

Minutes of the 44th SCQF Partnership Board held on Thursday 13 December 2018 at 09.00 hours
in the SCQF Partnership Conference Room, 201 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2LW

Confirmed

Present:

Rob Wallen (RW)	Chair SCQF Partnership
Gill Stewart (GS - Representing Janet Brown)	SQA
Rowena Pelik (RP)	QAA Scotland
Jim Metcalfe (JM)	College Development Network
Hugh McCafferty (HM – Representing Steve Hearty)	CITB
Alastair Sim (AS)	Universities Scotland
Bernadette McGuire	Chair of SCQF Quality Committee

In Attendance:

Aileen Ponton (AP)	SCQF Partnership
Sheila Dunn (SD) from Items 4 onwards	SCQF Partnership
Julie Cavanagh (JC) from Items 4 onwards	SCQF Partnership
Beverley Wallace (BW)	SCQF Partnership (Secretariat)

Welcome and introductions

RW welcomed all to the meeting. As it was the first time HM had attended a Board Meeting, everyone around the table introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were noted from Janet Brown and Steve Hearty with appropriate representatives in place.

Register of Interests

RW reminded Directors of the Register of Interests form which was included with the papers. Should any interests of Directors have changed which would have implications for work with the Board, the form should be completed and submitted to BW to record.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018

RW asked Directors if there were any amendments to the previous minutes. RW pointed out a small error in Page 3 otherwise the Directors were satisfied that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Due to an error with the redacted version, the Board were given the wrong version of the website minutes. For the avoidance of doubt RW ran through the areas of text to be omitted and they accepted the redacted version of these for the website with the agreed omissions.

2. Matters Arising

AP began by saying that discussions with Macedonia were continuing however it was looking more likely that the money due would be received. AP understood that the Macedonian Government

were settling a final figure with IBE in Poland. Notice had been served on Cooke & Co, SCQFP's Management Accountants and AP provided a brief background on the reasoning for this. A new staff member, a qualified accountant, would be taking over the Management Accounts from January 2019 at no extra cost to the business. An external financial consultant would be brought in to assist with the year-end accounts and settling of the budget for 2019-2020. RW asked the Directors if they agreed with the new arrangements. The Board stated they agreed however they would wish to monitor and review the quality of the accounts going forward.

RW then informed the Board that SCQFP did not win the two awards it was recently nominated for at the Glasgow Chambers Awards. However, RW acknowledged that it was a great achievement to have been nominated.

Referring to Annex 1 of the paper relating to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the issues relating to the marketing of Graduate Apprenticeships, RW invited AP to update the Board on progress to date. As agreed at the September 2018 Board Meeting, AP informed the Directors that SCQFP had been working with SDS to resolve matters. A number of meetings had taken place and SCQFP delivered a workshop to all SDS staff who worked on Graduate Apprenticeships. AP then went over the three main issues, as detailed in Annex 1. Referring to Issue 2 and the marketing of Graduate Apprenticeships by universities and colleges, RP stated that universities were accountable to the Competitions and Market Authority CMA, for their website and marketing materials and had an obligation to accurately promote programmes, which AP noted.

AP then went on to say that SDS had formally responded to all the issues in the form of the paper Annex 1 and had indicated that they would like SCQFP to be involved in resolving some of the issues around the marketing and promotion of the apprenticeships in the future. RW then invited comments from the Board. The Board asked for reassurance that the issues were being addressed and AP responded she believed they were, saying that SDS staff found the workshop extremely helpful and it had given them a better understanding of Graduate Apprenticeships. RW then asked how informed the SDS Board and senior team were on the matter. AP responded, saying she had asked to present at SDS's Frameworks and Standards Group and hoped this would take place in January 2019. After discussion with Directors it was agreed that in the formal reply to SDS she should include the requirement for SDS senior management to be formally briefed on the issues, ask for the opportunity to address the Frameworks and Standards Group and finally to indicate that although SDS was considering changing the full nomenclature of the apprenticeship family this was not a requirement of the SCQF Partnership.

The Board then noted the other Matters Arising.

Joining the meeting at Item 4, JC requested to have another item added to Matters Arising, relating to the planned Recognising Qualifications campaign and requirement to find an alternative to #ditchthedegree. JC informed the Board that, following a planning meeting, her team had come up with some alternative ideas. The Board requested that JC forward the ideas to them for comment, with a deadline.

