MINUTES

IFATE APPROVALS AND POLICY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting title:	IfATE Approvals and Policy Assurance Committee
Meeting date:	28 June 2023
Protective marking:	Official

Board members present:	Kate Barclay (KB) (Chair); Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ) (via teleconference); Neil Morrison (NM) (via teleconference); Malcolm Press (MP) (via teleconference).
IfATE officials present:	Rob Nitsch, Delivery Director (RN); Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director (BC) (via teleconference); Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director (RC); Carmel Grant, Deputy Director for Commissioning and Development (CG); Darren Shaw, DD Change Implementation (items 3-4); Sam Callear, DD Policy and New Concepts (SC) (items 5-7); Head of Governance; Head of Policy (items 3-4); Senior Policy Advisor, Emerging Skills (item 4 only); Head of Skills Policy (item 4 only); Head of Development, Occupational Maps (item 5 only); Head of Business Support Route Group (item 7 only); Senior Product Manager (item 7 only); Governance Manager (Secretariat).
Other stakeholders present:	Judy Ling Wong (JLW), independent Chair of the Green Apprenticeships and Technical Education Advisory Panel (GATE-AP) (via teleconference) (item 3 only)
Apologies:	Bev Robinson, board member.

Item 1. Welcome, introductions and conflicts of interest

1. The Chair welcomed members and officials to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bev Robinson, who had provided comments on the papers in advance of the meeting.

2. The Chair asked members whether they had any new declarations of interest to make. No declarations were made, and members recognised that they should declare any potential or actual conflict that may arise by virtue of their other interests.

Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

3. The minutes of the 19 April 2023 APAC meeting were approved without amendment.

Item 3. Green Apprenticeships Panel – report on impact

4. JLW, independent chair of the GATE-AP, introduced the item and explained the role of the GATE-AP in providing advice and challenge in respect of IfATE's programme to embed sustainability across its suite of apprenticeship and technical education products. The programme consisted of three themes: greening IfATE's products; having wider influence;

and IfATE's internal green network. IfATE's environmental and climate change strategy had recently been published, setting out IfATE's key principles and commitments in this area.

5. JLW added that whilst sustainability was a priority in a global context, IfATE had a significant role to play, directly and indirectly via partners, to improve the sustainability of occupations for the benefit of employers and to help deliver the ambition of Net Zero. The GATE-AP had identified 228 occupational standards whose sustainability may benefit from revision, 104 had been updated, 30 were undergoing revision and a further 81 were preparing to be revised. 6 green apprenticeships had been highlighted during the Coronation celebrations.

6. Members commended the work and enthusiasm of JLW and the GATE-AP, and asked if developing a new sustainable occupational standard required a different approach to revising an existing standard. JLW advised that both could be achieved through use of IfATE's sustainability framework, and that this framework could be a useful tool for other organisations. Sustainable occupational standards could have use in voluntary as well as paid roles.

7. Members asked if there were any IfATE products that had not yet had the uptake envisaged, and whether these included any sustainable standards. RN advised that this information would be provided for the impact-focused APAC meeting in November.

Item 4. Update on implementation of IfATE's future facing innovation strategy

8. RC introduced the item, and reminded the committee that IfATE's skills policy team had presented to APAC in 2022, and had outlined plans to scope out IfATE's role in embedding emerging skills into occupational standards, apprenticeships and technical qualifications. Since that presentation they had led a cross-IfATE working group to develop and publish the Future-Facing Innovation Strategy, which sets out IfATE's vision to ensure a future-facing, dynamic technical education system which supports employers to meet their future skills needs.

9. Members asked how consideration was given to factors such as artificial intelligence, which may have effects upon diverse sectors in different ways and to different extents. RC advised that insights were gained from a number of sources and communicated to trailblazer groups in order that employers could continue to take the lead in defining their skills needs.

10. Members noted that there was a difference between a desire for a skill, and a skills need that would lead to increased productivity or increased employment. RN advised that different sectors responded in different ways and at different rates to emerging skills and technologies, but that IfATE's sector-based approach enabled it to provide a tailored response to each sector's skills need. Members emphasised the importance of entrepreneurship, and were advised by the skills policy team that the strategy covered a number of innovation skills that had relevance for multiple sectors. Members requested that the board discuss innovation and cross-sector skills in IfATE's products at a future meeting.

Item 5. Occupational Map development

11. RC provided a brief introduction to the item, which provided an update on the work done so far on development of the occupational maps. Positive feedback had been received on the public beta of the new occupational maps, and there were a number of directions in which the project could move in the next phase.

12. Members praised the work done so far on occupational maps, and discussed the potential directions in which the work could evolve in a second phase. The committee recognised the benefits of collaboration with other organisations and highlighted the role that the API

could play in enabling other organisations to develop products and interfaces with additional functionality directly relevant to their stakeholders, whilst ensuring that these products were supplied by a single authoritative data source.

Item 6. Review of trailblazer model

13. SC introduced the item, which provided an update on the work done to review the trailblazer operating model since the APAC meeting on 19 April 2023. Some immediate actions had been identified, such as improving the trailblazer portal and determining which activities in the standards development and revisions process could be adapted to ease the burden on trailblazers. A project had been established to consider the longer term opportunities to maximise further digital and data solutions to improving the trailblazer operating model. It was noted that greater flexibility was being considered to support variable models in different situations.

14. Members were supportive of sector-specific solutions where appropriate, and of easing the burden on trailblazers to enable them to focus on the areas where their insights had the most value. Members commented that it was important to speak to employers who did not routinely engage with trailblazers in order to understand any potential barriers to engagement, and were informed that this would happen in a structured way.

15. The committee emphasised the importance of using this review as an opportunity to explore efficiencies in operations, rather than simply transferring work from one group to another, and asked that an update on the work done so far was provided to the Trailblazer Reference Panel.

Item 7. Report on IfATE policy assurance activity

16. The Head of the Business Support Route Group introduced an update on the work undertaken to develop the operational policy assurance activity register. This will be provided to each future meeting of APAC, with content aligned to the agenda of each meeting.

Item 8. Operational report

17. RN provided an update on IfATE's operations and delivery performance. This included the ability of those studying for HTQs to access the Lifelong Loan Entitlement and an update on discussions relating to apprenticeship funding bands.

Item 9. Any other business and confirmation of focus for next meeting

18. The Chair thanked members and officials for their participation and confirmed that the next APAC meeting would take place on 13 September 2023, with a focus on assessment and quality.