

Ofqual Board

Paper 4/15

Date:

20 May 2015

Title:

Chief Executive's Report

Report by:

Glenys Stacey, Chief Regulator

Paper for discussion

open paper



Issue

1. This short report updates the Board on strategy and progress. It updates the Board on known and relevant Government policy priorities following the recent national election, 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. There are no unexpected developments or initiatives so far, post-election.
4. We were well prepared for the perceived most likely General Election outcomes, and updated you on this on 30 April. Following the election there has been little change in the ministers we deal with most regularly, with Nicky Morgan, Nick Gibb and Nick Boles reappointed. Nick Gibb's responsibilities now include teacher training, the curriculum and accountability, alongside qualifications and the relationship with Ofqual.

5. We wrote to the Secretary of State for Education straightaway to advise her on immediate and medium term issues, and met with her and with Nick Gibb on 14 May. The Government's education priorities are as set out in the Conservative party manifesto, with (in addition) an aim to provide for community language qualifications at key stage four and beyond. Planned qualifications reform continues, with no new reforms or initiatives proposed.
6. Sajid Javid has been appointed as Business Secretary. Although we had no direct dealings with his predecessor, we may meet with the new Business Secretary, given the priority to be given to apprenticeships. We wrote to him on 12 May and to Nick Boles on 14 May, and hope to meet with minister Boles ahead of the summer break. Meanwhile, with a strong consensus amongst economists that skills are one essential element of improving the nation's productivity, we expect government priorities to include the stated commitment to 3m apprenticeships, and an increasing focus on higher level skills.

Strategy and delivery

7. As Board members no doubt expect, we are focused on delivering the strategies and activities set out in the Board's Corporate Plan. With government policy in large part settled, Board members will not be surprised that there are no new strategic issues for discussion, albeit we will be discussing with the Board the complexities of EAR and Appeals reform in a presentation at the Board meeting.
8. The commissioned review of our progress in developing and delivering our regulatory strategy is well underway. Early indications are that we have made good progress, and now face two questions: whether and if so how best to evaluate whether individual qualifications are sufficiently valid, and how best to ensure a strong, sufficiently precise and consistent understanding within the growing organisation of how we regulate. We were already well aware of these questions, but it is nevertheless good to have them stated back to us.

Progress in delivery

9. The Board is asked to note progress against planned activity during the 2015/16 business year, as shown at appendix one. The reporting mechanisms that support the report are well developed, and the Board can have confidence in the timeliness and accuracy of reporting. At this stage of the year, the picture inevitably looks reassuring, and belies perhaps the challenge of delivering all that we set out to deliver in this business year (see paragraph 13, below).
10. Board members are updated on the work of the Chief Operating Officer and team at Board paper 05/15. With last year's resources managed well, like others in the public sector we now face CSR 2015.

11. Board members are referred to the individual updates from the General and Vocational directorates (papers 06/15 and 07/15) to see that we are still delivering at pace the reform of general qualifications while continuing to implement our regulatory strategy for vocational (and all) qualifications. With the contract for the National reference Test now signed, we will be providing the Board with periodic updates. More immediately, the 2015 exam season is underway. We continue to prepare for summer awarding, and update the Board in paper 07/15.
12. Board members are updated on the work of our Strategy, Risk & Research Directorate in a paper 09/15. Board members will wish to note, alongside progress in other areas, the completion (to time) of our GCSE Maths research programme (and the regulatory action we are taking) and also the success of our Teacher Ethics in Assessment symposium, held jointly with Oxford University in March.

Capacity and capability

13. May 18 marked the implementation of our new team level structures. Overall, implementation has been successful. The Chief Operating Officer's Report (closed paper 05/15) provides a more detailed update on progress. Board members should note that the organisation is inevitably carrying a good number of vacancies, as we transition to the new operating model. This continues to present some challenges in our capacity to deliver.
14. A second round of recruitment for the one remaining Executive Director post (in General Qualifications) is well underway, with final interviews planned for mid-June.

Strategic Risks and Issues

15. Board members are asked to review and comment on Ofqual's strategic risks and mitigations, as shown in the updated register attached at appendix two. Broadly the direction of travel is positive, though Board members will note steady and remaining concerns regarding our capability and CSR funding pressures – as noted above. Board members will note the strategic issues log at appendix three.

Future Look

16. The forward planner for the Board is attached at appendix four.
17. We will continue to deliver the plans and actions agreed.

Impact Analysis

Internal stakeholders

18. Collective consultation on our new operating model is closed, and the transition made. With the new directorates starting to take shape, each will have a launch day to set out directorate objectives and ways of working.

External stakeholders

19. Relationships with external stakeholders remain generally positive. Engagement with both the science and maths communities has been constructive and helpful.

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

Appendices list:

Appendix one: Corporate Plan Progress Report – closed

Appendix two: Strategic Risk Register - closed

Appendix three: Strategic Issues Register - closed

Appendix four: Board Forward Plan

Forward Planner - Ofqual Board

Subject	20 May 15	18 June 15	29 July 15	23 Sept 15	18 Nov 15	20 Jan 16	23 Mar 16	Note
Reporting/Governance								
CEO Report	x		x	x	x	x	x	
COO Report	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Strategy, Risk and Research Directorate Update	x				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	
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	
Vocational Qualifications Directorate Update	x		x	x	x	x	x	
National reference test			x		x			b/f further update July 2016
QCF - post consultation decision			x					
Enquiries after results - decision to consult	x							
Awarding reformed qualifications (2017 onwards)	x							
Equality Act section 96 specifications - agree position and consultation proposals			x					include in routine reporting
Subjects for 2017 reform - pre consultation decisions			x					may need to be by electronic business
Subjects for 2017 reform - post consultation decisions					x			