

Ofqual Board

Paper 11/17

Date:

17 May 2017

Title:

Review of Terms of Reference for the Standards Advisory Group and National Reference Test Advisory Sub Group.

Report by:

Salma Ahmed, Board Secretary

Responsible Director:

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator

Paper for decision

Open paper



Issue

1. The National Reference Test Sub Group (NRT Sub Group) provides advice to the Standards Advisory Group (SAG) on National Reference Test matters. SAG in turn provides advice to the Board. Following a review of the structure of the NRT Sub Group, it is recommended that some changes be made to its membership.
2. In order to increase the membership of the NRT Sub Group, some changes need to be made to its Terms of Reference. Any such changes would need to be agreed by the Board, this provided a timely opportunity for a wider review of the Terms of Reference for both the SAG and the NRT Sub Group.

Recommendation

3. The Ofqual Board is recommended to:-
 - a) Approve the changes to the Terms of Reference for SAG and the NRT Sub Group as set out in Annexes A and B; and
 - b) That John Jerrim is appointed to the NRT Sub Group.

Analysis

This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

5. In order to appoint an additional member to the NRT Sub Group revisions to its Terms of Reference are needed. In addition to this, it is proposed to make some updates to the SAG Terms of Reference to reflect current practice and some other minor changes.

6. The proposed revisions to the two sets of Terms of Reference are annotated as tracked changes in Annex A to this paper. Areas where revisions are proposed to the NRT Sub Group Terms of Reference are:-
 - (i) Membership (paragraph 2). To increase the number of members from 2 to 4.

7. The proposed revisions to the Governance Framework in relation to the Standards Advisory Group Terms of Reference are annotated as tracked changes in Annex B to this paper. Areas where revisions are proposed are:-
 - (i) Paragraph 1, Memberships (paragraphs 4 and 5), Duties (paragraphs 8 and 9), Meetings (paragraphs 14) and in addition to this a new paragraph (18) has been included to detail that the advisory group may establish Sub Committees for specific purposes. Such sub groups will be constituted as subcommittees of the Board.

8. Under Ofqual's governing legislation, the Board can establish Committees of the Board and, where those Committee's Terms of Reference provide the power to do so, Board Committees can establish Sub-Committees.

The Ofqual Governance Framework provides that the membership of Committees will be proposed by the Ofqual Chair and agreed by the Board and that membership of Sub-Committees will be proposed by the Chair of the relevant Committee, in consultation with the Ofqual Chair, and agreed by the Committee. Terms of reference for Committees and Sub Committees will be agreed in the same way. Nothing in the Governance Framework however prevents the Ofqual Board from making decisions on the governance and membership of

Sub Committees or for Committees to refer decisions on governance and membership to the Board.

For expediency therefore, the Board is asked to agree all of the proposed changes and the new appointment.

Finance and Resource

9. Costs for the review and implementation of the Governance Framework are marginal as they only concerned the Board Secretary's time.

Impact Assessments

10. No wider impacts have been identified

Risk Assessment

11. If the recommended adjustments to the Governance Framework cannot be made there would be a risk that the Framework would not be suitable for the Board and its business will not be managed efficiently.

Timescale

12. Changes will take effect once the Board has approved them.

Communications

13. The revised Governance Framework will be communicated appropriately to staff and placed on the website.

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

ANNEXES LIST:-

ANNEX A Terms of Reference for the SAG

ANNEX B Terms of Reference for the NRT Sub Group

Annex A

Standards Advisory Group

Terms of Reference



1. The Ofqual Board has established a Standards Advisory Group as a Committee of the Board to support its role in relation to standards of general qualifications, vocational qualifications and assessments. This includes, but is not limited to, matters concerning comparability between regulated qualifications, international comparisons, validity, reliability, predictability and setting standards.

Membership

2. The Advisory Group shall consist of:-
 - Between two and five members of the Board
 - A pool of independent members (see paragraph 5)
4. Appointments are made for a period of up to three years. In the case of Board members the appointment is for three years or until the member's Board term expires; whichever is the sooner. Appointments are renewable.
5. The independent members are generally appointed to the Advisory Group to bring particular expertise, and will usually be expected to attend only those meetings where their particular expertise is involved.
6. Alternates are not permitted.

