

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Meeting in Authority Offices

Thursday 13 April 2011

Present:

Mr. Paul Haran (Chairperson)
Mr. Mogens Berg
Ms. Marie Bourke
Ms. Audry Deane
Mr. Eamon Devoy
Mr. Tony Donohoe
Mr. Donal O'Rourke
Mr. Gary Redmond
Prof. Seamus Smyth
Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)

Apologies:

Prof. Anne Moran (Deputy Chairperson)
Prof. Anne Scott

In attendance:

Ms. Claire Byrne (Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications)
Dr. Anna Murphy (Director of Research and Strategic Development)
Dr. Jim Murray (Director of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition)
Ms. Trish O'Brien (Head of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition)
Mr. Eamonn Collins (Corporate Business Manager) (Item2)
Mr. Vincent Teo (Crowleys DFK) (Item 2)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2011 were agreed and signed.

Matters arising

The Chairperson welcomed the new members to the Authority, Ms. Marie Bourke and Ms. Audry Deane. Professor Anne Scott, a new member, was unable to attend the meeting.

It was noted that a number of members of the Internal Audit Committee had completed their terms of office. Three new nominations were made and the Authority agreed to the appointment of Tony Donohoe as Chair of the Internal Audit Committee and Marie Bourke and Audry Deane as new members of the Committee. The executive reported that Stuart Roche, HEA and Denise Kennedy, National Library had agreed to continue to serve on the Committee until the wind-up of the Authority on amalgamation or earlier if it is deemed appropriate.

The Authority noted that the Chief Executive of FETAC was due to complete his term of office on 10 June 2011. In this regard the Authority expected to repeat the process that it had undertaken with HETAC of consenting to the Chief Executive of the Authority holding the same office in FETAC. The Authority agreed that the executive would write to the Department of Education and Skills seeking formal notification of the retirement and the terms thereof.

2. Budget, Finance and Risk

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

The Authority noted that the Department had issued final funding figures for the three bodies in 2011. The allocation for 2011 is €9,163,000 including a capital amount of €500,000 for the FETAC Business Management System.

It was noted that FETAC anticipated an additional income in fees in 2011 of approximately €600,000. It was noted that a revised budget, based on the anticipated additional fee income, is to be submitted by FETAC in the coming days. The Authority agreed that the allocation to each of the bodies will be in line with funding allocated in 2010 having regard to any decline in fee income, any exceptional items and a contribution by each of the bodies towards amalgamation costs.

The allocation agreed is as follows:

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	€2,355,210
Higher Education and Training Awards Council	€1,359,360
Further Education and Training Awards Council (includes FETAC Business Management System)	€4,839,947

The Authority agreed to the provisional allocation of these amounts subject to:

- sufficient funds being made available by the Department
- the level of fee income to be received by each body
- the submission of quarterly reports to the Authority
- the Councils confirming that each funding drawdown is required in accordance with agreed framework of accountability

- the continuing review by the Authority and the Councils of their own funding needs and
- review of the allocations should the activities rise to exceed or fall below the estimated levels during the year.

Crowley's DFK presented the draft financial statements 2010 to the Authority for consideration and approval. The Authority approved the signing of the financial statements by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive, following clearance by the Comptroller and Auditor General, subject to there being no material change.

The executive of the Authority was requested to leave the meeting to facilitate a discussion between the Authority members and the Authority's accountant. The Authority requested that the minute note that it was satisfied with the responses it received from the accountant and was confident that the executive was carrying out its governance functions in a correct manner. The Authority noted the complexities arising from some of its new functions and it will continue to closely observe developments in these areas.

3. Report on Authority's Work 2010 and Draft Business Plan for 2011

The Authority noted the report on the work of the implementation of the Authority's Business Plan 2010-2011, in relation to the calendar year 2010. This was completed having regard to the suggestions and recommendations made by the Authority on the draft report at its meeting in February 2011. The Authority agreed to adopt the report.

Arising out of the report the Authority agreed that it would have a further discussion on RPL and the role of the Authority in this regard. The executive is to consider presenting a structured discussion on RPL at a future Authority meeting.

The draft Business Plan for the Authority for 2011 was presented. The draft plan set out the action lines, target dates, key performance indicators and critical success factors in relation to the Authority's six strategic goals. The draft plan proposes a new strategic goal to prepare for the successful amalgamation of the qualifications and quality assurance agencies. In developing the plan, the executive took account of the changing operating environment, in particular government measures to manage the public finances, planning for amalgamation and the integration of new functions of the Authority with existing and planned operations. The Authority considered and agreed the plan.

4. Organisational Change in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Area in Higher and Further Education and Training

The Authority noted the paper on developments in relation to the implementation of the Employment Control Framework (ECF) in the Public Service and its impact on the Authority, the Councils and ultimately, the amalgamated body.

[Section removed for data protection purposes]

The Authority noted the update on the establishment of a central Planning Group on amalgamation and a number of Project Task Force Groups and associated work streams. The Authority noted that the work of the Planning Group will result in a report in June 2011 on the current and new (from legislation) functions and activities and will look at key business processes for QQAI, current number and levels of staff, outline costing and revenues to inform future financial planning, outline systems requirements and the identifications of opportunities for shared corporate services.

5. Integration of ACELS in the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

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

The Authority noted the background to the establishment of the Advisory Council for English Language Schools and the functions of the body. The functions of ACELS were transferred to the Authority in 2010 and the Council began to officially wind-up as a company. The Authority noted that this process is ongoing.

The Authority noted that the functions of ACELS have been integrated into the Authority and continue to be effectively carried out. The Authority noted that in addition to continuing to manage the functions of the accreditation of English language services, the executive is seeking to more closely align the awards and quality assurance with that of the Framework.

6. Internationalisation Register

The executive presented a preliminary issues paper for discussion by the Authority. The purpose of the paper was to inform and update the Authority on the experience of the Internationalisation Register since it was transferred to the Authority on 1 March 2010.

The Authority noted the origins of the Register since its establishment in 2005 and its role and use in internationalisation of education services. The Authority noted the purpose of the Register and the criteria for including programmes on the Register.

The paper raised a significant number of issues and questions on the role and operation of the Register. Over the coming weeks the executive, following discussions with other stakeholders, will prepare a final draft of the paper for

presentation at the June meeting. It is envisaged that the paper will present a series of strategic options for resolving many of the issues, which will inform the approach of the Authority's administration of the Register in the short term and contribute to the planning process for the establishment of the new qualifications and quality assurance body.

7. Quality Assurance – Enhancement Activities

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

The Authority noted the progress on the institutional review of the Dublin Institute of Technology. The report of the review is expected to be submitted to the Authority at its meeting in June 2011.

The Authority noted that the work of the Irish Higher Education Quality Network is continuing and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in its capacity as a newly designated awarding body, has been invited to become a member of the network.

8. Communications and Use of Framework

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

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on the slightly earlier than scheduled date of Tuesday 21 June 2011 at 11.00am in the Authority's offices on Jervis Street.

The meeting concluded.

Chairperson_____ **Date:**_____