

Minutes of the 45th SCQF Partnership Board held on Thursday 14 March 2019 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
George Brown (GB) - 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

In Attendance:

Aileen Ponton (AP)	SCQF Partnership
Julie Cavanagh (JC)	SCQF Partnership
Beverley Wallace (BW) (Secretariat)	SCQF Partnership
Laura Wilding (LW) for Items 8 & 9	SCQF Partnership

Welcome and introductions

RW welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

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

Apologies also from:

Bernadette McGuire (BM)	Chair of SCQF Quality Committee
Sheila Dunn (SD)	SCQF Partnership

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 December 2018

RW asked Directors if they were happy that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. The Directors confirmed they were satisfied that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. They accepted the redacted version of these for the website.

2. Matters Arising

AP began by informing the Directors that SQA's overseas Advanced Certificates and Advanced Diplomas had been placed on to the interactive framework on SCQFP's website. AP also indicated discussions with SDS were ongoing but had moved forward. JM then asked, in relation to Item 13 in the paper, if there would be any Scottish Government representation as an observer at the Board, even at junior level. AP responded that Dr Linda Pooley had indicated that SCCFP was not a priority for her, based on ministerial priorities. Dr Pooley's team were the sponsor team for SCQFP but only in a funding and grant sense and there was no policy lead for SCQFP within that team or any other within Scottish Government. The implications of this would be considered later in the Agenda. The Board then noted the other Matters Arising.

3. CEO Report

To begin AP informed Directors that the School and College Ambassador programmes were moving forward. Following a successful School Ambassador Sharing Best Practice Event on 8 March 2019, a number of schools had requested additional help and guidance in relation to the curriculum offer. AP intended to hold discussions with SQA around how they could work with SCQFP to provide this. College Reviews were progressing and were expected to complete in June 2019, with a further year's funding in place to enable another full cycle of reviews. AP pointed out that discussions would be needed around how to move forward once the cycle had been completed. The Board then noted the report.

An additional item was raised by AP that referred to a situation with Napier University, the SCQFP and a Third Party where a number of issues had arisen. AP provided an update on the situation and informed Directors they would be kept informed about any developments.

4. Reflections on 2018-19

JC and AP (on behalf of SD) then gave presentations on the highlights of 2018-19 along with some of the challenges. Highlights were the Parliamentary Reception held in February 2019; the Veterans Project; the School Ambassador Project; Quality Assurance for CRBs; Support and Development and European and International Activity.

The challenges included SCQFP's capacity to support the increase in activities such as School Ambassadors and Quality Assurance, the costs associated with increased Bespoke Workshops and the impact of Brexit. A discussion followed and some clarification and expansion was sought. Referring to the Veterans Project, AS asked if anyone had the power to compel the MoD to take specific actions. AP responded that she thought not but that this was being handled in the main through Scottish Government Defence Unit and the Veteran's Commissioner. HM praised the Veterans Project and acknowledged the positive work to date and the additional funding being provided by the SFC but noted that this was a very resource intensive exercise.

5. Impact measurements indicators 2018-19

RW introduced the paper that showed SCQFP's level of activity year by year. RW questioned the drop in Engagement in 2018-2019 to which AP responded, stating that, as awareness of the SCQF had grown, there had been a reduction in demand from main stakeholders therefore less workshops were offered. AP also stated there was a shift from Open Workshops towards Bespoke Workshops.

RW also pointed out the drop in 'Employers mentioning SCQF in job adverts' before emphasising the importance of the Inclusive Recruiter campaign in terms of highlighting to employers how useful the SCQF was as a recruitment tool.

In reference to the Development of Framework section, GB asked if there was merit in splitting the Mainstream and Other Qualification figures into those that belonged to CRBs and those owned by

Third Parties. AP thought this could be useful and would look into it. The Board then noted the Impact Measurements before suggesting the Quality Committee had sight of the papers as they thought it did provide a very useful snapshot.

6. Board self-evaluation

RW began by informing Directors that he had received three evaluations, which all indicated that the Board functioned effectively and individual Directors were comfortable with their roles. He noted that two Directors wished to observe the approval/review of CRBs. AP agreed to take this forward and RW invited other Directors to take part if they wished. RW then addressed the ongoing issue around the level of detail that was passed to the Board at each meeting. RW and AP had agreed not to overload Directors with unnecessary detail, but wanted to ensure that the Board were provided with sufficient detail to give context to strategic discussions. AS asked whether individual Directors got feedback on their performance as a Board Member and RW responded by saying he would follow this up on a one to one basis.

7. Consultation on Scottish Charity Law

RW began by asking Directors whether the SCQFP should be commenting on the proposed changes to Scottish Charity Law, was it a good use of the Boards time and how would the Board manage the process of collectively putting its views across. AS and GB thought the changes to the law were sensible and did not require SCQFP to comment. RW agreed however suggested the SCQFP submitted a letter stating it supported the changes. JM suggested, given the current challenges in engaging SG that it was important for SCQFP to be seen to comment. It was agreed that AP would submit a response on behalf of the Board, stating SCQFP was happy with the proposals in the consultation.

