021 and 05 March 2021. As schools were presently closed to most students, the SoS had this week agreed that Ofqual could defer administering the test in schools until the summer term. Ofqual would inform schools of the plan.

The meeting ended at 09.30am.