

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 1 APRIL 2009

Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10 am on Wednesday 18 February 2009 in Spey/Tay, Optima, Glasgow.

Members

- * Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- * Dr J Brown
- * Mr A Cassidy
- * Mr J Edgar
- * Mrs J Gillespie
- * Prof A MacLennan
- * Mr J Mitchell
- * 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
- * Ms J Ross
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mr R Sylvester

Observers

- * Mr J MacDougall, Scottish Government

In attendance

- Ms K Dinwoodie, SQA (item 54/11 only)
- Mrs J Faulds, SQA, (item 54/12 only)
- Mr J McMorris, SQA (item 54/5 ii only)

* indicates present

54/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

It was noted that the meeting had been preceded by a private session of the Board.

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr Edgar, recently appointed as an SQA Board member, to his first meeting of the Board. There were no apologies.

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

54/2 PREVIOUS MEETING**i Minutes of meeting held on 10 December 2008**

Subject to a few typographical errors, the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ii Action Grid

The contents of the action grid were noted.

54/3 MATTERS ARISING**53/3 52/5 Trading Subsidiary (Matters Arising)**

SQA officers were in continued dialogue with the Scottish Government around the establishment of the trading subsidiary, and recent work had included adjustments to the working capital provision and cash

flow forecasting to the year end. Discussion was also in progress with lawyers around governance arrangements.

The Board was assured that the Scottish Government was fully aware of the urgency and requirement for SQA to have the Trading Subsidiary in place without delay.

It was noted that Mr MacDougall would write formally to the SQA for clarification on a number of matters that would support the case for the establishment of Trading Subsidiary. On receipt of that information, the final Business Case would be submitted to Ministers.

54/4 **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman reported that he had held separate meetings with Colin MacLean, Alison Coull and Philip Rycroft from the Scottish Government, where discussions had focussed around continued engagement and contribution to policy developments.

Forthcoming engagements included attendance at a Public Sector seminar on Pay Policy, and a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary at the end of March, which the Chief Executive would also attend.

54/5 **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:

Promoting Science

A meeting had been scheduled with Prof Anne Glover, Scotland's Chief Science Officer, to discuss developments underway in terms of SQA's approach to Science, Engineering, Maths, and Technology.

The Qualifications Committee and Advisory Council would contribute to this work, and any outputs would be reported back to the Board.

CfE Stakeholders group meeting

This was a valuable forum where SQA's plans and priorities for the future had been received positively. It was suggested that the Board could receive any updates around policy issues.

ii **Media**

John McMorris, Head of Marketing, was welcomed to the meeting, and provided a comprehensive update on the work underway to develop innovative approaches to SQA's marketing functions. A new strategic direction had been identified, bringing together the marketing and communications disciplines and taking account of PR activity, stakeholder engagement and media relations.

The Board was encouraged by the coordinated and proactive approach that was being taken, and it was agreed that the fundamentals of this work would be presented to the next meeting of the Board. It was also noted that the Business Development Strategy would be presented to the June meeting of the Board.

Mr McMorris left the meeting.

54/6 **QUALIFICATIONS UPDATE**

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

To provide the Board with reassurance on the planning activity underway, Dr Stewart circulated a copy of the current Qualifications Development project plan for CfE. This project plan dovetailed into the overall Scottish Government CfE programme. The work of the Qualifications Team was currently focussed on:

- Recruitment to the CfE Development team.
- Work with Business Systems to develop the technology environment.
- Work with the Scottish Government.
- Scottish Baccalaureates.

Discussion around dual running confirmed that the operational implications of this featured in SQA's planning process. A final decision was dependent on the choice of new CfE qualifications and the expected speed of implementation at local level.

National Qualifications Group Awards (NQGA)

SQA had received confirmation from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for funding in the next two academic years, with £1.4m in year one of the programme. The management arrangements would be similar to those of the HN Modernisation Programme and funds would be managed through Anniesland College on behalf of colleges.

Needs of employers

Working with the Business Development teams, a review of SVQs would be undertaken in those sectors with low uptake, to explore how SQA could understand and better meet employers' needs.

53/7 **OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

i *Report from Certification Planning Group*

Ms McCallum presented the progress on certification planning and monitoring, and was pleased to report that work was on target.

EMC (Electronic Marks Capture)

Good progress was being made on both software development and testing, and all aspects of the work were being managed closely by a Project Team. It was intended to issue invitations soon to Principal Assessors (PAs) and markers who would participate in EMC for the current Diet.

Results Day

It was highlighted that results day would be Wednesday 5 August. Electronic notification of exam results would be available to registered users on the same date, with emails and texts being issued between 8am and 9am. A full communication would be made to stakeholders, outlining the schedule for issuing results data and certificates.

