



Date

Wednesday 17 July 2019

Venue

Room 6016/17, Earlsdon Park, Coventry

Attendees

Board

Ian Bauckham
Delroy Beverley
Sally Collier
Mike Cresswell
Lesley Davies
Hywel Jones
Dame Christine Ryan
Jo Saxton
Roger Taylor Chair
David Wakefield

Ofqual

Varinder Bassan	Acting Board Secretary
Phil Beach	Executive Director, Vocational and Technical Qualifications
James Creasey	Manager, Strategy and Risk – Item 28/18
Michael Hanton	Associate Director, Strategic Policy and Risk
Katy Harding	Associate Director, Finance and Commercial – Item 31/19
Emma Leary	Associate Director, VTQ Policy – Item 29/19
Andy Lester	Senior Manager, Strategic Policy
Michelle Meadows	Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research
Paul Newton	Research Chair – CPD session
Sean Pearce	Chief Operating Officer
Chris Shadforth	Director of Communications
Julie Swan	Executive Director, General Qualifications
Anona White	Private Secretary to the Chief Regulator

Observers

Susan Barratt

21/19 Closed Session

22/19 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were noted from Frances Wadsworth.

The Chair introduced Susan Barratt who would be joining the Board in September 2019.

23/19 Declarations of interest

Hywel Jones confirmed his entry but advised he did not receive a salary from the Inspiration Trust.

24/19 Minutes and Matters arising

The Board agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 22 May and 19 June to be a true and accurate record and noted and agreed the matters arising report.

25/19 Chair's update

The Chair thanked Lesley Davies for inviting him to visit Trafford College. During the visit he had discussions with staff and students about reformed vocational and technical qualifications.

The Summer Symposium had taken place in June and the Chair thanked those staff who were involved in organising what was a successful event.

The Chair was pleased to report that the Secretary of State had made three new appointments to the Board: Susan Barratt, Matt Tee and Mike Thompson. The new members would start in September.

26/19 Chief Regulator's report

The Chief Regulator provided a report on the work of the organisation since the last meeting of the Board.

Overview

The Board was made aware that Ofqual staff would be attending a selection of awarding meetings for both general and applied general qualifications. The Board noted that while there had been fewer security breaches this year, there had been an increase in the number of leaks and hoax leaks on social media which have led to different challenges.

The Board asked how Ofqual decided which awarding meetings to attend and were advised it was a risk based approach. The Board expressed the view that more awarding meetings for Modern Foreign Languages should be attended and the executive agreed to explore whether attendance at these meetings would be possible.

The Board asked about newspaper reports relating to the marking of AQA GCSE English Literature and was advised an Ofqual subject expert had looked into the quality of material used for standardisation and confirmed it was fit for purpose.

The Board was also informed that Ofqual would be talking to social media companies in the Autumn regarding how quickly inappropriate material could be taken down.

Apprenticeships

The Board was advised the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) had launched a new EQA framework and that Ofqual was supportive of the high level principles.

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

T-Levels

The Board was advised NCFE and Pearson had completed their initial phase of work on the development of the first three Technical Qualifications.

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

English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL)

The Board was advised of our work to review our regulation of ESOL qualifications and the release of NAO's report following Panorama's report on organised fraud in English language tests.

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

Qualification Review

The Board noted that our response to the Department's review of post-16 level 3 and below qualifications had been well received by others in the sector. The second stage of the consultation will not take place until after Christmas.

Qualification Price Index (QPI)

The Board was advised the work on the QPI had attracted more interest than anticipated, following testing with key stakeholders. Views about its usefulness have been generally positive.

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

There was a discussion about the driver for the publication of the QPI – noting that this relates to our efficiency statutory objective, rather than to our standards objective. The Board was advised that we do not intend to initiate work with regards to price regulation, and that the QPI is not intended for that purpose. Rather it is intended to shine a light on price changes in the market – particularly as the market is largely price insensitive. The Board advised that our communication of the QPI should not give a view of the whether or not changes in the QPI are appropriate, but rather that the intention of the work is to give more information to the reader to aid their interpretation of the market, and to assess the price changes they may experience from AOs if they are a purchaser. Our communications should take care not to promote a race to the bottom.

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

The Board also asked from what date the QPI drew price information. They were advised that the first data point is 2016 prices.

The Board agreed that the QPI should be published. A revised draft, incorporating the comments above and including the press release would be shared with the Board via correspondence, for any comments.

Action

QPI – A revised draft, incorporating the comments above and including the press release to be shared with the Board via correspondence, for any comments

Audit

The Board was advised on eight conflict of interest audits as part of the wider review of Centre controls. Due to weaknesses in AO controls, we have had a low level of assurance. This suggests a systemic issue and we are working to address this.

Review of the Regulatory Compliance service offer

The Board was advised of a transitional plan to review the Regulatory Compliance service. A new Associate Director would be recruited for the service in the next quarter and a new focus would be on evidence and intelligence gathering as opposed to just audits.

Employee Health and Wellbeing

The Board noted the drop in sickness rates over the last period, and asked that benchmarking sickness rates against other similar organisations be included in the report for next time.

Action

Employee Health and Wellbeing – all future reports to include benchmarking of sickness rates against other organisations.

27/19 Fraud and Malpractice Findings

The Board was given a presentation on our findings following visits to other organisations and how they handle fraud and malpractice.

The Board discussed a number of issues including marketing this work, whose responsibility it was to report fraud and malpractice, and working with other organisations in the sector to look at schools with consistently abnormal results during two consecutive exam periods, which could be an indicator of malpractice.

28/19 Strategic Risk Register [Closed]

The Board noted the Strategic Dashboard and was reminded it had been considered by the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2019.

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

29/19 Identifying systemic risks in the qualification market, 2019 [Closed]

The Board contributed to a discussion about risk identification to enable identification, analysis and assessment of our systemic risks up to 2023.

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

30/19 Accountability for Awards Policy – outcomes from policy consultations

The Board was reminded of our policy consultation on the moderation and verification of centre assessment judgements which took place between February and May 2019.

The Board asked if one centre could be visited by a number of awarding organisations and if so could one AO not take this on for all of them. The Board was advised it could and one AO does take on this role for the rest in GQ, however in this instance it would be a question for the Federation of Awarding Bodies to consider, but we would not be opposed to it.

The Board was advised that centre approval was a key area for consideration after the summer.

Decision

The Board agreed to:

- *implement the overall policy approach consulted on;*
- *refine the supporting detail to enable this approach and update the reform sub-committee ahead of the technical consultation (see Annex B);*
- *consult on the Conditions, requirements and guidance necessary to implement this approach;*
- *delegate responsibility for the sign-off of the policy consultation outcomes, the technical consultation and the final wording of the Conditions, requirements and guidance to the Chief Regulator in consultation with the Chair.*

31/19 Strengthening – development regulatory proposals

The Board was advised the purpose of the strengthening project was to consider, develop and implement our approach to how Ofqual regulates qualifications used for broader accountability purposes.

The Board asked that the ‘age-appropriateness’ of qualifications, and centre approval to delivery performance table qualifications, be considered as part of our strengthening programme.

Decision

The Board agreed to all the strategic positions and recommendations in the paper

33/19 Report on the work of the Board committees

The Board was provided with verbal updates from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting which took place on 19 June 2019, and the Standards Advisory Group meeting which took place on 28 June 2019.

Decision

The Board Agreed the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on 08 May 2019.

34/19 Publication of papers

The Board agreed for all open items to be published.

35/19 Other Business

There were no other items of business.

36/19 Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 25 September 2019