

Fifty fifth meeting of the Ofqual Board

**Minutes of the meeting held at 10:00 on
Wednesday 23 September 2015 at Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry**

Present: Board Members
Tim Balcon
Mike Cresswell
Maggie Galliers
Anne Heal
Barnaby Lenon
Amanda Spielman (Chair)
Terri Scott
Glenys Stacey
Tom Taylor
Neil Watts
Julius Weinberg

Ofqual

Marc Baker	Chief Operating Officer
Jeremy Benson	Executive Director for Vocational Qualifications
Matthew Humphrey	Associate Director, Legal Moderation and Enforcement
Michelle Meadows	Executive Director for Strategy, Risk & Research
Ian Stockford	Executive Director for General Qualifications
Alison Townsend	Board Secretariat Manager

34/15 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Philip Fletcher, Roger Taylor, Dana Ross-Wawrzynski and Susan Ali-Shah, Interim Associate Director Finance (for item 38/15).

35/15 Declarations of Interest

Neil Watts declared an interest in paper 38/15 (paragraph 28 only) as he was a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation Complaints Committee. The interest was not considered relevant to the line of discussion in the meeting and Neil remained in the room for this item.

36/15 **Minutes**

The Board agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 29 July as a true record.

Matters Arising

The Board considered and noted a paper on matters arising from previous meetings:-

115/14, 25 March 2015 – work to draft the consultation on resit arrangements for outgoing GCSE, AS and A level specifications was nearing completion and the consultation would start soon.

119/14, 25 March 2015 – the Chair reported that Dr Rebecca Allen, Director, Education Datalab and Ian Bauckham, Headteacher, Bennett Memorial Diocesan School had been appointed to the Standards Advisory Group.

7/15, 20 May 2015 – the OCR report on the investigation into summer 2014 marking issues had been published on 7 August 2015.

23/15, 29 July 2015 – the Board sub-group had met to consider the Teacher Assessment Framework consultation. An update on this was included at item 40/15 on the agenda.

25/15, 29 July 2015 – a full update on the functional skills reform programme would be brought to the 18 November board meeting.

26/15, 29 July 2015 – new conditions necessary to allow the withdrawal of the QCF were published on 19 September 2015 ahead of the withdrawal of the QCF on 30 September 2015.

27/15, 29 July 2015 – work was under way to prepare the consultation on the retention of existing specifications made under section 96 of the Equality Act 2010.

28/15, 29 July 2015 – the board had taken a decision on the subject content for the second phase of qualifications reformed for first teaching in 2016 by electronic business on 7 September 2015.

28/15, 29 July 2015 – work was under way to implement the board's decision on lesser taught languages to ensure that the qualifications would be subject to the same regulatory principles as other reformed qualifications.

All other matters arising were picked up on the agenda.

37/15 **Chief Executive's Report**

The Board considered and noted an update paper on key issues for the Chief Executive. The latest strategic risk register was annexed to the paper; the board reviewed the register and welcomed the updated format. The board

made a number of observations on the register that would be drawn on when it was next reviewed.

The board received an update on the work to develop Ofqual's strategy on National Assessments and noted that a session on this was planned for the next board strategy day. The plan and timetable to draw together the next report to parliament was briefly discussed and noted by the board.

38/15 **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

The Board considered an update paper on operational matters and discussed:-

- an update on the 2016-21 comprehensive spending review including discussions on this with DfE. The potential implications of the outcome of the review were briefly outlined to the Board; and
- the current 2015/16 forecast outturn spend and work taking place to decide how to reallocate underspend;

The Board discussed aspects of the report and the associated verbal update including work taking place to ensure Ofqual meets its corporate plan objectives while posts in the organisation structure remained vacant. The Board also noted actions under way to develop Health and Safety expertise within Ofqual and issues with the facilities management contractor in this area.

The Board went on to consider the Information Management Transformation Programme including the agile approach to the development and implementation work and how the risks associated with the work were being managed. The Board received a short presentation on the work to develop a replacement regulatory platform including a demonstration of the new system.

The Board approved spend for the extension of a contractor in the data services team for work since August 2013 at a total cost of £265,940.

39/15 **Vocational Qualifications Update**

The Board considered and noted a paper that updated it on current activities in the Vocational Qualifications Directorate. The Board discussed key issues including:-

- the withdrawal of the QCF rules and launch of the new regulatory framework at the end of September 2015; and
- the focus of current regulatory work. The board discussed options for regulatory action available to Ofqual and the potential unintended consequences of these. The Board noted that full consideration was given to the balance of the public interest before any regulatory action was taken.

40/15 **General Qualifications Update**

The Board considered a paper that updated it on current activities within the General Qualifications Directorate.

