

**Minutes of the 74th meeting of the Ofqual Board**

**23 May 2018**



**Present:**

**Ofqual Board**

Ian Bauckham	
Delroy Beverley	
Sally Collier	Chief Regulator
Mike Cresswell	
Lesley Davies	
Hywel Jones	
Christine Ryan	
Roger Taylor	Chair
Frances Wadsworth	

**Ofqual**

Salma Ahmed	Board Secretary
Phil Beach	Executive Director, Vocational and Technical Qualifications
Paul Bird	Associate Director, Finance – <b>for item 09/18 only</b>
Toni Dumolo	Interim Associate Director HR, including L&D and Facilities – <b>for item 10/18 only</b>
Daniel Gutteridge	Acting Director of Legal
Michael Hanton	Associate Director, for Strategic Policy and Risk - <b>for item 82/17 and 83/17(i) only</b>
Catherine Large	Director of Vocational Qualifications – <b>for item 07/18 only</b>
Andy Lester	Senior Manager, Strategy and Risk - <b>for item 08/18 only</b>
Michelle Meadows	Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research
Julie Swan	Executive Director, General Qualifications

**02/18 Welcome and Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Jo Saxton and David Wakefield.

**03/17 Declarations of interest**

The Board was notified that since Ian Bauckham was a trustee of NFER, he may need to withdraw from certain discussions relating to NFER.

**04/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018**

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018 as a true and accurate record.

**Matters arising**

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

**27/17:** The organisation was undertaking work on moderation and it was monitoring a number of National Assessment moderation meetings. This action was now closed.

**82/17:** A summary detailing the content of readiness reviews discussions with the Exam Boards was circulated. This action was now closed.

**82/17:** An update on how information security was being maintained when examinations were being taken in different time zones was included under item 06/18 (GQ update section) of the Chief Regulator's report and also under the Strategic Dashboard item 08/18. This action was now closed. Further information was requested and has been documented as a new action.

**Reporting**

**05/18 Chairman's Stakeholder Feedback**

The Chairman provided the Board with a verbal update on the meetings and events that he had attended since the Board last met. These

included visits to Bennett's Memorial School Kent, Bolton School, Rivington, Blackrod High School Bolton, Skills Group in Plymouth (a skills provider) and a meeting with DfE economists to discuss T levels.

## **06/18 Chief Regulator's Report**

The Board was informed that a decision on Ofqual's role in T levels had been reached. This would involve a joint Ofqual and IfA partnership. It was expected that an announcement on this would be made over the weekend.

### GQ Update

The Board was provided with an update on the work of the General Qualifications (GQ) directorate. The summer exams were underway and the Exam Boards (EBs) were notifying Ofqual of events as they arose. At the time of the meeting the EBs had not reported any particularly serious events.

At the March Board meeting, the Board had sought information about how the EBs managed the risks to the security and integrity of GCSEs, AS and A Levels taken outside of the UK, and particularly in countries in different time zones.

The Board was provided with an overview of the controls that the EBs used. Further information was requested about how the EBs knew the safeguards were being properly implemented by schools and colleges outside of the UK.

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

### Strengthening the safeguards to protect the confidentiality of assessment materials

The Board received an update on the closed policy consultation and the open technical consultation on teacher involvement in developing confidential assessment materials. The former consultation had generated broadly supportive responses. One teaching union had commented negatively on one aspect within the technical consultation. This suggested an Awarding Organisation (AO) investigating the possibility that a teacher had used their knowledge of confidential assessment materials to influence his or her teaching might review that teacher's teaching plans and/or other materials. Ofqual would engage directly with the union to reassure them of the proportionality of this approach. The final draft of the strengthened Conditions and Guidance would be shared prior to publication with those members of the Board

who had been engaged with the work and they would be invited to comment.

**The Board delegated to the Chief Regulator authority to publish the final revised Conditions and Guidance, once the technical consultation had concluded, and the responses to the consultation had been considered and reflected in the final documents.**

### Vocational and Technical Qualifications update

#### Memorandum of understanding with the Institute for Apprenticeships (the Institute)

The Board was informed that Ofqual had been working with the Institute to agree a high level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU was intended to serve as an overarching agreement that would be supplemented by more detailed information sharing agreements over time. The Board was informed that the MOU would not constrain either Ofqual or the Institute and the approach mirrored our recent arrangements with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

**The Board agreed to the request that authority for the signature of the MOU should be delegated to the Chief Regulator, following which it would be published on a date agreed with the Institute.**

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

### Apprenticeships

The Board received an update on Apprenticeships and the number of assessment plans that had been reviewed. There was interest in the number that Ofqual was expected to review over time. The Board was informed that it was difficult to advise on the number of assessment plans Ofqual would be expected to review since this was a decision for the Trailblazers to choose Ofqual as the External Quality Assurance (EQA) provider.

The Board also questioned how Ofqual was considering how to use the information from the technical evaluation of the first eight End Point Assessments (EPAs). It was noted that the assessment plan had been interpreted differently by various AOs in their developed EPAs and this had been picked up in our preliminary evaluation of the standard with the Trailblazer. The information could be used in two ways: to inform Trailblazers of this divergence and confirm their preference; and to engage with EPA Organisations to drive consistency in assessment.

