INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

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| Meeting Title | Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board |
| Meeting Date | 17 November 2021 |
| Protective marking | Official |
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| Board members present | Kate Barclay (KB), Dayle Bayliss (DB), Paul Cadman (PC, John Cope (JCop), Jennifer Coupland (JCou), Dame Fiona Kendrick (FK), Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ), Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) (RMS), Robin Millar (RM), Toby Peyton-Jones (TPJ), Malcolm Press (MP), Bev Robinson (BR) |
| Institute officials present | Beth Chaudhary (BC), Rachel Cooper (RC), Kristofer McGhee (KMc), Rob Nitsch (RN), Peter Schild (PSch) |
| Other stakeholders present | Peter Mucklow (PM) (ESFA) |
| Apologies | John Edwards (ESFA) and Susan Lovelock (DfE) |

**Welcome and Introductions/declarations of interest**

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting.
2. The Chair asked board members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. All board members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests) then it must be raised at the outset of the relevant meeting which deals with the issue giving rise to the actual or potential conflict. No interests were declared for this meeting.

**Minutes from the 22 September 2021 meeting**

1. The board approved the minutes from the 22 September meeting, with no further comments. Three items had been carried over from 22 September and would be brought to future meetings: (1) data-driven narrative on employers’ needs; (2) digital agenda delivery plan; and (3) equality, diversity and inclusion delivery plan.

**Learner Story**

1. The board valued hearing one T Level student’s account of what had attracted him to study T Levels, his experience at college, and his account of engaging with employers and exploring his future options. The individual was studying one of the first construction T Levels in design, surveying and planning. While the Covid-19 pandemic had presented challenges, the learner in partnership with his college had accommodated the situation well. Learners from different backgrounds received effective support while undertaking their T Levels; the approach was inclusive and the workload manageable. The board congratulated the presenter on his achievements to date and wished him success for the future.

**Risks – strategic management update**

1. The Institute’s risk heatmap summary covering strategic risks and informed by significant risks captured in the Institute’s operational and programme risk registers was noted. The board highlighted the emphasis that should be placed on monitoring and mitigating risk associated with cyber security and data vulnerability. It would seek further feedback on progress in these areas, with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee leading.

**Feedback from board committee chairs**

1. The board discussed the activities arising from the board committees which had occurred since the July board meeting. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had not met in this time.
2. The Approvals and Funding Committee’s 28 October meeting had looked at positive progress on HTQs and the first four T Level waves. It had been encouraged to see an increased focus on digital products emerging. Approvals and Funding Committee members encouraged the Institute’s efforts to revise and streamline decision making models. Institute officials had begun considering whether a new or revised definition of ‘occupation’ might be needed for the purposes of the occupational maps and approvals. They were also reviewing the use of ‘core and options’ in apprenticeships. This work would be presented to a future meeting.
3. The Quality Assurance Committee’s 21 September meeting had noted progress on external quality assurance (EQA) transition to Ofqual. The committee had received an update on Quality Assurance Agency and Office for Students (OfS/QAA) role as EQA providers for integrated degree apprenticeships; and had noted progress on the Long-Term Assurance Model (LTAM).

**Performance report**

1. The October 2021 board performance report was noted. Further work on this report would clarify the objective aligned to the KPI. It was affirmed at the board that progress had been made in relation to the objective: ‘prioritise the development and revision of standards.

**Technical qualification reform and T Level roll out**

1. The Department for Education (DfE) brought board members up to date with latest Ministerial decisions and delivery plans for T Level roll out and the Level 3 and below qualifications review. The Institute would progress discussion with DfE on making the most of the Institute’s contribution and role in employer-centred awareness raising activities. The board’s priority requirement was for the Institute and DfE to work together on getting well expressed messages to employers, learners, and parents to explain the timing of the qualifications as they roll out, relevance and implications for employment settings. DfE campaign material should be tested across Institute networks.

**Governance Review**

1. The board discussed and agreed further key components of a revised board operating model to allow further development, building on prior agreements reached through 2021. All changes were being made to ensure the Institute has the capacity and decision-making arrangements in place to process the relevant volume of applications for Institute approval of qualifications; improve the Institute’s governance arrangements; and improve the board’s ability to focus on strategic issues.
2. The board agreed a revised board committee structure, to be made up of four committees. There would be two new committees: an Approvals, Policy and Assurance Committee (APAC); and a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (EDI). The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and Remuneration Committee would continue. Under the new structure the board would set the approvals criteria to govern the Institute’s approvals process for apprenticeships and technical qualifications, on APAC’s recommendation.
3. The agreed new Approvals, Process and Assurance Committee (APAC) would replace the existing Approvals and Funding Committee (A&FC) and Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). APAC would develop and recommend to the board the criteria and imperatives that govern all aspect of approvals activity for apprenticeships and technical qualifications; assess the impact of the Institute’s apprenticeships and technical qualifications, making recommendations for improvement to the executive; and oversee the assurance of the Institute’s approvals related processes and activities.
4. APAC would receive advice and input from a range of sources including from the creation of a new Assessment Advisory Panel, made up of independent external members. The new Assessment Advisory Panel would ensure that the Institute is appropriately advised and challenged on assessment issues. Its role would be to support the APAC in exercising APAC’s assessment-facing impact monitoring and assurance functions.
5. It was agreed that the executive would take more accountability for ensuring the compliance with the criteria and imperatives set by APAC. An executive level Compliance Board would be formed, chaired by the Delivery Director, to deliver the executive’s refreshed responsibilities. Apprenticeships and technical qualifications would follow the same approvals path. The scheme of delegation would be revised to reflect these changes.
6. Detailed assurance of the approvals process – sampling and deep dives - should rest with the APAC, with ARAC to take an annual audit in accordance with statutory duties. It was agreed that final decisions about Procedural Review requests should be delegated to the Chief Executive, with reporting to the board through the Chief Executive’s report and strategic risk report.
7. Rob Nitsch was thanked for his contribution on developing the APAC proposals. Proposals on how APAC’s impact would be measured would be brought to the board.

**Funding band approvals model**

1. The board was updated on progress with developing a new model for providing recommendations to DfE on apprenticeship funding bands. The next step was to run a 12-month pilot, due to start in January 2022, subject to ministerial approval. The board agreed that as part of the pilot the funding band recommendation provided to the Minister would be accompanied by a ‘sector report’ to help inform decision making. The board would be kept informed.

**Any other business**

1. The board received a spoken update on the progress being made within the independent review of the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) being led by Sir David Bell.
2. Eight papers for information were noted. Minutes were received from board committee meetings: the Approvals and Funding Committee held on 19 August 2021 and the Quality Assurance Committee held on 21 September 2021. The board also received a technical education update; a finance report; a people and HR report; a proposal for the proposed board strategy days to be held 26 – 27 January 2022; a data pack; and the ESFA quarterly performance review QPR outcome letter.
3. The board heard that positive progress was being made on the Institute’s electronic domain name.

**Next board meeting**

1. The next meeting of the board would take place on Thursday 27 January 2022. (*Post meeting note: the date was subsequently changed to Wednesday 26 January*.)

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| Author | Secretariat, Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education |
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