The Board discussed the current process to accredit reformed qualifications for first teaching in 2016. The Board noted that to date no specification had been successfully accredited at first submission and that, in 2014, only a small number of first submissions had been successful. The Board heard that the quality of specifications at second submission was improved and went on to discuss the accreditation process generally including communications to schools around the process. The Board noted that it was established practice for exam boards to place specification materials on their websites at the point they were submitted for accreditation. While this action gave schools visibility of specifications as early as possible it placed the draft materials in the public domain and meant that they were open to public discussion. The Board agreed that exam boards should be allowed to continue to place unaccredited specifications on their websites but that the accreditation status should be made clear.

The Board went on to consider aspects of the paper including:-

- work and analysis that had been carried out to support the award of the CIE IGCSE First Language English qualification; and
- an update on plans for the reform of lesser taught languages. The Board noted that a meeting was scheduled with exam boards to discuss issues with the reform of these qualifications and develop a way forward.

The Board agreed:-

- (i) that the Board would take decisions on the incorporation of the assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE design and technology qualifications, consulted on by DfE, into Ofqual's regulatory framework by electronic business;**
- (ii) that the Board would take decisions on the subject content for the remaining four subjects proposed for first teaching in 2017 by electronic business; and**
- (iii) the proposed assessment objectives for AS/A level mathematics/ further mathematics and delegated the authority to approve any further minor changes required as part of the development of related statutory guidance to the Chief Regulator.**

41/15 **Appointment to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

The Board considered and a paper that recommended the appointment of Roger Taylor to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to the Board. The paper also recommended the terms of reference for the committee be increased to permit the appointment of five board members to the Committee

for the period to 31 March 2015 to allow a period of handover between Philip Fletcher and Roger Taylor.

The Board:-

- (i) appointed Roger Taylor to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee until 31 March 2018; and**
- (ii) increased the membership of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to 'up to five Board Members' for the period to 31 March 2016.**

42/15 Publication of Papers

The Board heard that work was under way to look at increasing the transparency of the Board's business and how more papers could be published.

The Board agreed that, subject to some minor redactions, all papers for this meeting would be published.

43/15 Other Business

There was no other business.

44/15 Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting would be on Wednesday 18 November 2015. There would be a Board strategy day on Friday 9 October 2015.

Ofqual Board

Paper 47(ii)/15

Date:

18 November 2015

Title:

Matters arising from past Board meetings

Report by:

Alison Townsend, Board Secretariat Manager

Responsible Director:

Jeremy Benson, Executive Director for Vocational Qualifications

Paper for information**open paper**

Issue

1. To update the Board on progress with actions/matters arising from past Board meetings.

Recommendation

2. The Board is recommended to note the position on past actions.

Background

3. The table below sets out actions agreed at past meetings of the Ofqual Board and progress/plans to achieve these:-

Date/Minute	Action	Update
115/14 25 March 2015	<u>General Qualifications</u> <u>Update: resit arrangements</u> <u>for outgoing GCSE, AS and A</u> <u>level specifications</u> Proposals were agreed for consultation in May 2015.	Drafting of the consultation document is nearing completion and the consultation will start towards the end of November 2015.

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Date/Minute	Action	Update
25/15 29 July 2015	<p><u>Vocational Qualifications Update</u> in principle commitment to a functional skills reform programme subject to reaching agreement BIS on the resources for the programme; and the development of satisfactory scope and management arrangements for the programme.</p>	<p>An update is included in the Vocational Qualifications Update at item 50/15 on the agenda.</p>
27/15 29 July 2015	<p><u>Reasonable adjustments and Ofqual’s specifications under Section 96 of the Equality Act 2010</u> Ofqual should consult in September 2015 on the retention of existing specifications made under section 96 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>Work is under way to prepare the consultation and it is hoped to publish before the end of 2015.</p>
40/15 23 Sept 2015	<p><u>General Qualification Update</u> Decisions on the incorporation of the assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE design and technology qualifications into Ofqual’s regulatory framework would be taken by electronic business.</p>	<p>The Board agreed on 28 october 2015 by electronic business:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the the DfE’s content requirements could be incorporated into Ofqual’s regulatory framework; • that assessments should not be tiered; • that 50% of marks will be allocated to non-exam assessment (NEA), with specific conditions put in place to set out the way in which it operates; and • that authority is delegated to the Chief Regulator to confirm the final wording and weighting of the assessment objectives

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

Date/Minute	Action	Update
40/15 23 Sept 2015	<u>General Qualifications Update</u> Decisions on the subject content for the remaining four subjects proposed for first teaching in 2017 would be taken by electronic business.	The Board agreed on 28 October by electronic business that the subject content for short course GCSE physical education (PE), AS and A level politics and AS and A level geology was suitable for consultation as, in principle, it was consistent with our expectations and so capable of supporting effective regulation.

Paper to be published	YES – after the meeting
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ANNEXES: NONE