

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B139/1.12 iii

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 10am on Wednesday 16 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
- * Mr J Booth

Observers

████████████████████
Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office

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Ms H Mansbridge, Scottish Government

* Indicates present on the call

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including Ms Helen Mansbridge from the Scottish Government. The Chair welcomed new directors Beth Black and John Booth to the organisation and their first meetings of the Board.

The Chair noted that apologies had been received from:

- Roger Stewart;
- Hamish McKay; and
- Grahame Smith.

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 Minutes of the previous meetings

The Chair noted that the minutes of the previous meetings would come to a future meeting of the Board for approval for publication.

1.13 Matters Arising

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

1.2 Chief Executive's Update

The Chief Executive provided the Board with an update on the delivery of qualifications in 2021, with activity reaching a peak in the lead up to the end of term. She reported that the national quality assurance process had concluded, and all national reports had been published. A note of thanks had also been issued to all appointees for their work in this.

The Chief Executive noted that the OECD review would be published the following Monday, accompanied by an open press conference which SQA would be included in, and assured the Board that staff would be fully briefed once the Executive Team had sight of the final version of the report.

With regards to appeals, the Chief Executive reported that some timelines had been adjusted at the request of the system, on the basis that material could be provided digitally.

In closing, the Chief Executive noted that work was ongoing around further analysis of results to be provided on 10 August, highlighting that equalities analysis would also be published on results day. The Board noted that, as an official statistics provider, it would be critical to ensure that correct data sharing processes were followed.

It was agreed that an overview of the position around awarding and appeals for 2021 would be brought to the Board's next meeting on 1 July.

2 PAPERS FOR DISCUSSION

2.1 Delivery Assurance Report – Awarding 2021

The Board welcomed [REDACTED] to the meeting to provide an overview of current status of the programme, key dates, issues and risks.

[REDACTED] noted that the overall programme status remained at amber with KPIs largely unchanged from a RAG perspective. He was pleased to report that a further major programme milestone had been achieved with the enquiries management system in Ivanti now successfully operational.

[REDACTED] reported that the ACM was in a good position, with the quality assurance exercise proving a positive experience for both SQA and centres, with all subject specific reports and key messages issued to centres within timeframes.

[REDACTED] went on to update the Board on the appeals process rating following the publication of the process and noted that SQA's internal audit partners would commence an independent programme review the following week.

The Board noted the update, commending the planning and management of the programme.

3 PAPERS FOR APPROVAL

3.1 SQA People Strategy

Ms Mahmoud provided a brief introduction to the SQA People Strategy that had been developed as a key deliverable SQA's Performance Framework. She reported that the strategy had been developed through a process of workshops, focus groups and engagement with colleagues from across the organisation, included trade unions.

[REDACTED] delivered a presentation providing an overview of key principles of the strategy designed for supporting our organisation over the next 3 – 5 years, including:

- Develop our organisation design and culture;
- Improve health, wellbeing and environment;
- Improve our performance; and
- Be a responsible business.

[REDACTED] led the Board through the strategy, highlighting how the tenets of fair work framework threaded through all of the principles.

The Board welcomed the presentation, noting that the strategy would be broadly three years in length, underpinned by a detailed operational plan with committed engagement and communication plan and quarterly progress reporting.

The Board discussed the strategy in detail, advising on points of communication and messaging. [REDACTED] thanked the Board for the important feedback, agreeing the importance of clarity in the organisation's offering to staff as an employer, as well as

the asks and expectations. This would be developed through work and engagement undertaken throughout the organisation.

The Board approved the key underlying principles of the strategy, observing the positive direction of travel, and provided comment on reporting to the organisation and to the Board.

3.2 EHRC Section 23 Agreement

Mr Baxter presented the proposal, reporting that following several exchanges with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) over the past year, the Commission were seeking to commence a Section 23 Agreement with SQA.

Mr Baxter provided an overview of the proposal, including SQA's obligations, the current position, the implications of a Section 23 agreement, alternatives and a recommended course of action.

The Board approved the recommended course of action, noting that progress would be reported into the Board regularly and when appropriate.

3.3 Remuneration Committee Standing Orders

Board approved the standing orders noting that they would be reviewed by the Remuneration Committee again this year, with any changes returning to the Board for approval.

4 PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 Qualifications Delivery

4.11 National Qualifications Certification Programme

The Board noted the contents of the National Qualifications Certification Programme Group report.

4.12 Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Certification Programme

The Board noted the contents of the HN, Vocational and International Certification Programme Group report.

4.2 Cash Position

The Board noted the position for the year based on the 2021-22 Period 1 and 2 accruals forecast, accepting it as an assurance on the current position.

4.3 Annual Summary of the Advisory Council's Work – 2019 & 2020

The Board noted the two reports presented, acknowledging that they would go on to be submitted to the Scottish Government.

4.4 Committee Reports

4.41 Qualifications Committee – 23 February 2021

Dr Thomson reported that the Qualifications Committee had met on 23 February. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.42 Qualifications Committee – 3 March 2021

Dr Thomson reported that the Qualifications Committee had met on 3 March. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.43 Advisory Council – 8 March 2021

Ms Handley reported that the Advisory Council had met on 8 March. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.44 Performance Committee – 10 March 2021

Ms Craig reported that the Performance Committee had met on 10 March. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.45 Audit Committee – 15 March 2021

In the absence of the Convenor, the Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.46 Advisory Council – 22 April 2021

Ms Handley reported that the Advisory Council had met on 22 April. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

4.47 Advisory Council – 6 May 2021

Ms Handley reported that the Advisory Council had met on 6 May. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the Board would meet again on 1 July to receive a progress update on the appeals consultation.