

**Minutes of the meeting of the 69<sup>th</sup> Ofqual Board meeting held at 10.00 am on Wednesday 12 July 2017 at Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry, CV5 6UB.**

**Present: Board Members**

Roger Taylor                      Chair  
Sally Collier  
Barnaby Lenon  
Christine Ryan  
David Wakefield  
Frances Wadsworth  
Hywel Jones  
Julius Weinberg  
Mike Cresswell  
Neil Watts  
Tom Taylor  
Terri Scott

**Ofqual**

Julie Swan                      Executive Director for General Qualifications  
Marc Baker                      Chief Operating Officer  
Michelle Meadows              Executive Director – Strategy, Risk and Research  
Phil Beach                      Executive Director for Vocational and Technical Qualifications  
Salma Ahmed                      Board Secretary  
Naomi Nicholson                Interim Director Regulation of National Assessments (for item 27/17(ii))  
  
Tim Leslie                      Director, National Reference Test Project - **for item 30/17 only**  
Dennis Opposs                      Standards Chair - **for item 31/17 only**  
Clare Rowntree                      Private Secretary  
Jan Roszkowski                      Chief Information officer - **for item 29/17(ii) only**  
Paul Bird                      Associate Director, Finance – **for item 29/17 only**  
Katy Harding                      Senior Manager, Management Accounts and Business Planning - **for item 29/17(ii) only**

**Observers:**

Steve Hickmott                      Senior Manager Regulation Development & Impact  
Jim Busher                      Senior Manager, Strategic Policy

**22/17 Welcome and Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Anne Heal.

**23/17 Declarations of interest**  
Barnaby Lenon notified the Board that he currently held the position of Governor at the London Academy of Excellence.

**24/17 Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 May 2017 and Matters arising from past meetings of the Board**  
The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2017 as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

The Board considered and noted a paper on matters arising from previous minutes;-

76/16, A Functional Skills policy consultation was planned to be launched in October and a paper on this would be brought to the Board in September. The Board would be requested to consider the regulatory approach to take in relation to the consultation.

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

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**27/17**

**Strategy, Risk and Research Update**

The Executive Director for Strategy, Risk and Research provided the Board with an update on the work of the directorate. The Board was notified that the Strategic Policy and Risk Team (SPR) was reviewing Ofqual's regulatory strategy and approach in order to maximise its impact. The Board's view on this would be sought at the October Strategy day.

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**[Action]** A demonstration of a single view risk would be given at the September Board and an update on the work and review of implementation would be provided at the autumn Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting.

Three BIT Business Impact Target (BIT) assessments had been returned by the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) for review. These had been revised and resubmitted and had since been approved.

Two special conditions had been imposed by the Legal Team. The first was in relation to the exam paper error and the second was related to the use of the Ofqual logo.

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**29/17**

### **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) provided the Board with an overview of the paper which included an update on the financial position at the end of May 2017. This showed an underspend of £72k for the first two months. A more detailed review of the first quarter was scheduled to take place at the Finance Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> August.

The 2016/17 draft Annual Report and Accounts had been considered at the 20<sup>th</sup> of June joint Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Finance Committee meeting, during which it was highlighted that there was a difference in views between Ofqual and the NAO on whether research projects should be considered as capital spend. This was later referred to a NAO technical panel who concluded that the 2016/17 research projects would not be considered as capital, however Ofqual was advised to seek guidance from the Treasury on this matter for research projects going forward. The Annual Report and Accounts were approved at the Joint meeting and this has subsequently been laid before Parliament.

With regard to people, the first phase of the talent management process had taken place.

The Board was asked to consider the business case for a replacement HR and Finance system. Board members requested further information relating to the payback period and cost of the preferred option and asked that the Finance Committee review this analysis and confirm their approval of the business case. This was subsequently provided electronically after the Board meeting.

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### **The Board approved the following;**

- i. the business case to fund the new HR and Finance system**

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**30/17**

### **National Reference Test**

The Director for the National Reference Test Project introduced a paper updating the Board on the first annual National Reference Test (NRT). The live test had been held for the first time in schools during February and March 2017. Being the first live test, the results would be used as a baseline against which subsequent years' results could be compared. Should the NRT indicate that there had been a change in the cohort performance, Ofqual would agree with the exam boards on how the NRT results would be taken into account when awarding GCSE English language and maths.

The Standards Advisory Group had endorsed the advice that had been provided by the Standards Advisory Group NRT sub group, including that the tests had performed well this year and that the level of test precision that had been achieved was acceptable. The Board noted the good quality of the test materials and its delivery in 2017.

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The arrangements for the NRT for 2018 will remain the same as in 2017. The test will use the same questions. It will be held at the same time and with the same sample size of schools and students. The schools asked to take part will be different from those who took part in 2017.

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**31/17**

### **Report on the work of Board committees**

The Chair of the Finance Committee, the COO (in the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee) and the Standards Chair provided the Board with a brief update on the matters that had been considered at the Committee meetings. It had been agreed at the 20 June joint Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Finance Committee meeting to bring the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report to the Board for sign off.

**The Board agreed to sign off the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report.**

**32/17      Publication of Papers**

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

**33/17      Other Business**

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Work is currently being conducted to determine which conditions might need to be dis-applied or modified and the intention is to consult on this in early 2018. In the interim, the Board considered, and agreed, a suggestion to suspend the requirement for minimum guided learning hours for EPAs.

**34/17      Date of Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20 September 2017.