MySQA

In the period since the end of October, almost 3000 candidates had newly registered. Marketing activity would continue in an effort to raise awareness and try to encourage registration from non-NQ candidates. It was confirmed that registration should take place by 16 July, and accounts must be activated by 24 July, when the online service would be closed down until 10 August.

Performance Measures for 2009

For the first time, this year would see UCAS suspend their systems in order that SQA results could be processed quickly. This could possibly lead to earlier notification of results data to HEIs. It was noted that weekly certification for all other awards would continue throughout the NQ certification period.

The Board approved the performance measures for 2009.

54/8 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 a recent contract between SQA and Q-Validus for the endorsement of Computer Wings and Spreadsheet Safe - a global ICT qualification.

In closing the report, it was noted that SQA would seek to address the current economic challenges through close working with colleges to ensure that qualifications and skills were responsive to individuals' needs.

54/9 BUSINESS SYSTEMS UPDATE

Mr Gibson provided an overview of the work underway within his directorate.

The Information Systems (IS) strategy was being reviewed to ensure it reflected the needs of the business, and took into consideration the interdependencies across all projects and business areas. In the course of discussion it was noted that:

- There were a number of challenging timescales around the implementation of an operating environment to support the needs of CfE.
- The introduction of any new IT systems would be supported by a controlled and phased implementation plan.
- The Board sought assurance that measures would be taken to ensure security of data.

It was agreed the Board would have sight of the IS strategy when further developed.

54/10 **ACCREDITATION STANDING ORDERS**

Prof Simmons presented the revised standing orders for the Accreditation Committee that had been discussed and fully supported by the Accreditation Committee. He advised that one of the amendments would facilitate emergency procedures and the ability to make decisions offline. There had also been a minor change to the membership of the Committee.

The Board approved the revised standing orders.

54/11 **CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

Ms Dinwoodie was welcomed to the meeting.

i **Current Performance at Q3**

Corporate Balanced Scorecard

Further to the contents of the report, Ms Dinwoodie provided an update on a number of measures within Scorecard.

Corporate Risk Register

Ms Dinwoodie provided an explanation for the key changes to the risk register. Following detailed discussion, the Board agreed a number of revisions. The Board noted the update on current performance and that a new reporting format would be introduced for 2009-10 risk register.

Ms Dinwoodie left the meeting.

54/12 **APPOINTEE MANAGEMENT**

Mrs Faulds was welcomed to the meeting. She presented an update on the background, objectives and progress to date with the appointee management project.

It was confirmed that consideration had been given to the potential of introducing a Winter Diet and that any possible increase in appointees would be supported by a robust recruitment campaign. The recruitment and training of new appointees also featured in the high level CfE programme plan. Teachers' contribution to the appointee role was recognised as adding value and playing an important role in Continued Professional Development (CPD).

The Board acknowledged the considerable work that had been completed to date. Mrs Faulds left the meeting.

54/13 COMMITTEE REPORTS

i **Audit and Performance Committee held on 5 November 2008**

A verbal report had been provided at the last meeting of the Board.

The approved minutes were noted.

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

Mr Cassidy provided a verbal summary of the main business covered, which included:

- An update on the PwC Internal Audit Plan Status Report for 2008-09, which reported a shift in a number of reviews to the last quarter of the financial year. This had been as a consequence of the need to accommodate a number of operational issues surrounding continuous improvement activity, and had been fully supported by the Committee.
- Audit Scotland had presented its summary of planned audit activity for 2008-09. This had been reviewed and approved by the Committee. The plan included a review and assessment of SQA in the two key areas of performance and, governance and internal control, comprising the modernisation agenda, funding arrangements, data handling, financial accounting and IFRS.
- A presentation on the developments with SAP – the integrated Finance, HR and payroll system.

The minutes of the meeting would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

iii **International and Commercial Committee held on 19 November 2008**

A verbal report had been provided at the last meeting of the Board.

The enclosed minutes were noted.

iv **Qualifications Committee held on 2 December 2008**

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

The Board was advised that Mrs Walsh would formally join the Committee.

v **Accreditation Committee held on 2 December 2008**

A verbal report had been provided at the last meeting of the Board.

The enclosed minutes were noted.

Prof Simmons added that the draft Communications Plan, as referred to at 114/2 Accreditation Remit, had been received for comment, and would be discussed formally at the next meeting of the Accreditation Committee.

54/14 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Appointments to the Advisory Council

Prof MacLennan advised that progress was being made with the Scottish Government on appointments to the Advisory Council and it was anticipated that the first round of recruitment would be completed soon.

PAPERS FOR NOTING

The Board noted the contents of the Financial Report to 31 December 2008.

54/15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 1 April 2009 in Dalkeith.