

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 2 JULY 2008

Minutes of the forty-ninth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10 am on Wednesday 21 May 2008 in the Jurys Inn, Glasgow.

Members

- * Mr J McCormick (Chairman)
- * Dr J Brown
- * Mr A Cassidy
- * Mrs J Gillespie
- * Prof A MacLennan
- * Mrs L McKay
- * Mr J Mitchell
- * Mrs M Nicol
- * Mr G Rodgers
- * Prof J Simmons

* indicates present

Officers

- * Ms M Cahill
- * Ms K McCallum
- * Mr J McDonald
- * Ms J Ross
- * Dr G Stewart
- Mr R Sylvester
- Mr J Young

Observers

Ms C Carlin, Scottish Government

In attendance

Ms J Blair (item 49/8 only)

49/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mr R Sylvester and Mr J Young.

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

49/2 PREVIOUS MEETING**i Minutes of meeting held on 9 April 2008**

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

ii Action Grid

The contents of the action grid were noted. The Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Council would be submitted to the next formal meeting of the Advisory Council.

49/3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

49/4 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS***Board appointments***

The Chairman advised that interviews had taken place for the appointment of two Board members and the associated paperwork was in the process of completion. Recommendations for appointment would be submitted to Ministers within the coming weeks.

Progress was being made in the appointment process for a new Chairperson, with the skills matrix and advertising schedule now agreed with the Scottish Government.

49/5 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

Dr Brown presented an overview of the headline issues since the last meeting of the Board. Further to the contents of the report, she reported that:

Continuous Improvement – Quality Assurance Structure

The departure of the Business Manager for Assessment Standards, along with the management restructure had prompted a review of the need for this role in the Operations directorate.

It had been decided that as part of the drive to embed quality assurance across the business, there would no longer be a need for the role, and instead it would be timely to create two separate functions, one for the delivery and quality assurance of External Assessment, and the other for Internal Assessment. There would be close working relationships in place with the Qualifications teams, where responsibility would sit for the policy development of quality assurance of assessment.

Star Awards

It was confirmed that the annual star awards ceremony would take place on Friday 21 November in Glasgow. The Board was thanked for having kept other dates on hold.

'Making Skills Work for Scotland'

Led by the Skills Division of Lifelong Learning, the purpose of this event had been to articulate how Scotland would approach the Skills Agenda. With contributions from SQA and Skills Development Scotland, there had been positive discussion around how these two bodies could engage in driving forward implementation of the strategy.

Dalkeith Accommodation

Ms McCallum updated the Board on progress. Working to the terms of the new Relocation Policy, officers were in regular dialogue with colleagues from the Scottish Government to ensure best value. A full review and interrogation of space requirements had identified a 17% reduction on the original allocation. A detailed property search that considered a wide range of options was underway and next steps would include a full appraisal of those properties.

St Andrew's Day Holiday

In line with the First Minister's message that the Scottish Government would like Scotland to mark St Andrew's Day, members were invited to consider a recommendation to approve SQA staff an extra day of holiday on, or around, 30 November. Any associated cost would be notional and not counted towards agreed Pay Limits. The proposal before the Board had been considered and approved by the Scottish Government.

The Board approved an extra day holiday for staff on the working day nearest to 30 November.

49/6 **REPORT FROM CERTIFICATION PLANNING GROUP**

Ms McCallum was pleased to report that the script management project, introduced through Continuous Improvement activity, had presented positive outcomes in terms of developing skills, ownership and new ways of working. She went on to praise the work of verification teams, where this year had seen an improved management of the process and associated data, and also paid credit to the IMT staff in their assessment and management of the Grangemouth fuel dispute to ensure the continuity of SQA's services.

Commenting on the two main developments that featured in this year's Diet activity, Ms McCallum reported that:

- ***MySQA***
Registration had opened according to schedule on 1 May, with more than 15,000 candidates registered, of which over 9,000 accounts had been activated. Bulk emails providing advance notice of closure dates would be issued in June and July. Current work centred on full testing of the online facility.
- ***Electronic Marks Capture***
Considerable time and effort had been given to the testing and launch of Marking from Paper and Marking from Image. Significant progress had been made and work was on track.

Other

The Chairman and Mrs Gillespie would accompany SQA officers at the beginning of June as part of a scoping visit to the Edexcel scanning farm.

49/7 ***CURRICULUM for EXCELLENCE***

The Board received an update on the development of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and its proposed outcomes and objectives and looked forward to the publication of the Scottish Government's Consultation document. Recognising that this was an iterative process, the Board documented the importance of engagement and that it would work closely with the Scottish Government and other partners to ensure that future arrangements for National Qualifications would reflect the values, purpose and principles of CfE.

