

MINUTES

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting Title: Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

Protective marking: Official

Board members present: Antony Jenkins (Chair), Kate Barclay (KB), Dayle Bayliss (DB), Paul Cadman (PC), Jennifer Coupland (JCoU), Dame Fiona Kendrick (FK), Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ), Robin Millar (RM), Toby Peyton-Jones (TPJ), Malcolm Press (MP), Bev Robinson (BR)

Institute officials present: Kristofer McGhee (KMc), Jonathan Mitchell (JoM) (items 7 and 8), Rob Nitsch (RN), Peter Schild (PSch)

Other stakeholders present: Peter Mucklow (PM) (ESFA), Susan Lovelock (DfE) (to item 8)

Apologies: John Cope (JCop)

Welcome and Introductions/declarations of interest

1. Antony Jenkins (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 conflicts were declared for this meeting.

Minutes from the 27 May 2021 meeting

3. The board approved the minutes from the 27 May meeting, with no further comments.

Feedback from board committee chairs

4. The board discussed the activities arising from the board committees which had occurred since the last board meeting. Minutes had been shared with the agenda. Strategic risk monitoring in board committees was discussed.

5. The Approvals and Funding Committee's 24 June meeting had dealt with Cycle 35 recommendations from route panels. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) had met on 17 June to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21. A decision had been reached to stop the Risk Management Advisory Group (RMAG) after valued work carried out during the Covid pandemic. ARAC members placed importance on the Institute reviewing cyber security and digital vulnerability in depth; this was supported by the board. Assurance work on cyber security was underway and Rob Nitsch would be leading work on business continuity. The Quality Assurance Committee's 8 July meeting had received an update on the Office for Students (OfS)/Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) role as EQA provider for integrated degree apprenticeships; received a presentation from Ofqual in relation to progress on the EQA transition and the EQA annual report; and welcomed the interim findings of the Institute's survey of stakeholders' response to the EPA flexibilities in response to the Covid pandemic. An outline of the EQA landscape would be shared with board members.

Performance report

6. The board noted the highlight report setting out the Institute's delivery against objectives and its performance against key milestones. The Institute's joint work DfE on developing the post-16 qualifications process, to promote an outcomes-focused approach aligned with employers' needs was noted.

Institute 2021

7. The Institute 2021 organisational redesign process was now concluding, with structures finalised and staff assigned to posts. The Institute's operational teams were now established with a focus on routes. The internal structure was organised into a Delivery Group; an Insights and Transformation Group; and a Corporate Services Group. Engagement with staff during transition to new roles had been good.
8. The board would seek assurance from the Institute 2021 outcomes and success after six months of implementation, looking for evidence of the impact of change on organisational culture. The board encouraged demonstration that feedback from stakeholders, including views offered through advisory groups, was being used effectively to shape route activities. Lucy Rigler was commended for her work in leading the change programme.

Apprenticeship Programme

9. The board was invited to reflect upon the apprenticeship programme in order to inform future priorities and ambition in the Institute's work on apprenticeships, noting work carried out in partnership with DfE. The board highlighted its enthusiasm for the apprenticeship programme to work at a pace suitable for the circumstances, addressing the skills gap and focusing on informed engagement; operating with dynamism; clarifying roles with a useable taxonomy; assisting SMEs with detailed content; channelling demand; and offering consistency and quality.

Spending Review 2021

10. The Institute was working in collaboration with the DfE in readiness for negotiating a multi-year funding settlement within the autumn 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review. The overall intention would be to strengthen Institute digital capability to deliver the DfE programme for the benefit of employers and also to generate longer term efficiencies. The board welcomed the Institute's focus on aligning skills within an economy in recovery. The Institute team was invited to come back with a demonstration that where feasible focus was being given to reducing overhead cost and adapting operations with agility. The board's priority was for the Institute to demonstrate how adaptation and innovation would translate into productivity, specifically through digital transformation.

Engagement Plan for Institute Strategic Plan 2021-24

11. Further to discussion at its May meeting, the board reviewed the engagement plan for its Strategic Plan 2021-24. It discussed the stakeholder engagement strategy and use of appropriate channels and networks to optimise the impact of the Institute's programme, ready for the next stage of strategic implementation.

Governance review phase one report

12. The board received recommendations from the governance review phase one activities following June workshops in which board and senior leadership team members had participated. The board determined the need for a set of governance principles as a next step to inform a board operating system and enable the division of responsibilities between the board and executive. A governance principles-based approach would help

strike the right balance for the board to give focus to Institute strategy, performance and assurance; for board committee time to be spent appropriately; and for clarity around the use of advice from the board.

13. Subject to board agreement to these governance principles, the board intended to agree an updated governance model to be set out in a revised Institute governance framework with an integrated updated scheme of delegation. The overall proposal should be tested against a matrix of individuals responsible; accountable; to be consulted; to be involved. Draft terms of reference for the replacement committees together with a revised scheme of delegation would be agreed in due course. Non executive members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and its independent member should be consulted on the detailed work.
14. Notwithstanding the need for the board to have sight of the proposed new corporate governance system as a whole before agreeing its elements, Board members were favourable to establishing a new permanent board committee - a Quality, Approval and Funding Oversight Committee (QAF) - to replace the existing arrangements. Subject to agreement to the detail, this model proposed to delegate board functions to this board committee to hold the executive team to account for assurance from approval decisions on apprenticeship and technical qualifications. The board was also favourable to reconstituting the existing Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) as an executive advisory group. This would mean that the existing QAC function specific to EPA and EQA transition delivered by the committee of three independent experts would report to the Chief Executive in the future, rather than as exist as a board committee.
15. Discussion should commence with Strategy Directors and relevant board members on diversity, equity and inclusion in the Institute's work programme. Further work would be carried out on how the advisory groups identified in the governance framework enable the board to give due consideration to the stakeholder voice, with proposals to be brought back to the board.
16. Elizabeth Youard was thanked for her work on the governance review.

Any other business

17. Eight papers for information were noted. Minutes were received from board committee meetings: the Approvals and Funding Committee held on 29 April 2021; the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 11 March 2021; and the Quality Assurance

Committee held on 31 March 2021. The board also received a copy of the Strategic Plan 2021-24, a technical education update; a finance report; a people and HR report; a corporate update; and a data pack. The draft 2022 schedule of the proposed board and committee

18. dates was circulated with the papers.

19. As this was his final meeting in the role, board members extended heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Antony Jenkins for his service to the Institute as its chair, leadership of the board. Antony's support for the Institute's stakeholders, members and staff since the Institute's inception would be remembered.

Next board meeting

20. The next meeting of the board would take place on Wednesday 22 September 2021.

Author: Secretariat, Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education

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