

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Meeting in Authority Offices

Thursday 15 September 2011

Present:

Mr. Paul Haran (Chairperson)
Mr. Mogens Berg
Ms. Marie Bourke
Mr. Donal O'Rourke
Mr. Gary Redmond
Prof. Anne Scott
Prof. Seamus Smyth
Dr. Pdraig Walsh (Chief Executive)

Apologies:

Ms. Audry Deane
Mr. Eamon Devoy
Mr. Tony Donohoe
Prof. Anne Moran (Deputy Chairperson)

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)
Ms. Deirdre Stritch (Project Officer)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2011 were agreed and signed.

2. Budget, Finance and Risk

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

The Authority noted the financial management reports for the Authority and the two Councils for the period to June 2011.

In accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies the Authority agreed that Board member training in respect of the duties of a Board member would be conducted on 24 November 2011. It was agreed that members of the Internal Audit Committee would attend a separate training session specifically for the internal audit committee function before the end of the year.

3. Alignment of the Awards of Certain Bodies: Groups B, C and D

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

The Authority noted the progress in relation to the alignment of the awards of Certain Bodies (Groups B, C and D) with the National Framework of Qualifications, including a review currently being undertaken by HETAC of its 'Group B' alignment policies. The Authority noted that as part of this process, the HETAC executive has developed new professional award-type descriptors for the Framework. The descriptors are intended to facilitate the alignment of the learning achievements of those who have received certain kinds of professional awards, and these descriptors will be brought forward for ratification by the Authority at a future date.

The Authority noted advancements in the implementation of 'Group C' alignment specifically relating to VET awards recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and Pontifical University (St. Patrick's College Maynooth).

4. Delegation of Authority to Make Awards

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

The Authority noted that the Higher Education and Training Awards Council had written to the Authority on 15 June 2011 seeking the agreement of the Authority in accordance with Section 29 (1) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 to the extension of delegation of authority to two Institutes. The Council sought the agreement of the Authority for the extension of delegation in relation to the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) to make awards in respect of taught programmes at level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and for the Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) to make awards in research programmes at level 9 in the specific field of Software Engineering and at level 10 in the fields of Polymer Engineering, Toxicology and Microbiology. The Authority decided that it was in agreement with the Council's satisfaction that the Institutes had met the requisite criteria.

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

The Authority noted the update from the Chief Executive on the amalgamation process and the work of the Interim Board.

The Authority noted that the amalgamation planning process had moved into phase 2 which has two parallel streams – the practical preparations for launch day and the development of strategic directions for QQAI. This work includes a synthesis of the reports from the ‘as is’ work done in phase 1.

The Authority was informed about the progress of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill, 201. The Authority was briefed on the main elements of the Bill including the key functions of QQAI, the new legislative elements in relation to qualifications and quality assurance and the key governance arrangements.

The Authority noted the ongoing communications work with staff across the agencies on amalgamation and the plans for communications with external stakeholders.

The Authority noted the ongoing work to realign the Authority’s operational plans in preparation for the establishment of QQAI and for the dissolution of NQAI. The Authority noted the internal re-organisation that is underway to facilitate these developments.

6. Framework Implementation

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

The Authority noted progress in relation to the award formally known as the Higher Diploma in Education and the arrangements that are being put in place by the universities to commence use of the Professional Diploma in Education programme/award title.

The Authority noted the work by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in preparing proposals for the reform of the Junior Cycle and the Authority’s participation in these developments.

7. 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 24 November 2011 at 10.00am in the Authority's offices on Jervis Street.

The meeting concluded.

Chairperson_____ **Date:**_____