

**Minutes**

Board Meeting

Time and venue

9.00am by Microsoft Teams

Date

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Attendees**Board**

Ian Bauckham	Interim Chair
Susan Barratt	
Delroy Beverley	
Hywel Jones	
Simon Lebus	Chief Regulator
Dr Catherine McClellan	
Dame Christine Ryan	
Matt Tee	
Mike Thompson	
Frances Wadsworth	

Ofqual

Beth Black	Director for Research and Analysis/SRO VTQ 2021 Programme (item 05/21 and 06/21)
Niamh Field	Board Secretary
Danielle Cartwright	Private Secretary to the Chief Regulator
Richard Garrett	Director of Policy and Strategic Relationships (item 09/21)
Daniel Gutteridge	Director of Legal
Michael Hanton	Director of Strategy and Markets
Charlie Henning	Associate Director, People and Culture (item 10/21)
Cath Jadhav	Director for Standards and Comparability/SRO General Qualifications 2021 Programme (item 05/21 and 06/21)
Catherine Large	Executive Director, Vocational & Technical Qualifications
Paul Newton	Research Chair (item 05/21)
Dennis Opposs	Standards Chair (item 11/21)
Jane Parsons	Director of Communications
Sean Pearce	Chief Operating Officer
Julie Swan	Executive Director, General Qualifications

02/21 Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Lesley Davies.

03/21 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

04/21 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from the Board Meetings held on 17 March 2021 were approved and the matters arising were noted.

05/21 Awarding 2021 Update

The Board received an update on awarding in 2021, including Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) and General Qualifications (GQs) summer and autumn series, high-level findings from the public sentiment survey and communications approaches.

In discussion, the Board noted that Ofqual was working with Awarding Organisations to ensure results were administered and delivered to learners within the short turnaround period. In addition, it was monitoring the process to clear the backlog relating to Functional Skills and noted that the VCRF had only been in place for four weeks and more time was needed until a firm position on numbers was known.

In relation to GCSEs and A levels, the Board noted the importance of public explanation of the QA arrangements.

The Board noted the assurance with arrangements for private candidates which was based on stakeholder feedback and the arrangements put in place by DfE.

The Board noted that decisions on the autumn series were expected to be published shortly, once ministers' position on the provision of AS exams was known.

The results from the public sentiment survey were noted and highlighted the public's views of this summer's arrangements. It was noted that public perception may shift in the light of actual results. The Board was assured with the level of detail around the approach to communications.

06/21 Summer 2022 assessment arrangements for General Qualifications

Consideration was given to the request from DfE for advice in relation to summer 2022 exams on two issues – possible changes to the exam timetable in summer 2022, and possible adjustments to the qualifications and exams to take account of the disruption experienced by students.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to:

- i. delegate to the Chief Regulator, in consultation with the Chair, all necessary decisions in relation to arrangements for GQs to be awarded in summer 2022, including but not limited to decisions in relation to the approach to consultation, the policy proposals for consultation, final policy

decisions, and the implementation of those decisions, including amendment of any regulatory framework

07/21 DRAFT Corporate Plan 2021/22

The Board considered the draft Corporate Plan 2021/22.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to:

- i. approve the substance of the draft corporate plan at Appendix B
- ii. delegate approval of the plan to be published to the Chief Regulator in consultation with the Chair

08/21 Annual Regulatory Burden Statement

Consideration was given to Ofqual's statutory duty to publish an annual Regulatory Burden Statement. The Statement provides an overview of the work undertaken in the previous year and how Ofqual proposes to manage burden for the forthcoming year. Due to the public health crisis, it was necessary to ask AOs and those working with schools and colleges and learners, to adopt new requirements for exams and assessments which inevitably placed additional burden on all those involved. Ofqual has sought to ensure that burden has been proportionate to the situation and acted to reduce burden in other areas, where possible.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to:

- i. approve the Regulatory Burden Statement
- ii. endorse the approach for publication at the end of April

09/21 Ofqual's response to DfE's Post-Qualification Admissions Consultation

The Board received a presentation outlining Ofqual's response to DfE's Post-Qualification Admissions consultation. The Board supported the proposed approach to the response and added that the potential impact on teaching and learning of moving exams forward should also be included. In addition, the Board noted that, should the timetable be compressed, there would be limited scope for contingency.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to:

- i. respond formally to DfE's consultation
- ii. delegate sign-off and publication of Ofqual's formal response to the Chief Regulator, in consultation with the Chair

10/21 Bi-Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report

The Board received an update on progress and plans to further strengthen Ofqual's work in relation to EDI as part of the 2021 People Plan. The Finance and HR Committee monitored and challenged progress against KPIs quarterly and considered the need to embed EDI in all discussions around people.

The Chair noted the detailed, thorough and valuable work that had been delivered under the strategy. In discussion, it was noted that there was no

separate target to increase representation at senior grades in line with other non-governmental organisations. Ofqual did not benchmark itself against other government departments, however, increased representation was an aspiration of the plan as agreed by the Board in November 2019.

The Board noted the recently published report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which highlighted the use of the term BAME. Ofqual will address any changes in accordance with guidance from the wider Civil Service.

11/21 Update on the Standards Advisory Group membership

Consideration was given to the revised proposal for the membership of the Standards Advisory Group (SAG). The revised proposal sought to appoint four new members, including one international member, and one sponsored early career researcher. The Board noted the aim of the sponsorship/bursary position was in consideration of increasing opportunities for underrepresented groups.

RESOLVED:

The Board resolved to:

- i. appoint Will Pointer, Daisy Christodoulou and Catherine Close as independent members with effect from 01 June 2021 until 31 March 2022
- ii. reserve one position on SAG for a sponsored early career researcher, and that appointment be delegated to the Chair in consultation with the Chief Regulator

12/21 Publication of Papers

Agreed to publish open papers

13/21 Any Other Business

There was no other business.