SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY   B56/3 i

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 10 JUNE 2009

Minutes of the fifty-fifth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10 am on
Wednesday 1 April 2009 in the Boardroom, Dalkeith.

	Members		**Officers**
*	Mr G Houston (Chairman)	*	Ms M Cahill
*	Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)	*	Mr R Gibson
*	Mr A Cassidy	*	Ms K McCallum
*	Mr J Edgar	*	Mr J McDonald
*	Mrs J Gillespie	*	Ms J Ross
	Prof A MacLennan	*	Dr G Stewart
*	Mr J Mitchell	*	Mr R Sylvester
*	Mrs M Nicol		
*	Mr G Rodgers		**Observers**
*	Prof J Simmons	*	Mr C MacLean, Scottish Government
*	Mrs S Walsh		

		In attendance
*	indicates present	Ms K Dinwoodie, SQA (item 55/12 only)

55/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr MacLean, Scottish
Government, to his first meeting of the Board.

Apologies were received from Prof MacLennan.

55/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Mrs Walsh declared a conflict of interest around the development of vocational
qualifications on behalf of the Izmir Chamber of Commerce, as referred to in the
Business Development Report.

55/3 PREVIOUS MEETING

i   **Minutes of meeting held on 18 February 2009**
        The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ii   **Action Grid**
        The contents of the action grid were noted.

55/4 MATTERS ARISING

Any matters arising would be covered in the agenda of the meeting.

55/5 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman reported on his recent activities and engagements in connection with
SQA.

- During April he had completed induction visits at both sites and had been impressed by the enthusiasm and professional commitment of staff.
- Attended the Public Sector seminar on Pay Policy.
- A meeting with the Cabinet Secretary, Mr K Brown Minister for Schools and Skills, and the Chief Executive. Discussion had focussed on SQA's current priorities, including the urgency of a decision around the Dalkeith accommodation and the potential operational implications on SQA to deliver CfE.
- Attended the Business to College Awards and presented the Workforce Development award to Alstom Train Care and Forth Valley College.
- Met with Mr Chris Travis, Chief Executive of Scotland's Colleges.

55/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

i Chief Executive's Report

Dr Brown presented an overview of the headline business since the previous meeting of the Board. Further to the contents of the report, she reported on:

Single Equality Bill

The changes in the DDA and the amending regulations had given a statutory duty to SQA as a General Qualifications Body not to discriminate against disabled candidates and to follow law and guidance in achieving this. As an Awarding Body, SQA would need to agree the reasonable adjustments that should be applied to the qualifications.

Discussion had also centred on the dual role of the Accreditation body and the different structures that exist between Scotland and the rest of the UK, based on the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 that gave SQA the power of regulation. The Chief Executive would progress discussions with Prof Simmons and the Scottish Government around SQA's position on this matter, and the Board would be kept abreast of developments.

Dalkeith Accommodation

Recent exchanges had concentrated on the importance of a decision, especially in light of potential operational implications on SQA to deliver Literacy and Numeracy Awards in 2012-13. SQA had been clear in its message that the window of opportunity for relocation was winter 2010-11.

Trading Subsidiary

SQA had addressed the latest queries from the Scottish Government, and it was expected that the business case would be resubmitted to Ministers soon.

Recruitment

Interviews had taken place for the Director of Finance, and it was hoped to make an appointment within the coming weeks.

55/7 QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Dr Stewart provided an overview of activities within the Qualifications Development directorate.

- The Curriculum for Excellence - Experiences & Outcomes would be launched that week by the Cabinet Secretary. A significant amount of work had been completed with the Scottish Government and the CfE Management Board around the shape of Literacy and Numeracy qualifications and qualifications at SCQF 4 and 5. The Board discussed the potential contribution of e-assessment to support and facilitate delivery of Literacy and Numeracy awards, noting the challenge around enablement. Messages from SQA had included the need to ensure affordability and deliverability
- Discussions had taken place with Scottish Government officials and Partners about options for the Scottish Survey of Achievement in 2010.
- The Scottish Government had provided funding for 18 months for Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to credit rate SVQs. There was an expectation on Awarding Bodies to contribute to this funding, which would present serious resource implications for SQA. A meeting had been arranged with the Alliance of SSCs to discuss and agree an approach and timescales.

In line with the decisions reserved for the Board of Management, it was highlighted that any actions and decisions relating to the new qualifications, which were considered to be sufficiently novel or innovative, should be presented to the Board for advice. It was noted that the Board should find reassurance that the Qualifications Committee had had considerable input into discussions around developments of the new qualifications, and in turn, the committee would provide the Board with advice on any strategic and policy decisions that were taken.

The call for discussions to take place at the Board was supported by the Chairman, who maintained that the Board should have the opportunity to discuss any matters of import that could impact on the income and operational effectiveness of SQA. It was also agreed that following appointment of the new Board members, it would be helpful for the Board to have a discussion on its role and priorities going forward.

55/8   **OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

i   **Report from Certification Planning Group**

Ms McCallum presented the progress in factors relating to candidate certification in session 2008-09.

EMC (Electronic Marks Capture)

Good progress was being made with User Acceptance Testing, and SQA was confident that the timescale would be met for the application to be signed off and available on 21 April. The Project Board was commended for the significant software enhancements that had been introduced to enhance Quality Assurance and expand SQA's provision of e-enabled services. The Board was assured that contingency plans were up-to-date and in place in the event that these would need to be invoked.

