

Minutes of the meeting of the 67th Ofqual Board Meeting
Held at 10am on Wednesday 17 May 2017 at Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry
CV5 6UB.

Present:

Ofqual Board

Roger Taylor	Chair
Sally Collier	Chief Regulator
Professor Julius Weinberg	
Mike Cresswell	
David Wakefield	
Barnaby Lenon	
Frances Wadsworth	
Christine Ryan	
Hywel Jones	
Tom Taylor	
Anne Heal	
Professor Terri Scott	

Ofqual

Marc Baker	Chief Operating Officer
Michelle Meadows	Executive Director Strategy, Risk and Research
Phil Beach	Executive Director for Vocational and Technical Qualifications
Julie Swan	Executive Director for General Qualifications
Natalie Prosser	
Salma Ahmed	Board Secretary
Christine Forde	Associate Director Regulation Development & Impact (for item 7/17 only)
Jim Busher	Senior Manager, Strategic Policy
Dennis Opposs	Standards Chair (for item 11/17 only)

Observers

Catherine Large	Director of Vocational Qualifications
Emma Leary	Associate Director VTQ Policy, Vocational Qualifications
Phil Carr	Associate Director Standards for Design & Development of Vocational Qualifications
Daniel Gutteridge	Associate Director for Legal Establishment
Matthew Humphrey	Associate Director for Legal Moderation and Enforcement
Clare Rowntree	Private Secretary

01/17 Closed Board Session

02/17 Welcome and apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Neil Watts.

03/17 Declarations of interest

Professor Julius Weinberg notified the Board that he may have a conflict of interest to declare since he has accepted the appointment of Chair of Ofsted. The Board noted this declaration.

04/17 Minutes

It was proposed by Anne Heal that item 88/16 of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2017 would require revising.

The Board agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 22 March 2017 as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

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

76/16, It was agreed that a briefing session on Functional Skills will take place immediately before the July or September Board meetings which Board members will have the option of attending.

88/16, The first version of the diagram explaining the various qualifications and how they fit in was presented to the new Board members during their induction on 16 May 2017. A refined version of the diagram would be circulated to the Board ahead of the next meeting in July.

88/16, A report on the National Reference Test would be provided to the July Board.

05/17 Chief Regulator's Report

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

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06/17 Vocational and Technical Qualifications Update

The Board considered an update on key issues for the VQ Directorate which included;-

Regulation

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

Reform

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07/17 Strategy, Risk and Research Update

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There was an update on work to make a small adjustment to the grading standards of A level modern foreign languages (MFL). The exact mechanism for the adjustment had yet to be finalised with exam boards.

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

08/17 General Qualifications Update

The Board considered an update on General Qualifications set out in the paper and summarised by the Executive Director for General Qualifications. It noted that the summer 2017 exams series had started and that exam boards' handling of any issues arising was being closely monitored.

The Board welcomed the work that was underway to develop a framework within which pilots could be run, providing opportunities for innovation. An update would be provided at the July meeting.

The Board:-

- (i) Board agreed that the decision to roll out the new requirements to Project Qualifications should be delegated to the Chief Regulator.**

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

09/17 Chief Operating Officer Report

The Chief Operating Officer provided the Board with an overview of the paper. Long term staff sickness had decreased over the last three months, this was as a result of management intervention and proactive case management so that the best outcome could be achieved for both the individual and the business.

Full year performance reviews have been completed. The Executive Directors and Chief Regulator are in the process of undertaking moderation sessions with Directorates.

The Draft Annual Report and Accounts was submitted to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 11 May 2017 and the Committee has provided positive feedback on the content.

Following the recent ransomware attacks that affected organisations such as the NHS on the 12th May, immediate action was taken by the IT team to alert all staff on the potential threat. IT colleagues worked over the weekend to carry out checks on the servers to ensure they had not been the subject of an attack. All six exam Boards were contacted in writing on Monday 15 May to confirm that they had also taken appropriate precautions. The Chief Operating Officer assured the Board that we were satisfied that all appropriate checks had taken place and that no cases had been identified. In addition, he confirmed that Windows 98, which was the Operating System that had been affected by the ransomware, has been phased out in Ofqual. He also confirmed that patches released by Microsoft were applied across the network within 5 days and that changes to virus definition files were applied immediately on receipt.

New software for carrying out searches on social media has been purchased to support the summer series monitoring. As a result reports are produced on a daily basis which are sent to SMG with a summary of comments and sentiments.

Regarding the recognition of Awarding Organisations, concern was raised about the high number of recognition applications being rejected. The Board was informed that the rejection rate was high at stage 1 since new applicants had failed to meet basic minimum requirements for recognition. Videos and guidance detailing the recognition requirements was readily available to

awarding organisations via the Ofqual website and it was important that the bar for meeting the recognition requirements remained high.

The Board was notified that Ofqual's application to join the Public Service Network (PSN) was accepted first time and confirmed on 29 March.

10/17 Report on the work of the Board Committees

The Chairs for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Finance Committee gave a short oral update on the matters considered at each meeting.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report which has been recommended by the government will be brought to the June Board for sign off.

The Chair of the Finance Committee updated the Board on the meetings that took place on 24 March and 11 May which considered the year end, staff survey and bullying action plan.

11/17 Review of the Terms of Reference for the Standards Advisory Group and National Reference Test Advisory Sub Group.

The Standards Chair provided the Board with a brief overview of the paper and explained the rationale for requesting the Board's approval to the changes in the Terms of Reference for the Standards Advisory Group and the Standards Advisory Group NRT Sub Group.

The Board gave its approval for:-

- (i) Changes to the Terms of Reference of the Standards Advisory Group.**
- (ii) Changes to the Terms of Reference of the Standards Advisory Group NRT Sub Group.**

12/17 Approve the membership of Board Committees

The Board was asked to approve a request to step down from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and also to approve a number of memberships to the Board Committees.

The Board gave its approval for:-

- i. Barnaby Lenon to step down from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.**
- ii. Christine Ryan and Frances Wadsworth to join the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.**

- iii. **David Wakefield to join the Finance Committee.**
- iv. **Hywel Jones to join a current Enforcement Committee.**

13/17 Publication of papers

The Board agreed, that those papers indicated as open should be published with the exception of some minor redactions agreed during the meeting and any minor post meeting redactions that the Chief Regulator would agree with the Chair

14/17 Other Business

The Board considered a paper for decision on the Board Engagement Plan. The idea of a Board engagement plan arose from the staff survey which proposed more visibility for the Board. It was proposed that members of the Board were aligned to individual Directorates and also attend the annual staff event. The Board agreed the proposition and emphasised the need for early calendarisation of engagement events.

15/17 Dates of the next meeting

The next Board meeting would be on Wednesday 12 July 2017.