Ms Carlin and Prof Simmons left the meeting.

49/8 **FINANCE AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The Chairman welcomed Ms Jean Blair to the meeting.

i *Q4 Current Performance*

Ms Blair provided a comprehensive update on the key points in meeting SQA's Business Plan objectives for 2007-08. She highlighted that progress continued in the development of the 3-18 National Assessment Resource (replacing the current 5-15 national assessment item bank). The draft business case was in the final stages of preparation, and it was intended to submit this at the end of May for Scottish Government consideration.

Dr Stewart provided an update on the NQGA business case, and was pleased to report that SQA had been successful in its bid for European funding to support the ongoing

work of NQ modernisation. The Scottish Government had confirmed its contribution and SQA had drawn down the full £610,000 ESF match funding through the TranSETT project.

Balanced Scorecard

- Measure 3, delivery of Accreditation services, reflected the recent request to include a separate measure for the late submissions attributable only to SQA's Accreditation team. This had reported a much more favourable position in terms of meeting the target.
- Drawing attention to measure 5, Mr McDonald was pleased to report that the full year position on commercial targets could be reported at a surplus of £1.3 million net.
- Entries had shown an increase in HN uptake, measure 4, but with an overall decrease in HNC entries. It was noted that SQA would undertake a subject specific analysis of HN uptake.

Risk Register

- All local authorities were on board with the secure facilities for question paper storage. A rolling programme was in place to manage the transition period and steady progress was being made.

The Board noted the report on current performance.

ii **Draft Annual Review 2007-08**

A live version of the new 'web-only' style of the Annual Review was presented to the Board for comment. It was confirmed there would be the facility to download the Review in a 'Word' format. It was requested that download activity was monitored to track the level of interest. Feedback from the Board included:

- Change the term 'FAQs' to 'Summary'.
- Transcript and 'Summary' to include stronger and clearer references to employers and Accreditation.
- Awareness of page layering and 'stronger' front page to attract attention.

It was agreed that a revised link with incorporated changes would be sent to Board members for further comment and approval.

It was intended to launch the Annual Review at the beginning of June as part of the *Connecting with Customers* e-zine.

Ms Blair left the meeting.

49/9 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i **Advisory Council held on 12 May 2008**

Prof MacLennan outlined the main business of the last meeting of the Advisory Council, advising that discussion had centred on:

- the forthcoming CfE consultation;
- the requirement for a statutory public meeting;
- the future demand for Baccalaureates and the challenge for access in rural areas;
- the findings of the evaluation of the HN design principles, and the largely positive response to SQA's approach to the HN modernisation programme; and
- an update on the work of the Accreditation Unit in relation to the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (UKVQRP).

The Board noted the update and that the work on the development of NQGAs would incorporate the good practice and expertise gained from the HN Review programme.

ii **Audit and Performance Committee held on 30 April 2008**

Mr Cassidy reported that the meeting had focussed on preparations for the submission of the Annual Report, Annual Financial Accounts and the draft Statement of Internal Control.

The Board noted the update.

iii **International and Commercial Committee held on 7 May 2008**

Mr Cassidy was pleased to report that the Committee had been presented with a streamlined approach to the previously separate International and Commercial Activity updates. He commended officers on the effective performance reporting system that was now in place. These reports provided an understanding of the breadth of commercial work carried out by SQA, and it was suggested that the Board would benefit from receiving these reports as a point of information.

At the meeting, it had been noted with concern that approval for the establishment of a trading subsidiary remained outstanding. Dr Brown advised that SQA had received confirmation from the Scottish Government that all the necessary information had been received and the business case could now be submitted to the Minister for consideration.

The Board noted the update.

iv **Qualifications Committee held on 25 April 2008**

Mrs Nicol provided a summary of the main business covered. Predominantly focussing on CfE, the Committee had also considered an overview of the key messages from Diet 2007 Appeals and the measures being put in place to address operational issues that burden and challenge the system. The Committee had fully recognised and supported the proposal to undertake a robust review of the appeals system.

An informative piece of work on the demand for qualifications in the Scottish economy had also been considered. Amongst other things, the research had indicated a shift towards the use of units rather than full qualifications in order to upgrade skills.

The Board noted the update and the contents of the minutes.

v **Remuneration Committee held on 6 May 2008**

The Chairman reported that the Committee had considered and endorsed the performance ratings and bonus recommendations for the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Team in 2007-08. These would be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval.

49/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no matters raised for discussion.

PAPERS FOR NOTING

The Board noted the contents of the following reports:

PFN 1 Scottish Science and Languages Baccalaureates

PFN 2 Financial Report to 31 March 2008

49/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 2 July 2008 in Esk/Forth, the Optima Building, Glasgow.