Baccalaureates

In light of the increasing uptake of International Baccalaureates in Scotland, officers were urged to ensure that strong engagement and communication plans were in place to promote uptake of the Scottish Baccalaureates. The Board was assured that launch events and networks were in place to support delivery of the qualification, and that the continuing development of this work dovetailed into the overall CfE programme plan.

Internal Assessment Delivery

As part of the restructure, a dedicated team had been established from across four business areas, responsible for delivery of Internal Assessment and all Vocational certification (HN/SVQ). An initial area of work would be to review and identify more efficient Centre Approval routes and processes.

ii **Contract Award for Printing and Distribution of SQA's Question Papers**

The Board approved the award of the contract lots for printing and distribution of SQA's question papers in 2009-12.

55/9 **2020 VISION**

Dr Brown gave a presentation on the strategic plans and long term vision for SQA. This had been discussed previously with the Scottish Government and detailed the challenges and opportunities faced by SQA, along with the goals and objectives being set to address these.

Closely linked to SQA's operational plans and the national performance framework, these strategic goals highlighted the:

▪ need for SQA to be responsive and fit for purpose;
▪ importance for SQA to be recognised for its expertise in assessment;
▪ value of SQA's staff and appointees;
▪ need for commitment and engagement across the public sector;
▪ criticality of e-technology;
▪ call for a single funding arrangement with the Scottish Government.

Board members provided useful feedback, including the need to consider suitable performance measures of public perception, a user friendly format to ensure clear communication both internally and externally and, reference to the strategic nature of SQA's work. The Board noted and welcomed the update on the long term direction for SQA.

55/10 **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

i **Business Development Report**

The commercial sensitivity of the report was stressed to Board members. Mr McDonald presented the business development report for international and UK-based commercial and development activities.

Business Plan Reporting

Progress against plan was on track with the exception of the objective to develop a commercial infrastructure, which was dependent on the establishment of the Trading Subsidiary.

Activity and Intelligence.

Current endorsement activity reported on the recent contract between SQA and Q-Validus for the endorsement of Computer Wings and Spreadsheet Safe, a global suite of ICT qualifications. A press release was due for issue in the coming weeks.

Mr McDonald also provided an update on the ongoing discussions with the Driving Standards Agency on the Dangerous Goods Driver Training contract.

ii **Key Messages regarding SQA's role and activities**

Mr McDonald presented the draft key messages document, which was currently with editorial staff for comment and was presented to the Board for information. The document had been developed to provide a clear communication of SQA's role and activities, with the intention to deliver the message (adapted as appropriate) across different fora. Feedback from Board members included:

- The benefits of including a matrix for quick reference.
- Suggestions to include SQA's commitment to:
  - support Scotland's economic growth and competitiveness, and
  - meet the individual aspirations of learners.
- Consideration of the high level promotional messages.
- The importance of integrating the key messages of SQA's 2020 vision for consistency.
- The need for more regular mentions to accreditation.

The Board welcomed the production of the marketing material and approved its ongoing development for dissemination.

55/11 **BUSINESS SYSTEMS UPDATE**

Mr Gibson provided an overview of the work underway within the Business Systems directorate, including an update on the projects being delivered. This work would complement and support the business as it evolved and developed its new ways of working.

55/12 **CORPORATE PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

Ms Dinwoodie was welcomed to the meeting. She provided an outline of the work that had been completed to review SQA's approach to performance management and ensure that the progress of delivery against objectives was monitored effectively and timeously. She presented the proposed process for challenge internally on a monthly basis, with the Board reviewing information on a quarterly basis.

After discussion, it was suggested that the strategic goals and performance measures should incorporate measures for public perception (as mentioned in the 2020 vision) and also reference to Colleges at measure E (stakeholder perception targets). The Board approved the corporate planning calendar for 2010-13 with the recommendation to include consultation with the Accreditation Committee.

Ms Dinwoodie left the meeting.

55/13 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i **Accreditation Committee held on 3 March 2009**

Professor Simmons presented a summary of the main business covered, which had included consideration of the Scottish Vocational Qualification

annual audit visit reports on a number of awarding bodies. To provide comfort and assurance to the Board, Professor Simmons advised that the audit visit had taken place in April 2008 and that the majority of SQA non-compliance incidents had since been addressed. It was noted that a further audit would take place in June 2009.

ii **Audit and Performance Committee held on 28 January 2009**

A verbal report had been provided at the last meeting of the Board. The approved minutes were enclosed and noted.

iii **Audit and Performance Committee held on 25 March 2009**

The Audit and Performance Committee had met in the week preceding the Board. Mr Cassidy provided an update on the main business covered:
- PwC audit reports had been received on the Candidates Appeal Process, Corporate Governance, and Business Continuity arrangements.
- Consideration and approval of a single, combined plan for internal audit, reflecting both in-house and outsourced audit work on a rolling three-year period.
- Endorsement of the draft Statement on Internal Control for inclusion in the Annual Report and Financial Accounts 2008-09.

It was noted that the minutes would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

iv **International and Commercial Committee held on 31 March 2009**

The International and Commercial Committee had met on the day before the Board and Mr Cassidy advised that the Committee had considered and approved the draft International Strategy 2009-12 for submission to the Board in June. The committee had also received an informative presentation on SQA's engagement with vendor qualifications.

55/14 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no matters raised.

PAPERS FOR NOTING
The Board noted the contents of the following reports:
PFN 1   Financial Report to 28 February 2009
PFN 2   Note of the joint meeting of the Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee held on 20 February 2009

55/15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 10 June 2009 in Glasgow.