

**National Qualifications Authority of Ireland**

**Meeting in Authority Offices**

**Wednesday 20 February 2008**

**Present:**

Mr. Paul Haran (Chairperson)  
Dr. Caroline Hussey (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr. Mogens Berg  
Dr. Seán Conlan  
Mr. Tony Donohoe  
Mr. Hamid Khodabakhshi  
Mr. Donal O'Rourke  
Prof. Seamus Smyth  
Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú (Chief Executive) (not Item 5)

**Apologies:**

Ms. Inez Bailey  
Mr. Eamon Devoy  
Prof. Anne Moran  
Mr. Pat O'Callaghan  
Mr. Martin Shanahan

**In attendance:**

Ms. Claire Byrne (Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications)  
Dr. Jim Murray (Director of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition)(not item 5)  
Dr. Anna Murphy (Director of Research and Strategic Development) (Items 2-4)  
Ms. Trish O'Brien (Development Officer) (Items 2-4)

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2007 were agreed and signed.

**2. Strategic Planning**

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

The Authority noted the revised Strategic Plan and that its revision reflected the discussions at previous Authority meeting and reference group meetings.

Under section 58 of the Qualifications Act, the Authority agreed to adopt the Strategic Plan cover the period 2008 to 2012, subject to a number of suggestions made at the meeting. The Authority agreed to adopt the Business Plan for the Authority for 2008 and 2009 for publication on the Authority's website. The Authority also agreed to adopt, under section 59 of the Act, the report on the work of the Authority over the last two years.

The Authority agreed that a copy of the Strategic Plan and Report be sent to the Minister for Education and Science as required in the Qualifications Act. The Authority agreed that a copy of the two documents be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

### **3. FETAC Review and Strategy**

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

The Authority considered the self-evaluation report, the report of the review panel and the response of FETAC. The Authority noted that FETAC welcomes the external panel's report and the panel's acknowledgement of the significant progress made by the Council since its establishment.

The Authority considered that it was clear from the self-evaluation report, review panel's report and FETAC's response that the review process had succeeded in meeting its primary purpose. The Authority concurred with the findings and supporting rationale in the report of the review team and supported the plans set out in the response of FETAC.

In fulfilment of its statutory review function, the Authority was satisfied that

- the Further Education and Training Awards Council has performed all its principal statutory functions satisfactorily in a complex environment taking into account the objectives established by the Council for performing these functions;
- the Council's internal processes reflect best practice, are considered and are appropriate;
- in the performance of its relevant functions, the Council complies with the Common Quality Assurance Framework for European vocational education and training.

The Authority noted the need to attach priority to:

- Ensuring that FETAC has the capacity to deliver on its important and wide-ranging work – thus the need for the internal review of organisational and staffing arrangements was very important.
- The testing of a range of standard setting approaches (including setting new standards, and bringing together existing standards, where there is more than one or where there is only one) and then the speedy implementation of the agreed approach(es).

- The establishment of an industry forum.

The Authority noted FETAC's Strategic Plan, approved the plan under section 58 (5) of the Qualifications Act and agreed to provide a copy of the Plan to the Minister of Education and Science under section 58 (6).

#### **4. Framework Implementation**

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

The Authority noted the process to align awards of the Open University. The Authority agreed with the alignment of the awards of Open University, made in Ireland, with the National Framework of Qualifications in line with the proposal made by HETAC and subject to the conditions stated therein.

The Authority noted the process to align awards of the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The Authority agreed with the alignment of awards of the Scottish Qualifications Authority, to be made in Ireland, with the National Framework of Qualifications in line with the proposal made by FETAC and subject to a similar set of conditions as those set out for Open University.

#### **5. Budget/Financial Paper**

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

#### **6. Framework Implementation and Impact 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.

#### **7. Framework Implementation**

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

The Authority noted the joint establishment of the Framework Implementation Network by the Irish Universities' Association and the Authority. The Authority noted the purpose of the network is to bring together practitioners and to establish how experience in the use of the Framework can be shared.

## **8. OECD Project on Recognition of Prior Learning**

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

The Authority noted that the OECD review team's visit from 4 to 8 February 2008 went well and the OECD report is awaited.

## **9. Communications and Use of Framework**

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

The Authority noted that among the communication activities to raise awareness of the qualification recognition service is a breakfast event on 29 February 2008. The Authority noted that the event is being held in cooperation with the Office of the Minister for Integration and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturism (NCCRI). Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan T.D. is the guest of honour.

## **10. Decentralisation**

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

## **11. Staffing**

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

## **12. Tripartite**

The Authority noted the paper that had been circulated by the executive and noted that the tripartite meetings among the senior executives of the Authority, FETAC and HETAC have continued. The Authority noted that the tripartite engagement has extended to meetings between the Directors and senior officers of the three bodies.

## **13. Updates**

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

## **14. Meeting dates**

The following dates for Authority meetings for the remainder of 2008 were agreed:

- Wednesday 11 June at **4pm**
- Wednesday 24 September at **11am**
- Wednesday 3 December at **11am**

The meeting concluded.

**Chairperson** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_