The Board questioned whether Ofqual would share more widely the findings from technical evaluation in particular with employers and AOs.

**[Action]** It was agreed that Ofqual would consider how best to communicate its findings from the technical analysis of EPAs to a wider range of employers and AOs. This would be brought back to the Board in the Autumn.

### Functional skills

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

The Board questioned whether Ofqual was confident that the level of demand of Level 2 functional skills was equivalent to that of GCSE. The Board was informed that a judgement of level of demand of Functional Skills would be made during the upfront evaluation process but that there was no intent to specifically consider the relative demand of GCSE.

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

### Educational Assessment Seminar

The Board noted that the Educational Assessment Seminar had been a success with approximately 80 attendees and presentations on key areas such as standards and moderation. The research included work on comparative judgement of writing, statistical detection of malpractice and a new method of predicting GCSE outcomes. The event was strategically important for Ofqual since it involved researchers from the assessment community coming together to openly discuss the research they were involved in and innovative ideas to improve the quality of assessment.

The Board questioned whether the output from the seminar could be promoted. The Board was informed that the work presented at the seminar had previously been confidential. This was now less of an issue as an alternative forum was available to discuss such issues. Nonetheless, advertising the outputs of the seminar widely would need to be handled sensitively and would require careful consideration.

### National Assessments

Key Stage (KS2) tests had been held in the previous week and no significant issues had arisen. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA)

had completed the marker training and marking had commenced. Results were due to be released on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July and, as in previous years, outcomes were likely to generate some media interest. Ofqual was continuing to engage with the STA to support accurate interpretation of writing outcomes following the changes to assessment criteria.

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

### Recognition

Work had been carried out within the organisation to understand the reason for the number of surrenders of recognition by AOs. The results suggested that of the surrenders made all but one was as a result of changes in the market and not a cause for concern.

### Complaints Investigations

The Board considered the figures provided for complaints investigation, and sought clarification on the number of complaints that were reported as remaining open.

The Board was assured that work was underway to ensure complaints were investigated within the service level agreement period.

**[Action]** The Board suggested that future updates on complaints investigations should quantify the number of complaints investigated, closed and those that remained outstanding.

### GDPR

The Board noted that the organisation was in a good position in terms of the preparations it had made to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which were due to come into force on 25 May 2018 and outstanding work relating to retro-fitting of contractual clauses was being undertaken on a risk basis.

### HR

The Board was provided with a brief update on HR matters which included an explanation of the increased turnover of staff and the Board was assured that senior management were comfortable with the figures. The turnover represented staff who had either left the organisation, secured promotions outside the organisation or those who had been unsuccessful in completing their probationary periods.

[Action] The Board suggested that staff turnover figures should distinguish between voluntary and involuntary turnover and it was agreed that this information would be reported at future Board meetings.

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

### Communications

The current campaigns included malpractice and GCSE science. The aim of the malpractice campaign was to promote and support good ethical practice in schools. The four planned stages of the malpractice campaign were detailed and the Board was informed that the GCSE science campaign had utilised various social media platforms and had generated 4.7m views of our films at a lower average cost than the previous year's campaign.

The provisional GCSE/AS/A level entry data were due to be published as official statistics on 24 May and it was likely that this would generate media interest. A letter was intended to be sent out to head teachers informing them of the patterns in this year's results that they should look out for and highlight the changes to GCSE science grading as well as potential variability in results for reformed qualifications.

### **07/18 T Levels Update**

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

### **08/18 Strategic Dashboard**

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

### **09/18 Financial Update**

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

## **10/18      Ofqual People Strategy**

The Board was informed that the People Strategy had been developed in response to the February Board Strategy day discussions and to support the refreshed corporate strategy and feedback from the latest Employee opinion survey. The strategy's main aim was to recruit the right people with the relevant expertise at the right time. Once recruited, ensuring that staff remained motivated and were being developed in their roles was critical, so that their expertise was retained within the organisation.

Implementation of the strategy was particularly important at this time so that Ofqual could respond effectively and deliver the reform activity over the coming months and years. It was accepted that there were many positive aspects to the organisation as evidenced by the excellent levels of response and staff engagement that resulted in Ofqual moving from 47<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> in the 2017 Civil Service People Survey. The People Strategy would ensure that Ofqual was not complacent about the position and that it would continue to develop the employee proposition so that it could meet the challenges in the future and secure its reputation as a great place to work.

Progress with the strategy would be tracked through the measures of success and it was emphasised that engaging managers in implementing the strategy would be key. In response to a question around diversity the Board questioned whether the organisation tracked social mobility, it was confirmed that at the moment standard Diversity metrics were tracked and in the future the organisation could consider whether this would be useful. The Board was also informed that a gender pay gap analysis had been completed for Ofqual and this will be reported in the Annual Report.

**The Board welcomed the People Strategy and positively endorsed it.**

## **11/18      Report on the work of the Board committees**

The Chairs of the following Committees provided the Board with a verbal update on the matters that had been discussed at their respective meetings.

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



**12/18      Publication of Papers**

The Board agreed to the publication of those papers indicated as open.

**13/18      Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

**14/18      Date of Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 18 July 2018.