

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 24 FEBRUARY 2010

For approval

Minutes of the sixtieth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10.00am on Wednesday 9 December 2009 in Esk/Forth, Optima Building, Glasgow.

**Members**

- \* Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- \* Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- Mr A Cassidy
- \* Mr J Edgar
- \* Mr W Gallagher
- \* Prof A MacLennan
- \* Mr K McKay
- \* Mrs M Nicol
- \* Mr G Rodgers
- \* Prof J Simmons
- \* Mrs S Walsh

**Officers**

- \* Ms M Cahill
- \* Mr R Gibson
- \* Ms K McCallum
- \* Mr J McDonald
- \* Mr G Moodie
- \* Ms J Ross
- \* Dr G Stewart

**Observers**

- \* Mr M McVicar, Scottish Government

\* indicates present

**60/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr McVicar from the Scottish Government. Apologies were received from Mr Cassidy.

The Chairman reminded Board members that input was invited from members of the Executive Team on any issues that required clarification or comment in the course of the meeting.

**60/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**60/3 PREVIOUS MEETING****i Minutes of meeting held on 4 November 2009**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**ii Action Grid**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

**60/4 MATTERS ARISING****59/7 Dalkeith Accommodation Project**

Ms McCallum advised that the Programme Board was now fully established. She went on to outline the three strands of work being considered and monitored by the Programme Board.

Any further matters arising would be covered in the course of the agenda.

## 60/5 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman opened his report with reference to the recent appointment of Mike Russell as the new Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. The Chief Executive and Chairman had accepted an invitation from Mr Russell to attend an introductory consultation event being held on Tuesday 15 December. It was also noted that the Chairman would extend an invitation for Mr Russell to attend a future Board meeting.

The Chairman went on to update the Board on other SQA related matters:

- A meeting with John Mulgrew, Chair of LTS and Colin MacLean.
- The advertisements for three new Board members would appear that week in a number of regional newspapers, including The Sunday Herald and The Scotland on Sunday on 13 December. They would also be posted on the Scottish Government public appointments website from 11 December, with a closing date for applications set for 22 January 2010. The details of the three posts were shared with the Board.
- The Chairman was pleased to announce Alex MacLennan's appointment to Vice-Chair.
- A self assessment feedback form would be issued to Board members in January, asking for members' input on how the Board was operating and seeking suggestions on areas for improvement. It was intended to discuss the outputs at a private session of the Board in February.
- Attendance at a pre-consultation event on the revised Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland.
- Attendance at the SQA *Scotland and Me* celebrations; the final event to support the Scottish Government's Homecoming Year.

In closing his item, the Chairman advised that copies of the final report from Deloitte were available at the meeting for members to collect.

## 60/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Dr Brown referred to the contents of her report and highlighted specific areas of interest and progress.

Regarding the recent press coverage in relation to the Edinburgh School of Business (ESoB), she advised that the matter had been fully investigated and that SQA officials had carried out a number of on-site visits. ESoB was approved as an SQA Centre in February 2009 as it met all of the necessary criteria for approval both as a Centre and as a provider of named and specific qualifications. The Centre had been approved to offer only two SQA qualifications - Internet Security and PC Passport and had not yet submitted any candidates.

In addition, ESoB had made an application to SQA to have the Advanced Diploma credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework; this information was now clearly reflected on the ESoB website.

Dr Brown also updated the Board on arrangements for the forthcoming Glasgow staff's informal committee Charity Ball and circulated the invitation for information.

## 60/7 ACCREDITATION

The Chairman welcomed Mr George Brown, Head of Accreditation, to the meeting.

### i **SQA Accreditation**

Dr Brown opened the presentation with an introduction on the role of SQA Accreditation. Mr Brown went on to provide an overview of the work of the Accreditation Unit, the outputs and targeted actions arising from the recent benchmarking study, and the next stages planned to take forward the communications and marketing plan. In the course of the presentation he highlighted that there were appropriate governance arrangements in place. He also clarified how the accreditation function worked with awarding bodies to maintain standards.

The Board welcomed the comprehensive account that clearly articulated the complex the work of SQA Accreditation and in the course of discussion it was confirmed that the fundamental role of the Accreditation Unit was to ensure that qualifications accredited met the needs of Scotland. The absence of a regulatory framework was also noted by the Board.

### ii **Standing Orders**

The standing orders for the Accreditation Committee had been reviewed to ensure they reflected clearly the relationship with the SQA Board and were consistent with the standing orders for other SQA committees. A summary of the changes had been detailed in the covering paper. It was noted that the revised standing orders had been approved by the Accreditation Committee.

The Board approved the revised standing orders for immediate adoption.

## 60/8 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Board noted the business development report for international and UK based commercial and development activities for the period to end October 2009, and was encouraged by the positive work underway in Croatia.

In light of the reported slippage and red status of progress with the establishment of a trading subsidiary, the Board voiced its concern and sought clarification on the position. It was reported that the Scottish Government had presented a number of significant questions that had since been addressed, with the Business Case having been resubmitted in the previous week. Mr McVicar confirmed that the business case had been circulated to the relevant Scottish Government officials for comment, but could not provide any assurance on when a decision would be taken. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman stressed the urgency of finalising this matter that had been in progress for some time, and was firm on the need for the Scottish Government to take timeous action.

