

# MINUTES

## INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting title:	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board
Meeting date:	18 January 2023
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE (the Chair); Dr Kate Barclay; Jennifer Coupland (JCoU); Sir Peter Estlin; Jessica Leigh Jones MBE; Dame Fiona Kendrick; Sir Robin Millar CBE; Neil Morrison; Malcolm Press CBE; Bev Robinson CBE; Dayle Bayliss.
IfATE officials present:	Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director (BC); Dr Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director (RC); Rob Nitsch CBE, Delivery Director (RN); Kristofer McGhee, General Counsel and Board Secretary (KM); Avril Cooper, HR Director (AC); David Wilson, Chief Financial Officer (DW); Anna West, Deputy Director Integrated Skills System (AW); Head of Governance; Governance Manager.
Apologies:	John Cope; Peter Mucklow, DfE Director for Apprenticeships.

## **Item 1. Welcome, introductions and declarations of conflict of interest**

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting. The Chair started the meeting by congratulating RM for being knighted for services to music, to people with disabilities, to young people and to charity; and BR for being made a CBE for services to further education. The Chair also asked for an IfATE colleague, Bhavena Patel, to be congratulated for being made an MBE for services to further education.
2. The Chair thanked Malcolm Press both for hosting the board over the last two days as well as organising a fantastic evening. The Chair also thanked the IfATE Governance team and the team at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) for facilitating the smooth running of the board strategy event.
3. Apologies were received and accepted from John Cope.
4. The Chair asked board members whether they had any declarations or conflicts 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 actual or potential conflict of interests were declared.

## **Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting**

5. The board agreed the minutes from the last meeting, held on 16 November 2022. The board noted there were seven open actions, two of which will be considered by APAC at its April meeting, three of which we are awaiting a response from DfE and two of which are longer term actions with anticipated completion by the end of March 2023.

## **Item 3. CEO report**

6. Jennifer Coupland (JCOu) presented the CEO report and updated the board on matters relating to T Levels. JCOu confirmed the content review had concluded which had identified the need for amendments to the content for both the Health and the Science T Levels. IfATE colleagues were in discussions with both DfE and Ofqual to establish next steps. The awarding organisation was in the process of implementing the changes to ensure students on programme were not disadvantaged. In addition, lessons learned regarding the capabilities of awarding organisations had identified additional requirements which IfATE was addressing as part of the procurement process for the next generation of T Level contracts. KM set out IfATE's experience during previous procurements and how this had informed procurement for the later waves as well as the re-tendering process with safeguards built in to ensure robustness. RN explained IfATE had engaged at a sector level to work with the awarding organisation community to provide opportunities for upskilling in specific areas.
7. The board welcomed the update regarding T Levels but continued to express the need for appropriate handling. RN explained IfATE would continue to work with all awarding organisations to ensure they had sufficient capacity and capability in all aspects of qualification development, delivery and awarding. The board queried the amendment to the content. RN explained, that, in certain parts of the core content for the Health T Levels, the science content had been extended beyond that necessary for the occupation to facilitate wider entry to HE. This was now being adjusted following feedback from providers and consultation with employers. The Chair requested a full paper be brought to the next board meeting which set out the issues, lessons learned and an update following the

November exam series.

#### **Item 4. Update on financial performance and business planning**

8. David Wilson (DW) introduced the item and invited feedback on the finance report. DW explained that, in response to previous feedback from board members, the content and format of the finance report has been revised to provide greater detail and transparency. DW commented on the forecast headroom against the current year's budget and explained the actions which had been taken and were being taken to mitigate this, including improving the management information (MI) which was available to budget-holders, an improved forecasting model and ensuring effective delegation of budgets to budget holders.
9. DW briefly set out the business planning process including how DfE allocates the budget to IfATE, in terms of programme capital, administration and programme resource expenditure and the timetable in place to set the 2023/24 budget. The board questioned whether board strategy sessions should move to an earlier date in the financial year to ensure effective alignment with the timetable set by DfE for agreeing IfATE's budget.

#### **Item 5. 2022 People survey results and culture and values update**

10. JCoU highlighted the key figures from the 2022 People survey, adding that although IfATE's scores were comparable with, or exceeded, the wider Civil Service scores on most measures, there was a 4% dip in the overall engagement index in comparison to IfATE's 2021 engagement score. JCoU, and SLT, were disappointed with this figure. Following on from the 2021 People survey results, initiatives had been launched to address managing change and learning and development (L&D), however, these initiatives had not had the intended impact. ELT had noted this was the first full year following the restructure and subsequent role changes, alongside expansion of IfATE's remit. JCoU explained ELT would continue to focus on managing change and L&D and would utilise a 'one IfATE' approach using SLT as the conduit by which to engage and listen to staff.
11. The board suggested one approach would be to focus on three targets, implement a plan to address the targets and conduct pulse surveys to ensure the approach was working. The board suggested ELT engage with groups of colleagues to identify what they want, ask them to identify what good looks like and co-create solutions. The Chair highlighted the challenge of engagement when colleagues were working from home. It was also highlighted multi-site working adds another layer of complexity. The board suggested it would be beneficial to undertake further analysis to identify exactly where the 'hot spots' were in the organisation to ensure all colleagues felt they were being listened to.

#### **Item 6. People Strategy / Workforce Planning**

12. Avril Cooper (AC) presented the paper and highlighted the approach taken from both a 'top down' and 'bottom up' perspective. This had produced a list of activities which are grouped into themes and prioritised, with the intention that this is a living document. The document has been shared with the board to get their views and identify gaps or omissions.
13. The board welcomed the opportunity to have early sight of the strategy. The board commented that the people strategy would benefit from drawing out the direct relevance to IfATE's organisational strategy, particularly focussing on the 'why' and went on to state they would welcome the People Strategy being explicit about how people resources are aligned to business need to identify gaps in capability and action required to address those.

The board suggested IfATE's equity, diversity and inclusion committee would be keen to provide input.

#### **Item 7. Matters arising from the papers for information**

14. The board asked how better connectivity between the committee chairs and their agendas could be facilitated. The board asked for regular meetings be instigated between committee chairs.
15. The board discussed the continued overt presence of skills in the government's post Brexit, post Covid strategy and requested that both the Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education ('the Minister') and the new Director General for Skills, Julia Kinniburgh, be invited to a future board meeting.
16. The board raised a concern regarding the long-term sustainability of the current approach to the apprenticeship levy. The Chair requested the DfE lead for the lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) be invited to a future board meeting.
17. There were no further matters arising.

#### **Item 8. Any other business (AOB)**

18. The Chair thanked Fiona Kendrick for her work and input to make the strategy sessions successful and repeated her thanks to Malcolm Press for hosting the board over the last two days.
19. There was no other business, and it was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 22 March 2023.

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