8. Management Accounts 2018-19 Quarter 3

LW joined the meeting. AP talked through the deficit budget, the unexpected costs incurred and the accrual of dilapidations before highlighting the effect this had had on the forecasted outturn and reserves. A discussion then followed around the terms of SCQFP's lease, the pros and cons of remaining in situ or seeking out new premises and the use of specialist property advisors. AP then talked through her planned property appraisal process, where SCQFP would look to obtain a best offer to stay from the landlord as well as seek alternative properties and opportunities for co-location.

The Board then noted the additional costs and the non-accrued dilapidations that had resulted in a larger than planned deficit budget and reduced reserves. AP then clarified the reserves position to Directors to which JM recommended that uncontrolled landlord costs would need to be factored in when managing reserves. AP pointed out that SCQFP's auditors were aware of the reserves situation and RW added that additional budget had been put aside for landlord's costs for 2019-20 as far as they were known but a service charge for 2019-20 had not yet been made available.

AP then provided a brief summary of the changes to the layout of the Management Accounts. The Board then noted with concern, the revised financial position but acknowledged the reasons for this and confirmed they were happy with the current layout of the Management Accounts.

9. Operational Plan and Budget 2019-20

AP introduced the paper setting out the proposed Operational Plan for 2019-20 which had been discussed with both the Quality Committee and the Forum. Based on the content of that plan the budget attached was showing an additional deficit for 2019-20 of almost £48k. The Board then had a detailed discussion about both potential income generation and cost savings. As Directors they decided that a deficit budget of this size would not be approved given the impact it would have on reserves. In the current situation where either SCQFP would have to move and find and fit out a new property or to stay with potentially a higher rent and service charge, there needed to be some reserves beyond the three month running costs to allow for that. The Board therefore asked

that further consideration be given to both cuts and income generation and a paper be circulated by the end of April with a revised proposal. Ideally this revision should be on the basis of a zero deficit but the Board would consider a deficit of less than £10k as long as there was evidence of how this could be managed going forward.

After the Board meeting a revised, zero deficit budget along with an explanation of the cuts involved was circulated by the CEO and approved by all Directors.

The Board also approved the Chair and the CEO to contact both SFC and SG as the funders of the organisation to alert them to this situation and to discuss any options for additional support.

10. Report from the Audit & Committee

RW introduced the paper then drew Directors attention to the addition of Risk 3 in the Risk Register before inviting comments on the Audit Plan and Risk Strategy. The Board had no comments and noted the Audit Plan and approved the Risk Register.

11. SCQF-EQF Final Re-referencing Report

RW invited Directors to consider the final draft, ask for clarification and approve the report for publication. AP notified Directors that SCQFP had received formal letters of endorsement from QAA and SQA but was still waiting for Scottish Government. RW and RP commented on the high quality of the document and the Board then approved the final draft for publication on SCQFP's website and submission to the European Commission.

12. Report from the Quality Committee

RW introduced the paper and invited AP to provide any additional comments. AP was happy with the paper as it stood and the Board then noted the general record of the Quality Committee.

- City & Guilds Periodic Update Report

AP spoke to the paper and provided a brief background before talking through the current position as detailed in the paper. AP added that CGLI's current Director was clear that, although a lot of progress had been made, there were still some issues which were a work in progress. Following the final report, Quality Committee was content with the progress made to date and the plan of action, and therefore recommended CGLI continue as a CRB however QC suggested that CGLI did not move to desk audit but continued with an annual monitoring visit. The Board agreed with the Quality Committee's recommendation.

- Institute of Counselling Periodic Review Report

AP began by talking through the key issues raised by the Review Team. Whilst none of them posed a major risk to quality assurance it was clear that some of the systems approved were not being adhered to and there had been problems with version control and with staff undertaking potentially conflicting roles. Referring to the Action Plan in the report, the Quality Committee felt that although the plan partly addressed the issues some of the actions were too generic. Therefore as a recommendation the Quality Committee asked that the IoC continued as a credit rating body on the proviso that:

- IoC should be asked to demonstrate that the points in the action plan which are indicated as fully resolved have in fact been closed out;
- SCQFP should carry out a follow up visit within 6 months of the Periodic Review visit to monitor progress towards the completion of the remaining action points;
- The next annual monitoring review of IoC should be under the review arrangement which requires the submission of an annual self-assessment report and includes a visit by the review team.

The Board then approved the Quality Committees recommendations.

13. Performance appraisal and remuneration

RW and AP introduced the paper which set out the proposals for pay related to individual performance. The Board noted that whilst this did have an impact on the budget, Directors wished to signal to staff that they were seen to be delivering a quality service and therefore all of the recommendations in the paper were agreed.

14. Update from the SCQFP Forum

AP provided a brief verbal update on the agenda and discussion which took place at the recent meeting of the SCQF Forum.

15. Any other business

AP reminded Directors for the purposes of the minutes that she would issue an extension of contract letter to the Chair to cover the period April to December 2019. The Board would then discuss at the June meeting what action they would take to either renew that contract or advertise the post.

16. Date of next meeting

Thursday 27 June 2019 at 09:00.