

Minutes of the 63rd SCQF Partnership Board held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 09.30 at SCQF Partnership Conference Room, 201 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2LW

Confirmed minutes for website

Members Present:

Rob Wallen (RW)
Marie Hendry (MH)
Stuart McKenna (SMcK)
Malcolm Foley (MF)
Alastair Delaney (AD)
Kathryn O'Loan (KO)

Chair SCQF Partnership
College Development Network
STF
QC Chair
QAA
QAA (Alternate Director)

In Attendance:

Pauline Radcliffe (PR)
Sheila Dunn (SD) Items 1 - 4.5 & 5 - 6
Julie Cavanagh (JC) Items 1 - 4.5 & 5 - 6
Laura Wilding Items 1 - 2.5
Beverley Wallace (BW) (Secretariat) Items 1 - 4.5 & 5 - 6
Naureen Ahmad (NA) Observer
Jane Duffy (JD) Observer
Alasdair Smith (AS) Observer

SCQF Partnership
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Scottish Government
Scottish Government
SQA

Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were given for Alastair Sim and Fiona Robertson. Alasdair Smith was attending on behalf of Fiona Robertson in the capacity as observer.

1.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023

There was one minor correction noted regarding the number of the Board meeting at the start of the minutes and BW would correct this.

ACTION

Regarding the redacted minutes, the Board confirmed they were happy with the recommended redactions.

1.2 Matters Arising

The Chair drew Directors' attention to the paper on matters arising from the previous minutes. There was a matter still outstanding relating to a review of CDN's networks to suggest ways

to increase College representation on the Quality Committee. It was agreed that this matter would be carried forward to the next Board meeting.

ACTION

The Board then noted the actions carried forward and the progress on matters arising.

1.3 CEO update

The CEO report was taken as read. PR highlighted the leaver and starters within the Partnership, in particular JC as Head of Partnerships and Communication, who would be leaving at the end of September. PR also drew Directors attention to the International activity still being undertaken despite the Partnership not being proactive internationally, given lack of access to European funding. Finally the Communications and Marketing team were thanked for successfully widening coverage and raising awareness of lifelong learning through media coverage in the *Herald* and local radio. The Board then noted the CEO update.

1.4 Annual Impact Report 22-23

Directors were generally happy with the balance between visuals and text and commended those involved, saying it was the best version of the Report to date. The Board then approved the report for publication.

1.5 Strategy for Recognition of Prior Learning – refresh

SD provided a brief summary of the changes made to the refreshed Strategy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This included new strategic objectives, actions and deliverables for the next 3 years. There was a focus on increasing engagement with key organisations, providing further tailored guidance for key sectors and the continued pursuit of a national RPL strategy. Directors were satisfied with the refreshed version and the Board approved the Strategy for Recognition of Prior Learning.

1.6 Skills Recognition Scotland update

PR provided Directors with an update on the current position and informed Directors that several meetings had taken place with SG Ministers. Directors were asked to consider two options relating to the future direction of the project that may be put to the Minister for consideration.

Directors then discussed both options in detail, assessing the risks involved, SG's expectations in terms of deliverables, continuity, timescales, quality assurance, capacity issues and funding. It was agreed that the Chair and PR would draft a formal positive response to the Minister stating the Partnership's willingness to deliver a revised demonstration project (with an agreed set of caveats) that could be delivered in the current financial year. The draft response would be circulated to Directors for approval before being sent to SG for consideration.

ACTION

2.1 Management Accounts 2022 – 23 Q1 23-24

LW spoke to the paper and attachments, talking Directors through the new dashboard layout. LW then highlighted the small anticipated forecast overspend, in particular the overspend on the financial services budget line. The Partnership was currently considering tenders for a new auditor and was reviewing applications. It was noted that due to significant increases in market costs a considerable increase in audit fees was expected and LW had reflected this in the monthly accrual

in the budget forecast. Directors confirmed they were happy with the new layout of the paper and the Board approved the Q1 Management Accounts.

2.2 Q1 Operational objectives report

Following a previous request from the Board, PR presented Directors with a new simplified Operational Objectives report with RAG ratings. Asked if was pertinent to 'red rank' activities influenced by external factors outwith the Partnership's control, Directors agreed that it was, as these clearly had an impact on deliverables and should be reflected as such. The new format was positively received by Directors, who felt it clearly showed progress over time. The Board then approved the Q1 Operational Objectives.

2.3 Audit and Risk committee: draft minute

The paper was taken as read and the Board noted the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk committee.

2.4 Risk register update

Following recommendations made at the previous Board meeting, PR had re-organised the risks in order of priority and had also incorporated the external risks caused by changes to SG's policy into the risk entitled "SG commitment to the SCQF or the SCQFP diminishes".

In relation to the ranking order Directors felt that Risk 5 relating to SFC should be moved into 4th position and PR would amend this.

