

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B137/1.12 i

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 18 MARCH 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1pm on Thursday 4 February 2021 by video conference.

Members

- * Mr D Middleton (Chair)
- * Ms F Robertson (Chief Executive)
- * Ms E Craig
- * Ms A Davis
- * Mr S Hagney
- * Mrs J Handley
- * Dr W Mayne
- * Mr H McKay
- * Mr G Smith
- * Mr R Stewart
- * Dr K Thomson

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr M Baxter
- * Mr L Downie
- * Mr J McMorris
- [REDACTED]
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mrs D Mahmoud

Observers

- [REDACTED] Committee Manager
- [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director
- [REDACTED], Communications Consultant

* Indicates present on the call

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noting no apologies had been received.

1.11 Declaration of Any Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest raised in relation to the agenda.

Whilst not a conflict of interest, it was acknowledged that Dr Thomson and Mr Hagney held an interest through their positions as Heads of Centre.

1.12 Matters Arising

There were no other matters arising that would not be covered in the course of the agenda.

1.13 Minutes of the previous meetings

i 5 November 2020

The minutes of 5 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ii 25 November 2020

The minutes of 25 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

iii **7 December 2020**

The minutes of 7 December 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

iv **21 January 2021**

The minutes of 21 January 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to an amended section of wording around item B134/1.31. It was agreed that the minutes would be brought back to the Board on 17 February for approval before publication.

1.2 **Awarding 2021**

1.21 **ACM 2021 Update**

Ms Blair delivered a presentation to the Board providing an overview of the status of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) for 2021 and the two options being explored at that point. She notified the Board that both options had been taken to the Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee for discussion earlier that week for discussion, feedback from which supported the need for awards to be based on demonstrated attainment, maintaining the integrity of awards, and safeguarding the appeals process.

Ms Blair assured the Board that colleagues remained committed to finding solutions and work continued with partners in the National Qualifications Group to agree a way forward to achieving safe and secure delivery of Awarding 2021.

The Board noted the update, discussing the two options presented and the implications of each, agreeing the importance of undertaking quality assurance in the awarding process to support teachers.

The Board acknowledged the current position of the organisation and the work ongoing to ensure SQA continued to fulfil its statutory obligations. The Chair noted that the next meeting of the Board on 17 February would allow an opportunity to present the current position and proposals as to how best to proceed.

1.22 **Delivery Assurance Update – Awarding 2021 Programme**

Discussed as part of the previous item.

1.3 **Strategic Review of Communications**

The Board were joined by [REDACTED], Communications Consultant, to provide an overview of the strategic communications report produced on commission of SQA and discuss next steps.

[REDACTED] led the Board through the key points of the report and recommendations arising from the work and highlighted that the recommendation to appoint a Director of Communications would allow SQA to take ownership of media relations and external communications, positioning the organisation to deliver more impactful and strategic communications.

The Board welcomed the report, endorsing the recommendations within and the appointment of the Director post. Recognising the fundamental changes and improvements that these would action for the future of SQA to best serve stakeholders and the wider system, the Board discussed the prioritisation of those changes in order to ensure the best format to communications over the following crucial months.

The Board went on to discuss options for increased engagement and communication with learners and teachers to ensure the provision of clarity and support to the entire system. Members acknowledged the complexity of communications given the wide and varied audiences reached by SQA and agreed that the recommended appointment would direct and focus this work.

The Chair thanked [REDACTED] for joining the meeting and the Board for their comments, noting that the report had demonstrated the essential function of communications within the organisation.

In closing, the Chair thanked members for their time and input to the meeting and noted that the Board would meet again on Wednesday 17 February at 10am.