Role

7. The role of the Standards Advisory Group is to consider and advise the Ofqual Board on qualification and assessment standards issues.

Duties

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9. .
10. Where possible to consider and advise on significant standards issues before they are considered by the Board
11. To review other standards issues at the request of the Board or the executive.

Meetings

12. The Advisory Group shall meet at least 3 times a year. The Chair of the Advisory Group may call additional meetings as s/he deems necessary.
13. A quorum shall be considered to be two members, one of whom should be a member of the Ofqual Board.
14. Meetings of the Advisory Group will normally be attended by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Standards Chair, Research Chair, relevant senior members of the Standards and Comparability and Research teams and the Board Secretary. Other members of staff may be asked to attend meetings as appropriate.
15. The Advisory Group may invite other individuals to attend meetings, for example to hear a particular stakeholder's point of view in a matter. The invitation may be for the entire meeting or for a specific item(s).
16. The Advisory Group may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members of the Advisory Group to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters.

Reporting

17. Minutes will be taken of each meeting of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group will normally report back in writing, via its minutes, to the Board after each meeting. The Chair of the Advisory Group will present the minutes to the Board. Meetings of the Advisory Group will be scheduled to allow this reporting mechanism to be achieved effectively.

Sub-committees

18. **The Advisory Group may establish Sub Groups for specific purposes. Any Sub Group will be constituted as a Sub Committee of the Board in line with the provisions set out in the Ofqual Governance Framework.**

Review

- 19 These terms of reference form part of the Ofqual Governance Framework and will be reviewed each year when that framework is reviewed.

Annex B

Standards Advisory Group (National Reference Test Sub Group)

Terms of Reference



1. The Ofqual Board has established a Standards Advisory Group to support its role in relation to qualification and assessment standards. A National Reference Test (NRT) Sub Group of the Standards Advisory Group has been established to support Ofqual's work in introducing and using the Tests. The Standards Advisory Group is formally a Committee of the Board and the Sub Group is a Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Group.

Membership

2. The Sub Group is made up of:-
 - One member of the Board who is also a member of the Standards Advisory Group
 - up to four independent members at least one of whom is also a member of the Standards Advisory Group
3. One member of the group shall be nominated by the Standards Advisory Group to chair the Sub Group.
4. Appointments are made for a period of up to three years. In the case of Board members the appointment is for three years or until the member's Board term expires; whichever is the sooner. Appointments are renewable.
5. Alternates are not permitted.

Role

6. The role of the Sub Group is to consider and advise the Standards Advisory Group on the introduction and use of the NRT. The Standards Advisory

Group will draw on the advice of the Sub Group in its advice to the Board on the NRT.

Duties

7. To consider issues associated with the introduction and use of the NRT including, but not limited to:-
 - (i) the design of the NRT
 - (ii) the analysis and presentation of the annual NRT results
 - (iii) the use of the NRT results in GCSE awarding
 - (iv) longer term plans for the development of the NRT
8. To review other issues associated with the NRT at the request of the Standards Advisory Group or the Ofqual Board.

Meetings

9. The Sub Group shall meet at least once a year. The Chair of the Sub Group may call additional meetings as s/he deems necessary and the Standards Advisory Group may request the Sub Group to convene a meeting.
10. A quorum shall be considered to be two members of the Sub Group.
11. Meetings of the Sub Group will normally be attended by the Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research, the Standards Chair, and the Director, National Reference Test Project and secretariat support. Other members of staff may be asked to attend meetings as appropriate.
12. The Sub Group may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members of the Sub Group to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters.

Reporting

13. Minutes will be taken of each meeting of the Sub Group. The Sub Group will normally report back in writing, via its minutes, to the Standards Advisory Group after each meeting. The Chair of the Sub Group will present the

minutes to the Standards Advisory Group. Meetings of the Advisory Group will be scheduled to allow this reporting mechanism to be achieved effectively.

Review

14. These terms of reference form part of the Ofqual Governance Framework and will be reviewed each year when that framework is reviewed.