3. CEO Report

To begin AP informed the Board of the upcoming Parliamentary Reception being held on 27 February 2019, providing an update on the speakers for the event as detailed in the CEO paper. Invites would be sent out in January 2019 and AP asked all Directors to hold the date in their diaries.

AP highlighted the success of the School Ambassador programme but would not be able to maintain and extend the programme with their current resource levels. A request had been made for more funding to the Scottish Government however AP was not hopeful this would be successful. AP then went on to highlight a positive article in TES that focused on Kingussie High School, one of SCQFP's Ambassador Schools.

Discussing the recent successful Influencers Dinner, AP stated that the dinner had resulted in three employers contacting SCQFP for follow up meetings and also a college was looking to discuss their international business.

Finally AP moved on to the matter relating to RW's chair coming to an end and the issue around wording in the Memorandum and Articles. RW and non-Board Directors were asked to leave the room to facilitate discussion. Following this the Board agreed that a variation on RW's contract would be issued, to allow RW to continue as Chair from March 2019 to December 2019, with a formal decision being made at the June 2019 Board meeting on the future appointment or reappointment process.

AP then invited GS to speak about the new SQA Advanced Certificates and Diplomas, detailed in Annex 1. GS provided the Board with a summary and a discussion then followed around the new qualifications. AP asked the Board for their comments on how the changes would be reflected on the SCQF and publicity materials, to avoid confusion in different markets and costly changes to materials where they were not needed. It was agreed by the Board that given the fact that these awards were simply a rebranding of HNCs and HNDs for markets mainly outwith Scotland the new Advanced Certificates and Diplomas would appear on the Interactive Framework only and not in any printed materials. AP agreed to liaise with GS on the wording for this.

4. Update on Veterans

RW invited JC to update the Board on the Veterans Project. JC provided a brief update on the project to date. The next stage would be to take recommendations from the focus and steering groups forward, in particular the mapping against the Forces Qualifications Matrix, which JC then went on to discuss in more detail. Other planned activities included the development of a workshop and webinar for the Careers Transition Partnership (CTP) and attendance at transition events.

Discussions had taken place with awarding bodies, such as Pearson and City & Guilds, to help gain recognition for more programmes on the SCQF. AP added that SCQFP had secured a slot at a Funding Council event for colleges and universities in January 2019, to talk about the project. AP then informed the Board that a bid for additional funding to continue activities into 2019-2020 had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

RW then invited the Board for comments and clarification. Asked by RP if there was a plan to produce a skills profiling tool kit for Veterans, JC explained CTP already had a similar type of resource for Veterans and that discussions had been held with CTP and SDS around how SCQFP could help add value to this resource. The Board then noted the progress.

5. Re-referencing to the EQF

RW invited SD to provide an update. SD provided an overview of the paper, talking through the timeline and the approach taken by SCQFP, as detailed in the paper. Following a presentation of the revised report to the EQF Advisory Group, SD reported to the Board that the comments from the group had been very positive, with the Advisory Group and the European Commission saying that the report was well structured, transparent and well presented. As a result SCQFP's report would be used as a benchmark for other member states to follow.

SD then went on to discuss the issues that were raised at the Steering Group, informing the Board that these issues would be addressed and a revised final report would come to the Quality Committee and Board in February and March 2019 before being formally published to the European Commission in March 2019. RW commented on the high standard of the report and acknowledged the work that had been done by the SCQFP team particularly Sheila Dunn. The Board then noted the progress.

6. Review of Colleges as CRBs

SD provided the Board with a brief update, stating that three college visits had taken place, seven had been planned before the end of March 2019, and for the remaining colleges, discussions were ongoing around securing dates for visits. SD commented that feedback from the colleges had been positive so far and she had found no major concerns. Formal feedback would be gathered from the colleges to help inform a final report and a meeting to update Education Scotland on progress in January 2019 had been planned. AP added that a funding bid had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council to continue the pilot into a second year for comparison purposes, in order to help confirm the format and frequency of visits going forward. The Board then noted the progress.

