

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B153/1.3 ii

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 26 APRIL 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1pm on Monday
13 February 2023 by video conference.

Members

- Mr D Middleton (Chair)
- * Ms F Robertson (Chief Executive)
- * Ms A Davis
- * Mr S Hagney
- * Mrs J Handley
- Dr W Mayne
- * Mr H McKay
- * Mr G Smith
- Professor K Thomson (Nominated Chair)
- Ms M Wailes

Officers

- * Mr M Baxter
- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr J Booth
- * Mr M Campbell
- * Mr M Ware
- * Mrs D Mahmoud
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Dr G Stewart

- * Indicates present

In attendance

Mr S Borley, Head of Chief Executive's Office, SQA
[REDACTED], SQA
[REDACTED], SQA
Ms L McGrath, Reform Programme Director, SQA
[REDACTED], SQA
Stephen Sharkey, Head of Service Delivery, SQA

1 OPENING REMARKS

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Board noted that Professor Thomson would be chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chair who was on leave. He welcomed members and thanked them for accommodating the exceptional meeting.

Apologies had been received from Mr Middleton, Dr Mayne; and Ms Wailes.

Professor Thomson noted that Mr Stephen Sharkey, Head of Service Delivery, would be deputising for Mr Martin Campbell and there would be no observer from the Scottish Government at the meeting.

1.2 Declaration of any conflicts of interest

The Board noted Ms Davis' declaration that a family member would be sitting exams in the upcoming diet.

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

2 SQA'S RESPONSE TO ONGOING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE

Professor Thomson welcomed Board members to the meeting, noting that this would be a single-issue meeting in response to the industrial dispute by teachers which was impacting on schools across Scotland. This also included targeted action in a number of schools. As a result, there were emerging risks to the delivery of SQA's services, in particular the 2023 exam diet. It was noted that the Scottish Government were making considerable efforts to resolve the dispute, and a revised pay offer was expected.

The Chief Executive highlighted that every year SQA manages a range of logistical issues, including risks, in preparation for the diet and certification of results in August. SQA recruits thousands of appointees – teachers and invigilators – to ensure the safety of the diet and credible certification. A programme of visiting assessment was already getting underway across centres for some courses and coursework completion was imminent. There were a range and combination of further actions being taken to help mitigate the elevated risk from industrial action, including: appointee recruitment and release; reallocation of visiting assessment and extending deadlines for coursework. However, Ms Robertson and Ms Blair highlighted that it would not be possible to successfully deliver certification without significant appointee resource.

Further mitigations, should they be needed, would require Ministerial decision and system-wide agreement.

The Board supported the range of actions being taken by SQA and recognised the impact on learners across the country. They agreed that existing mitigations would not be enough to contend with significant and widescale withdrawal from marking activities by appointees. Given the nature of these risks, the SQA Board concluded that these risks be escalated formally to the Scottish Government.

The Chief Executive agreed to take this forward.

Professor Thomson thanked members for their time and input and drew the meeting to a close.