

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Meeting in Authority Offices

Wednesday 11 June 2008

Present:

Mr. Paul Haran (Chairperson)
Dr. Caroline Hussey (Deputy Chairperson)
Dr. Seán Conlan
Mr. Eamon Devoy
Mr. Tony Donohoe
Mr. Hamidreza Khodabakhshi
Mr. Pat O'Callaghan
Mr. Martin Shanahan
Prof. Seamus Smyth
Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú (Chief Executive)

Apologies:

Ms. Inez Bailey
Mr. Mogens Berg
Prof. Anne Moran
Mr. Donal O'Rourke

In attendance:

Ms. Claire Byrne (Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications)
Dr. Jim Murray (Director of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition)
Dr. Anna Murphy (Director of Research and Strategic Development) (except items 1&9)
Ms. Trish O'Brien (Development Officer) (except items 1&9)
Ms. Carmel Kelly (Project Officer) (except items 1&9)
Mr. Shane Kelly, Incoming President of the Union of Students in Ireland (Observer)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2008 were agreed and signed.

2. DIT Quality Assurance

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority considered an update report from the Dublin Institute of Technology in relation to its implementation of the recommendations made by the European University Association, as part of the review of effectiveness of the Institute's quality assurance procedures. The Authority noted the progress made to date by the Institute in progressing the EUA's recommendations. The Authority commented on the lack of development regarding the issue of transparency of the student feedback system (with regard to module feedback received by lecturers). The Authority agreed that recommendations be made to the Institute that it endeavour to place School and Faculty reviews within a wider context

for those involved and that it seeks to consolidate School and Faculty review criteria requirements with other review criteria where possible and appropriate.

The Authority considered the findings arising out of the application of the quality assurance procedures in the Institute for the academic year 2006-7, in particular its implementation of School and Faculty reviews. The Authority noted the inclusion of two review reports and one response in the Institute's submission. The Authority made a number of observations and recommendations for communication to the Institute. The Authority requested that the Institute would submit a written response to the Authority on the observations and recommendations made by the Authority, incorporating details of how the Institute intends to address the recommendations made.

3. Framework Implementation

The Authority noted the paper that had been prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority agreed to amend the policies and criteria under section 8(2)(a) of the Qualifications Education and Training Act 1999 in relation to the inclusion or alignment of the awards of certain awarding bodies to reflect the agreement on the quality assurance of UK vocational education and training awards in Ireland. The agreed amendments will enable accredited qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which are now quality assured in Ireland to be aligned with the Irish Framework while such awarding bodies may continue to make awards in Ireland that are not accredited in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and not aligned with the Irish Framework.

The Authority agreed to amend the reserved functions of the Authority to enable the executive to advance with the alignment awards of vocational education and training awarding bodies which are accredited awards in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and which are made in Ireland, with the National Framework of Qualifications.

4. Budget/Financial Paper

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority noted that the Comptroller and Auditor General had completed the audit of the Authority's draft financial statements for 2007. The Authority approved the signing of the financial statements 2007 by the Chairperson, or in his absence the Deputy Chairperson, and the Chief Executive following 'clearance' by the Comptroller and Auditor General and subject to there being no material changes to the financial statements. The Authority approved the Authority's Letter of Representation and the Authority's annual compliance statement.

5. Framework Implementation Study

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority noted the progress with the study on the implementation and impact of the National Framework of Qualifications and the associated policies for access, transfer and progression. The Authority commended the work of the executive team in the development of the background paper which was written for input into the Framework Implementation and Impact Study.

6. Framework Implementation

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority noted the updates in relation to the implementation of the Framework and of the related policies on access, transfer and progression. The Authority noted that the Irish Universities' Association has been working with the universities on the inclusion of smaller awards in the Framework. The Authority noted that a university listing had been received from the Irish Universities' Association with details of non-major, higher diploma and postgraduate diploma awards. The executive of the Authority is to review the listing.

7. Communications and Use of Framework

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority noted that following the transfer of QualifaX to the Authority in January 2008 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment sought to engage with the Authority to look at the potential for implementing a National Learning Line. The executive of the Authority is advancing this work with relevant stakeholders.

The Authority noted the executive's ongoing work with the Office of the Minister for Integration.

8. Recognition of International Awards

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

The Authority noted that the annual meeting of the five-jurisdiction group was held on 9 and 10 June 2008. The Authority noted that the meeting was successful and it provided an opportunity for representatives from each jurisdiction to update the group on key issues and activities over the past 12 months and future areas of co-operation were explored. The Authority noted there is a particular focus on co-operation between Ireland and the UK in European engagement and the group discussed the processes that are underway to align frameworks in the UK and Ireland to the EQF.

The Authority noted the ongoing work of the executive and the Department of Education and Science in relation to the publication of a possible grey list of un-recognised institutions.

9. Decentralisation

The Authority noted the update on decentralisation.

The Authority noted that the executive of the Authority and the two Councils met with the Decentralisation Implementation Group on 20 May 2008. The Authority noted that the Decentralisation Implementation Group is to produce a report to Government by July 2008. The Authority awaits the outcomes of consideration by the Group.

10. HETAC Review Follow-Up

The Authority noted the paper prepared and circulated by the executive.

11. Updates

The Authority noted the paper that was prepared and circulated by the executive.

12. Meeting dates

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 September at 11am.

13. Chief Executive

The Chairperson informed the Authority that the Chief Executive had just received an offer of employment to the post of Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education and Science. The Authority members extended their congratulations to Seán Ó Foghlú.

The meeting concluded.

Chairperson_____

Date:_____