

Ofqual Board

Paper 23/15

Date:

29 July 2016

Title:

Chief Executive's Report

Report by:

Glenys Stacey, Chief Regulator

Paper for discussion

open paper (appendices 1-4 closed)



Issue

1. This short report updates the Board on strategy and progress. It updates the Board on known and relevant Government policy priorities and sets out known strategic risks.

Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to note progress and to review the organisation's strategic risk register

Considerations

Policy Developments

3. A broad range of topics warrant Board members' attention here. Beginning with National Assessments, we have provided advice to Nick Gibb and the Standards and Testing Agency on Government's proposed reforms, including reception base-lining, multiplication tests and teacher assessment. STA will consult with us formally on these proposals in due course. Board members are briefed further in a closed appendix one.
4. Referring to the General Qualifications (GQ) update paper (28/15), we completed our follow-up up maths research at the end of June. New sample assessment materials (SAMs) came online from Exam Boards immediately on the 30th June. There was little media coverage of the release of new SAMs.

5. New select committees have been formed both for Education and for Business, Innovation and Skills. We have written to both committee chairs and have been called to provide oral evidence to the Education Select Committee in November.
6. The Welsh Government has accepted a radical overhaul of curriculum and assessments, based on an independent review conducted by Prof Donaldson. The changes will include removing key stages and replacing them with 'progression steps'. A levels and GCSEs will remain but less directly related to accountability measures. Board members are pointed to an update on the set up of Qualifications Wales, in the Vocational Qualifications (VQ) update paper (25/15). Here the risks and issues are largely now favourably concluded.
7. Staying with the VQ update paper, Board members will note recent discussions with officials in DfE regarding Ministers' intentions for reform to 14-19 qualifications. We are due to meet Nick Boles in early August and welcome the opportunity to discuss his priorities.
8. We published our third annual report to the Northern Ireland Assembly about our work on vocational qualifications at the beginning of July. This covered the period 1st April 2012 – 31st December 2014.

Strategy and delivery

9. The commissioned review of our progress in developing and delivering our regulatory strategy is now complete. The report found that we have made good progress in many areas, which including reducing regulatory burden through the removal of the general accreditation requirement and the QCF also. The report found that we have made good progress also in developing specialist audit capability.
10. We are already underway in implementing the recommendations in the report. These include implementing a new governance framework for our internal regulatory decision making processes. This will improve our effectiveness in assessing awarding organisation compliance with our conditions.
11. We will also adopt a new approach to strategy development and deployment. This will include setting out a clear strategy for general qualifications, vocational qualifications and National Assessments. We will use this strategy cascade to inform the development of our next corporate plan for 2016-19.

Progress in delivery

12. The Board is asked to note progress against planned activity during the 2015/16 business year, as shown at appendix two. We continue to make progress delivering our corporate plan for 2015-18.
13. Board members are updated on the work of the Chief Operating Officer and team at Board paper 24/15. Here we report that our accounts were audited without qualification. In July we laid before Parliament our

annual report and accounts for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

14. We received confirmation from DfE that we will not be expected to make in-year reductions to our 2015/16 budget for either reform or CSR. This maintains our ability to deliver according to our published corporate plan.
15. Board members are referred to the individual updates from the General and Vocational directorates for a comprehensive view of key delivery in the past two months (papers 28/15 and 25/15).
16. Notably, no Exam Board has yet met our requirements for accreditation of reformed GCSEs and A levels to be taught from 2016. We have provided feedback to Exam Boards who are preparing resubmissions. Board members are directed to the General Qualifications update paper for further briefing.
17. Our prototype of an improved register of regulated qualifications is now available on line. We are receiving positive feedback (see the VQ update paper 25/15) on this first version of the new register and will continue to make and release improvements over the coming months.

Capacity and capability

18. Recruitment continues to progress at a steady pace. We have made some pleasing appointments, particularly in Research and the Standards teams in both VQ and GQ, areas that at present are acutely resource constrained.
19. We announced the appointment of Dr Ian Stockford as Executive Director for General Qualifications at the end of June. Ian's appointment marks the full appointment of the executive team.

Strategic Risks and Issues

20. Board members are asked to review and comment on Ofqual's strategic risks and mitigations, as shown in the updated register attached at appendix three. We are recommending the closure of the risk related to the Welsh Assembly.
21. Board members will note that we have closed the strategic issue related to GCSE maths on the conclusion of our second phase of research. The strategic issue log is found at appendix four.
22. Progress is neutral or positive across the strategic risk register – none are reported as negative. We will be making further improvements to our management of strategic risk in response to internal audit feedback, with a further enhanced strategic risk register coming to the Board for their next meeting.

Future Look

23. The forward planner for the Board is attached at appendix five.

24. We will continue to deliver the plans and actions agreed.

Impact Analysis

Internal stakeholders

25. Each directorate has now had an individual launch event to mark the implementation of our new operating model. The format of each day included common components across all directorates, with a focus on supporting staff to see their contribution to overall organisation objectives.
26. Relations with the PCS union are positive and we have successfully closed down collective consultation.

External stakeholders

27. Relationships with external stakeholders remain generally positive. We have worked positively with ASCL to improve awareness and understanding of the National Reference Test. We continue to engage actively with a range of stakeholders on arrangements for science practicals.

Paper to be published	YES
Publication date (if relevant)	After the meeting

Appendices list:

- Appendix one: Update on National Assessments – closed
Appendix two: Corporate Plan Progress Report – closed
Appendix three: Strategic Risk Register - closed
Appendix four: Strategic Issues Register - closed
Appendix five: Board Forward Plan

Forward Planner - Ofqual Board

Subject	29 July 15	23 Sept 15	18 Nov 15	20 Jan 16	23 Mar 16	May 16	June 16	July 16	Note
Reporting/Governance									
CEO Report	x	x	x	x	x				
COO Report	x	x	x	x	x				
Strategy, Risk and Research Directorate Update			x						
Corporate Plan					x				
Business and Financial Plan					x				
Annual review of Governance Framework			x						
Review of Advisory Group Membership					x				
Report on the work of Board Committees	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
2014/15 Annual Report and Accounts							x		teleconference
Dates for Board & Committee meetings in 2015/16			x						
Regulatory Business									
General Qualifications Directorate Update	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Vocational Qualifications Directorate Update	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
National reference test	x		x					x	
QCF - post consultation decision	x								
Enquiries after results	x								Update in CEOs report
Awarding reformed qualifications (2017 onwards)	x								
Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments	x								
Subjects for 2017 reform - pre consultation decisions	x								by electronic business
Subjects for 2017 reform - post consultation decisions			x						
2017 Subject Content: round 2		x							by electronic business August/Sept