7. Format of Strategic Plan for 2019-22

RW invited JC to speak on this paper. JC provided the Board with a background to the plan. Based on a decision to work around strategic priorities rather than objectives, JC directed the Board to the six priorities as detailed on Pages 3 & 4 of the paper, asking if they thought they were sufficient to allow an operational plan to follow. RW then invited the Board to comment on the priorities. Following a recommendation from JM, it was agreed that "Supporting workforce development and skills utilisation" could be shortened to "Supporting workforce development". A discussion then followed around the need for some focus on developing skills and whether the plan should include a vision and what form that would take. Following the discussion, AP agreed that this would be built into the Strategic Plan. The Board then agreed the six strategic priorities however acknowledged the plan should include a short paragraph that more sharply identified the SCQF as a key element of developing skills in Scotland.

8. Management Accounts 2018 – 19 Quarter 2

RW introduced the paper and asked AP for any further developments. AP highlighted to the Board the areas of underspend, confirming that SFC had agreed to the underspend being carried forward to 2019-2020. AP also informed the Board that the Contingency budget line had been reduced and that the funds would be re-allocated to the two main budget lines. The Board then approved the Management Accounts.

9. Report from the Audit & Risk Committee

RW began by reminding the Board of his position on ARC and although happy to continue with his position, would continue to advise Directors that any of them could offer to take his place, should they wish to do so. AP then provided the Board with a brief update, including changes to the Risk Strategy and recording of gifts and hospitality before highlighting the items the Board needed to approve.

RW then asked if the Board were satisfied with the amended Risk Strategy. Having noted that items 4 and 6 on the strategy were duplicates and one would be removed, the Board approved the Risk Strategy. Following a brief reminder from RW around the revised changes to the Management Accounts processes, the Board confirmed agreement of the revised process. The Board then approved the recording of personal gifts only with the value of £50 or above before noting the other business conducted at ARC.

10. Report from the Quality Committee

RW invited BMcG to report on the QC. BMcG highlighted the planned evaluation of the QC membership and its activities, stating a revised questionnaire would be sent out in January 2019.

- ICAS Periodic Review

BMcG spoke to this paper, saying that ICAS had undergone its first periodic review. ICAS had carried out all its recommendations and the review team was satisfied with ICAS's approach. BMcG pointed out ICAS was undergoing a strategic review under a new Chief Executive that may

lead to a number of new digital accountancy qualifications. QC was satisfied with the report and had no conditions or recommendations and recommended that ICAS continue as a CRB. The Board then approved the report and the recommendation that ICAS continued as a CRB and continue to be subject to desk audits for annual monitoring. RW commented on the quality of the report and the standard of work undertaken by the review team.

- Report from CGLI

SD provided the Board with a brief background to the paper before giving an update on City and Guilds (CGLI) progress on meeting its recommendations to continue as a CRB for SCQFP. Following a period of re-structure and the appointment of Nick Cutland as Director of Quality, progress had been made and this was outlined within an updated report. The delivery of a workshop to key senior members of CGLI on 5 December 2018 was very positive. Steps had been taken by CGLI to improve its website and a number of working groups had been put in place to take forward various aspects of the recommendations. However as some issues were still outstanding QC recommended a development visit in February 2019, followed by an updated final report for review by the Board in March 2019. It was also being suggested that given this date, the annual monitoring, if the periodic review was fully approved, should move to autumn 2019. It was emphasised that CGLI should be made aware that a full and final report would need to be submitted in time for the February 2019 QC and March 2019 Board meetings.

The Board approved both the development visit planned for February 2019 and the request for a full and final report in time for February 2019 QC and March 2019 Board meetings in 2019.

11. Board Dates for 2019

The dates for 2019 had been circulated to Directors and their PAs prior to the meeting. The Directors confirmed that these were now blocked off in their diaries

12. Revised MoU with BQA, Bahrain

AP highlighted that following a review of the MoU there were a couple of areas that the BQA wished to work on with SCQFP going forward. She explained that this work may or may not be chargeable and set out in what circumstances a costed proposal by SCQFP would be suggested. The Board then approved the signing of the new MoU.

13. Any other business

AP asked the Board to note that JB would be retiring as CEO of SQA in 2019. In line with the Memorandum of Articles, a discussion would need to take place with SQA's new CEO around the nomination to the SCQFP's Board. AP also informed the Board that Paul Smart retired on Friday 14 December 2019. Dr. Linda Pooley would take over his role in Scottish Government and AP would follow up regarding observer status on the Board.