

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B139/1.12 i

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT — 1 September 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1pm on Thursday 27 May 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]

Ms M McKerrell, Head of QA (NQ)

[REDACTED]

Ms L McGrath, Qualifications Portfolio Management

Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office

* Indicates present on the call

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including:

- Ms McKerrell, Head of QA (NQ); and
- [REDACTED]
- Ms L McGrath, Head of Qualifications Portfolio Management
- Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office.

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 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 previous meetings

i 18 March 2021

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

ii 31 March 2021

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

iii 15 April 2021

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

1.13 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 Chair handed over to the Chief Executive who reported that she and SQA colleagues had met with Ms Somerville, the newly appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, earlier that week for a discussion on appeals. This followed a letter to the Deputy First Minister of 13 May. SQA had provided advice around volumes, timelines, and implications which Ms Somerville would consider further. It was anticipated that a parliamentary statement would be made by Ms Somerville early the following week. The Board noted that SQA had provided as much support and advice as possible to inform these decisions.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the strength of feeling in the system, particularly from young people and parents, on appeals, highlighting that SQA colleagues had listened carefully to a wide range of views.

The Board noted the update and discussed the provision of support to learners over the summer, noting that SQA had been engaging with a number of partner organisations offering support, including, mental health organisations, to develop a dedicated area on the SQA website that would signpost learners to support resources.

1.3 Awarding 2021 – Delivery Assurance Report

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

[REDACTED] reported that an end-to-end operating model walk through had been completed the previous week and the organisation continued to proceed on the basis of the proposed appeals model at the current time. Communications colleagues were ready to issue key messages once they had been finalised.

[REDACTED] was pleased to report that the new enquiries management solution was now in the process of switching over to operational as user training had completed.

The Board noted that colleagues would continue to assess all aspects of the programme on a weekly basis and report into the Awarding 2021 Programme Board and Board of Management.

The Board noted that the top three recorded risks were those currently outwith SQA control. The Board thanked [REDACTED] for his update.

1.4 ACM & Appeals Update

Ms Blair delivered a presentation to the Board reporting that the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) was in stage three of delivery, with national quality assurance currently being undertaken. She noted that provisional results were due in by 25 June, after which there would be no further quality assurance or change to results.

For candidates who have suffered disruption and not been able to complete all assessments with submission date, incomplete evidence guidance had been issued confirming a submission date of 3 September, to adhere with deadlines from UCAS. More detailed guidance on this would be issued in early June and, at the request of centres, further information on the sharing of provisional results would be issued by the end of May.

Ms Blair was pleased to report that all centres had engaged with the quality assurance process and SQA had supported all centres to ensure they all had been able to submit their required evidence.

SQA had issued communications to centres the previous week to thank all involved for their continued engagement and work.

The Board welcomed the update, noting that appointees had been engaging with exemplification and standardisation training, and were now beginning to review evidence.

1.5 Confidentiality of Secure Assessments

The Board welcomed Ms McGrath, Head of Qualifications Portfolio Management, to the meeting. Ms McGrath provided a brief update on a number of incidents where assessment resources had been posted online by candidates, covering a number of subjects and levels and gave an overview of action taken by SQA to manage the issue.

The Board noted that the number of incidents recorded was small and did not appear to be escalating, with the assessment window coming to a close. SQA would continue to monitor these concerns and, where appropriate, contact centres to advise further.

The Board thanked Ms McGrath for the update.

No other business was raised, and the Chair brought the meeting to a close noting that the Board would meet again on Wednesday 16 June.