

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Meeting in Authority Offices

Tuesday 21 June 2011

Present:

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

Apologies:

Ms. Audry Deane
Mr. Tony Donohoe

In attendance:

Ms. Claire Byrne (Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications)
Dr. Anna Murphy (Director of Research and Strategic Development)
Ms. Trish O'Brien (Head of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2011 were agreed and signed.

2. Dublin Institute of Technology – Quality Review

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

The Authority considered the review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) which was undertaken by an external panel, assisted by the Authority as secretariat. The Authority also considered the institutional response to the review by the DIT and the executive's consideration of both the panel report and the DIT's response. The Authority commended the work carried out on the quality review and approved the review panel's report. The Authority agreed that the institutional response be published as is customary and in line with good practice.

3. Budget, Finance and Risk

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

The Authority noted the Comptroller and Auditor General had commenced the audit of the Authority's financial statements for 2010.

The Authority noted the report of the Internal Audit Committee and in particular its review of the Authority's organisation-wide risk profile. It noted that there is to be further development of the risk register and these amendments will be considered at the next meeting of the Internal Audit Committee.

The Authority noted the annual report on the system of internal financial controls and the management's response to the recommendations in the report. Following the recommendations made in the report the Internal Audit Committee Charter was amended and the amendments were approved by the Authority.

The Authority agreed to issue a further communication to the Department of Education and Skills reiterating its concerns and the risks arising from the delay in receiving a decision on the status of a number of fixed-term contracts. The Authority will be kept informed of developments.

4. 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 planning group on amalgamation, through the Task Force Project Groups, had been working to document the current practices in the four agencies in relation to corporate (HR, ICT, finance etc.) and business (NFQ, qualifications, awards, validation, certification, quality assurance etc.). The planning group completed this Phase 1 of the planning process at the end of May 2011 and submitted a report to the Interim Board for its meeting on 21 June 2011. The report will be disseminated to Authority members, and the Board/Councils and staff of the other agencies.

The Authority was informed that the amalgamation planning group was gathering the views of members of the Board/Councils/Authority of the four bodies to draw on their knowledge and experience in order to inform the development of a strategy for the new body and to assist in the planning process. In this regard, the Authority shared its views with the executive and indicated that some members would provide written views to the executive in the coming weeks.

The Authority noted that the next phase of work for the planning group is to analyse the data gathered in Phase 1 and to begin the practical preparation

towards launch day and to develop strategic directions for QQAI. The planning group will report to the Interim Board at its next meeting on 4 October 2011.

5. Internationalisation Register

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

At its meeting on 13 April 2011 the Authority noted the draft paper on the Internationalisation Register. The Authority were provided with an updated version of the draft paper which included a section on the short-term requirements to design and agree protocols for dealing with issues that arise for the Register. The executive is working with the Department of Education and Skills, and Justice and Equality on policy developments and the necessary protocols. This work is ongoing and the Authority will be kept informed of developments.

6. Quality Assurance – Enhancement Activities

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

With regard to the Dublin Institute of Technology Quality Review the Authority noted that the issue of the ownership of student feedback at the module level had been resolved and the Authority welcomed the outcome.

7. Framework Implementation

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

The Authority noted that a new title of the award formally known as the Higher Diploma in Education and now, by agreement, included at Level 8 in the NFQ, is being considered by the IUA. The executive awaits a communication from the IUA on the outcome of their considerations.

8. Qualifications Recognition

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

The Authority noted the work being carried out by the executive on the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework in Ireland; the progress being made on EQF referencing across member states; and the accelerated rate of the development of National Qualification Frameworks throughout most member and accession states.

The Authority also noted the European Commission's current development of a web portal to disseminate information on EQF and , in the longer term to link

national qualifications databases and allow citizens to search these databases on a European-wide basis through the portal.

9. 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 15 September 2011 at 11.00am in the Authority's offices on Jervis Street.

The meeting concluded.

Chairperson_____ **Date:**_____