

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B139/1.12 ii

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 4pm on Tuesday 8 June 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
- ██████████
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mrs D Mahmoud
- * Ms B Black

Observers

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Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Mr R Quinn, Head of English, Languages and Business
Mr M Ware, Head of Research, Policy, Standards and Statistics

* Indicates present on the call

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including:

- Mr M Ware, Head of Research, Policy, Standards and Statistics;
- Mr R Quinn, Head of English, Languages and Business; and
- Ms B Black, Director of Policy and Analysis and Standards, to her first meeting of the SQA Board.

The Chair noted that 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 Mr Hagney and Dr Thomson held an interest through their positions as Heads of Centre. Furthermore, it was noted that Ms Davis and Mr Hagney had children studying at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

The Chair noted that members of the Board would never be put in a position directly to affect the outcomes relating to their centres or family members.

1.12 Matters Arising

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

1.2 Chief Executive's Update

The Chief Executive provided a brief update to the Board including the finalisation of the appeals process and the Cabinet Secretary's statement in Parliament of intent to reform SQA and Education Scotland, in the context of the forthcoming OECD review. She noted that she anticipated that SQA would have sight of the final report from the OECD Review the following week, The Chief Executive highlighted that she had made a commitment to colleagues that SQA would be as involved as possible in the reform process.

The Board discussed the context for the announcement and noted the update.

1.3 ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER NATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021–22

Dr Stewart introduced the paper outlining the proposed arrangements for the assessment of Higher National and Vocational Qualifications (HNVQ) for the 2021-22 academic session. The starting premise in both HNVQ and NQ would be that learners would have had some loss of learning and disruption heading into 2022 so it would be appropriate to carry forward the modification approach taken in 2021.

Mr Ware noted that a SQA had consulted with stakeholders on whether to retain this approach. This proposition was widely supported, along with the provision of updated subject specific guidance where necessary. Subject to Board approval, SQA would issue high level communications to this effect to the sector the following week ahead of the holiday period.

The Board approved the proposed approach, noting that engagement with the sector had been well received.

1.4 MODIFICATIONS TO ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL COURSES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021–22

Mr Quinn provided an outline of the proposed final subject assessment requirements, including modifications for 2021-22, considering the status of the examination diet for

next session and the associated contingency arrangements to have in place to ensure valid and reliable certification if there were to be another wave of COVID-19.

Noting that this approach had been discussed and agreed by the steering groups with key stakeholder representation, Mr Quinn proposed that the majority of modifications be carried forward into 2022, including the added value unit for N4, with some further adjustments as outlined within paper. He highlighted that these modifications would stand, whether or not an exam diet was able to take place.

The Board welcomed the update and discussed the position around coursework, noting that this had been reinstated as far as was practicable within the scope of health and safety, and would be continuously reflected on.

The Board agreed that the public health situation across the country needed to be monitored throughout the coming academic year, noting that there was potential to use SQA's established exceptional circumstance process if appropriate. The Chief Executive assured the Board that SQA would work closely with the Covid Education Recovery Group, who were undertaking scenario planning for 2021-22 in response to various types of lockdowns.

The Board supported the approach and approved the issue of guidance to centres before the end of term.

No other business was raised, and the Chair noted that the Board would meet again on Wednesday 16 June 2021 at 10am. The Board then entered a short, closed session before ending the meeting.