

Meeting Title	Quality Assurance Committee
Meeting Date	Tuesday 22 March 2022 10:30 – 13:30 hours
Location:	Face-to-face
Protective marking	Official

Attendance:

Members

Paul Cadman (Chair), Jessica Leigh Jones

Independent Members

Professor Jim Iley, Isabel Sutcliffe, Ben Blackledge

IfATE Officials

Rob Nitsch, Nikki Christie, Jane Pierce, Darren Shaw and Tanya Lawes

Guests for item 5 only

QAA representatives from 11.30-13.30

1. Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest

- I. The Chair welcomed members and officials to the last Quality Assurance Committee (“the committee”) meeting.
- II. The Chair thanked all the members for their support and contributions to the Committee meetings. The officers were also thanked for their help.
- III. The Chair also congratulated Jessica Leigh Jones for appointment to the newly formed Approvals Policy and Assurance Committee (APAC) and Jim Iley, Isabel Sutcliffe and Ben Blackledge for their appointments to the new Assessment Panel (AP).
- IV. The Chair asked committee members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. All committee 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. Isabel Sutcliffe raised she had been appointed as interim chair of the City & Guilds Quality and Standards committee and was a former member of that committee. The Chair and committee concluded that this did not give rise to a conflict or potential conflict in connection with the matters under discussion at the meeting.

- V. Arrangements for reporting and handling of data, fraud or whistleblowing incidents were noted.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2022

- VI. The committee agreed the minutes from the previous meeting held on 13 January 2022 date as an accurate record.

3. L3 Aerospace

- VII. The committee was informed of the proposal from an employer group about the development of the Level 3 aerospace apprenticeship standards. The employer group would like the mandated qualifications to determine occupational competence over the course of the apprenticeship and have proposed that the end-point assessment (EPA) comprise a professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio.
- VIII. The committee did not fully agree with the proposal, as it was not in line with the general requirements for apprenticeships. The committee agreed that the Chair would write to the Employer Group and offer a meeting to discuss further.

Action 1:

The committee Chair to write to the employer group and offer an opportunity to meet with QAC representatives.

4. EPA Methods

- IX. A suggestion was made for the Assessment Panel to look again at the methodologies that are and are not used in EPA.

Action 2:

Add the methodology assessment review to the Assessment Panel agenda forward look.

5. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) update

- X QAA representatives attended the meeting to provide an update on the issues found with the data and advised the committee that no quality assurance exercises could start until at least the end of June or early July.
- XI The committee suggested a review be carried out in the next few weeks once issues with accessing the data are resolved. QAA raised a potential further delay due to needing to train their assessors.

6. External Quality Assurance Transition update

- X. The committee was provided with details of the work that had been carried out since January 2022.
- XI. The committee was advised that the IfATE had offered an interim arrangement to allow apprentices currently in the system to complete.
- XII. It was currently anticipated that this arrangement would be in place for the short-term.

7. Employer Directory

- XIII. A stock take of the employer directory was carried out and the committee was pleased to hear that the number of entries had increased. There are 228 standards now covered by the employer directory, representing 36% of all standards approved for delivery.
- XIV. Ofqual is currently trialling the use of the directory and the committee is

awaiting feedback. A performance assessment will be carried out to help identify the areas of concern and work out the best solutions.

8. Update on the Process for Approval and Review of Technical Education qualifications

- XV. The committee was updated on plans for a single point of access for Awarding Organisations (AOs) to submit qualifications for approval. The process map formed the first step in articulating the approach to approving and reviewing decisions and how other organisations would work in alliance with this.
- XVI. The committee was advised of the importance of underpinning this project with a robust data system. The committee felt that it was important to be clear on the data that are collected will allow for an accurate and effective review.
- XVII. The committee noted that it would be important to ensure that the process of reviewing the decision to approve a qualification was employer-led and that employer views should drive the design of the process.
- XVIII. The committee also wanted to know how the findings from reviews would be communicated back to AOs.
- XIX. The committee welcomed the good progress made in developing a robust approach to the approval and review of technical qualifications. The committee were reassured that continued Board-level oversight would be provided by the APAC.

9. Use of Grading (Apprentice's view and grading at the grade boundary)

- XX. The committee raised queries about how the work at boundaries will continue. Two approaches are used; continued focus on refining the grading descriptors themselves and monitoring of their use by EPAOs by the external quality assurance provider.

Action 3:

A letter to be sent from the committee to the Apprentice Panel to thank them for their comments about grading.

Action 4:

Add an item about the need for a distinction grade to the agenda for the next AP meeting

10. Governance Review Update

XXI. The newly formed APAC and AP will have their first meetings in May.

Action 5:

Send a copy of the new governance structure to Isabel Sutcliffe

11. Any other business

XXII. No other business was raised.

12. Papers for information

XXIII. The committee noted three papers for information: (a) the QAA business as usual update (b) EQA risk register and (c) EQA dashboard.