## 60/9 CFE UPDATE

Dr Brown presented an overview of the Scottish Government and SQA plans that were being progressed for implementation and delivery of CfE. This was followed by Dr Stewart who provided an update on work within qualifications development

regarding Literacy and Numeracy and National Courses (NCs). In summary of the ensuing discussion that took place, the Board:

- Noted that the Design Principles for new NCs and revised NCs (Highers and Advanced Highers) had not been approved and that any further significant delay could impact significantly on implementation and transition plans. The impact of the proposed assessment was being modelled and analysed by SQA officers, with the involvement of subject practitioners. The operational and business system implications would also be explored. This work would structure discussions at an extra meeting of the Qualifications Committee in January that in turn would inform dialogue with the Qualifications Governing Group in February. Recognising the considerable work that this presented, the Board fully endorsed the approach being taken, noting that it was crucial to develop an assessment approach that could be applied to all subjects.
- Agreed that the engagement and capability of centres was critical to the delivery of these new qualifications.
- Reiterated the importance of an independent audit of the overall CfE programme.

The Board would receive an update on progress at the next meeting of the Board.

## 60/10 FINANCE AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### **i Draft Corporate Plan 2010-13**

The draft corporate plan had been discussed by the Board at its meeting in September. The final draft was now presented to the Board and had been amended to take account of comments made, reflecting the input from SQA committees, the Advisory Council, the SQA Partnership Group, and early input from the Scottish Government.

It was suggested that the CfE commentary should be revised for clarification, and subject to this amendment, the Board approved the draft corporate plan for submission to Scottish Government for feedback, amendment if necessary and then approval.

### **ii Draft Budget 2010-11**

The draft budget supported the strategic goals as outlined in SQA's corporate plan, and had been developed as a result of in-depth reviews across the business. It was noted that whilst core income remained flat, there would be a sizeable increase in rest of UK and international income.

The budget was based on grant funding and CfE budget assumptions. The latter generated much discussion, and it was clarified that this approach had been taken while final CfE decisions were awaited. The Board was assured that SQA officers were developing CfE financial plans and costings for the next financial year and through to full implementation in 2017, which linked to the CfE plans at high and operational levels. Dr Brown stressed that delivery of CfE must not encroach on the ability for SQA to deliver its other commitments that were core funded. The Board encouraged the Executive Team to continue to develop its plans over the longer term.

Subject to two minor amendments in the commentary around funding models and Dalkeith accommodation costs, the Board approved the 2010-11 draft budget for submission to the Scottish Government for Ministerial approval.

### **iii Scheme of Delegation**

A full review of the Scheme of Delegation had been undertaken, and a number of amendments were presented, as outlined in the covering paper. The changes went to establish clear segregation of duties and more efficient control measures and processes. Next steps would include a review of all procedures and policies that linked into the Scheme.

The Board approved the revised Scheme of Delegation for implementation.

### **iv Draft Disability Equality Scheme**

All listed public authorities were required by law to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and action plan, which must be reviewed and published on a three year cycle. The current scheme and action plan would expire at the end of December 2009, and the Board was presented with new scheme and plan for 2010-13 that had been reviewed and fully re-written by Counsel instructed by SQA. It was suggested and agreed that the report should acknowledge the possibility of future equalities legislation around the need for a Single Equality Scheme that would bring together the six equality strands, and that SQA would take cognisance of this.

The Board approved the draft Disability Equality scheme for 2010-13.

### **v Financial Report 7 months YTD**

The Board noted the summary of the income and expenditure accounts for the year to 31 October 2009.

## **60/11 SQA GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Robert Quinn, Head of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Ms Marilyn Waters, Qualifications Co-ordinator to the meeting. Mr Quinn updated the Board on SQA's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) activity, summarising the work that had been completed to date and outlining SQA's key commitments under the plan. As an organisation, SQA had benefited from the support of a wide range of national and individual stakeholders in the development of this plan.

The Board discussed the unique position of the Gaelic language in Scotland afforded by the parliamentary legislation and the actions that would be taken by SQA in following the Language plan. Whilst the Board supported the organisations approach, it urged careful management of expectations in a period of significant activity for the organisation where resources were likely to be constrained.

The Board remarked favourably on the content of the report and approved the GLP for submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig that month.

## **60/12 REPORT FROM CERTIFICATION PLANNING GROUP**

The Board noted the update on certification planning, and that activity was progressing on schedule. Ms McCallum also provided an update on the management of appeals in 2009, noting that incidents of late and incomplete submissions continued to arise. Guidance and timelines would be reinforced to address this.

## 60/13 COMMITTEE REPORTS

### i **Advisory Council held on 9 October 2009**

A verbal update had been provided at the last Board meeting. The Board noted the contents of the approved minutes.

### ii **Audit Committee held on 11 November 2009**

Mr Edgar presented the draft minutes from the last meeting of the Audit Committee. These were noted by the Board.

### iii **Qualifications Committee held on 13 November 2009**

Ms Nicol presented the draft minutes from the last Qualifications Committee meeting. These were noted by the Board

### iv **International and Commercial Committee held on 18 November 2009**

The minutes had not been available for inclusion in the Board papers. Dr Brown provided an overview of the business covered, which had included a focus report on the licensed trade, and a discussion around the proposed Business Development structure.

### v **Advisory Council held no 4 December 2009**

The Advisory Council had met in the previous week and Prof MacLennan outlined the areas of business that had been considered, including a demonstration of SQA's e-Portfolio and e-assessment tools, and an update on the recommendation of tariff ratings for the SQA National Certificate.

### vi **Accreditation Committee held on 8 December 2009**

The Accreditation Committee had met in the previous day and Prof Simmons provided an update on the business covered, which had included approval of the standing orders and consideration of the operational plan for 2010-12.

## 60/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters raised for consideration.

## 60/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 24 February in Esk/Forth, the Optima Building, Glasgow