ACTION

The Chair then highlighted that the majority of risks post-control were amber despite the mitigations in place. The Board accepted that this was a fair reflection of the current uncertain landscape that businesses were operating under. The Board then approved the Risk Register.

2.5 Revised Terms of Reference: Audit and Risk Committee

PR provided Directors with an overview of the updates made as detailed in the paper. The Board approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee.

LW left the meeting at this point.

3.1 Report and Draft Minute of Quality Committee

SD spoke to the minutes of the Quality Committee and highlighted the following:

- the 6-month update on Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Annual Monitoring;
- the update on the SCQFP Database performance indicators.

The Board noted the general business conducted by the Quality Committee.

3.2 International Considerations Paper

SD provided some background to the International Considerations paper as reviewed at the previous Quality Committee meeting. Following the review the Quality Committee had indicated that any decisions around the risks and ethics of the Partnership's and the SCQF's international interactions were a matter for the Board.

Directors then considered whether there was a need for any of the following:

- an international strategy and/or a risk assessment process for SCQFP's work with other countries;
- a policy or a standard statement around overseas organisations becoming a CRB and what that policy/statement should be and/or any changes to the SCQF QAM criteria;
- further guidance for CRBs around the credit rating of overseas third party programmes and/or any changes to the SCQF principles.

Following discussions, it was agreed that the decision to work with other countries would be made by the Board on a case by case basis. Regarding the need for a policy or a standard statement around overseas organisations becoming a CRB and the need for further guidance for CRBs around the credit rating of overseas third party programmes, the Board considered that these were required. SD agreed to bring a further paper to the December 2023 Board meeting.

ACTION

NA also agreed to clarify whether Scottish Government had any policy guidelines on working with specific countries.

ACTION

4.1 Net Zero Policy

PR spoke to the paper and annex, providing Directors with a brief summary, adding that progress against KPIs would be reported to the Board as part of the annual Performance Indicators report. The Board then approved the Net Zero Policy.

4.2 Health and Safety Policy review

PR provided a summary of the changes to the Health and Safety Policy which was updated following the implementation of designated safe spaces within the building and a 'buddy' system to help those requiring assistance in the event of a fire. The Board then approved the amended Health and Safety Policy.

4.3 Chair Recruitment

The Board formally homologated the decision by email to appoint John Evans to the role of Independent Chair of the Partnership, commencing following his appointment by Members at the Partnership's AGM on 14 December 2023.

4.4 Committee appointments and membership

The Chair informed Directors that a new Chair of the SCQFP Quality Committee would be sought following the upcoming retirement of the current Chair in March 2024. The new Quality Committee Chair would also be required to sit as a Director on the SCQFP Board. Once the post went live Directors were asked to promote the post to their networks, bearing in mind that suitable candidates could not be an employee or non-executive director of an existing Credit Rating Body, based on current provisions in SCQFP's Articles of Association.

ACTION

The Board also noted that a Board Directors would be required to volunteer for the SCQFP's Audit and Risk Committee following the retirement of the current Chair of the SCQFP.

4.5 Review of Board forward agenda 2023-24

PR talked through the December Board forward agenda as detailed in the paper and the Board noted the forward plan. The Chair asked Directors to let PR know if they wished any changes made to the plan.

Items 5 & 6 were taken before item 4.6. JC, SD & BW left the meeting after item 6.

4.6 People Update

PR spoke to a short paper detailing a number of staff developments, minor re-structure and re-titling of roles taking place within the SCQFP team as a result of staff changes. In addition PR asked Directors to approve a proposal to introduce a 1 x annual salary Death in Service benefit to all staff contracts since this was not part of the current SCQFP's Pension provider's provision. Director's approved the proposal.

5. AOB

JC would be leaving the Partnership at the end of September after more than 15 years' service. The Chair commented that JC had been instrumental in developing and embedding the framework over the years. The Board then thanked JC for all her work and dedication over the years.

6. Date of next meeting

Thursday 14th December 09.00 – 11.00

Action List

Item No	Action	By whom	Completed
1.1	Minor correction to number of the Board at the start of the minutes	BW	
1.2	Review CND networks and suggest ways to increase College representation on the Quality Committee	MH	
1.6	Chair and PR to draft a formal response to the Minister and circulate to Board	RW/PR	
2.4	Move Risk 5 relating to SFC into 4 th position on Risk Register	PR	
3.2	Investigate if guidance relating to working with specific countries exists in SG	NA	
3.2	Provide further clarity via paper at Dec Board regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the need for a policy or a standard statement around overseas organisations becoming a CRB- further guidance for CRBs around the credit rating of overseas third party programmes	SD	
4.4	Directors to promote the role of the Chair of the SCQFP Quality Committee	Directors	

	through their networks once the recruitment advert is live		
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