

MINUTES

IFATE APPROVALS AND POLICY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting title: IfATE Approvals and Policy Assurance Committee
Meeting date: 30 November 2022
Protective marking: Official

Board members present: Kate Barclay (KB) (Chair); Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ) (via teleconference); Neil Morrison (NM); Malcolm Press (MP) (via teleconference); Bev Robinson (BR) (via teleconference); Robin Millar (RM) (observer) (via teleconference).

IfATE officials present: Carmel Grant (Deputy Director for Commissioning and Development) (CG); Rob Nitsch (Delivery Director) (RN); Rachel Cooper (Strategy Director) (RC); Beth Chaudhary (Strategy Director) (BC); Head of Economic Analysis (JGC); Head of Research and Analysis (SA).

Other stakeholders present: Simon Ashworth (Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) – (Director of Policy); Teresa Frith (Association of Colleges) (AoC) - (Senior Skills Policy Manager) and Terry Fennell – (Federation of Awarding Bodies) (FAB) (Vice Chair).

Item 1. Welcome, introductions and conflicts of interest

1. Dr Kate Barclay (the chair) welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and invited participants to introduce themselves.
2. The chair asked members whether they had any 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 draft minutes of the Approvals Policy and Assurance Committee (APAC) meeting held on 13 October 2022 were approved without amendment.
4. The committee received an update on the action log and agreed to close 4 actions; actions 025 and 027 remain open.

Item 3. Impact measures: what does the data say and IfATE's response

5. The committee received an update on IfATE's work on impact measures. This built on the draft scheme of success measures (shared with APAC in May 2022), which are drawn from the overarching programme success measures and IfATE's contribution to them across T Levels, Apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

The committee highlighted the importance and value of this work and welcomed the way in which data/trends was presented. For the next presentation, the committee requested further consideration to (a) explore any additional refinement (particularly on themes and measurement of quality) and (b) how external feedback is received and utilised to further re-enforce the assessments. Amongst the issues the committee discussed was the recent announcement from the NAO that colleges are in the public sector.

Item 4. Provider view: the impact of IfATE's work on apprenticeships and qualifications

6. The committee welcomed Simon Ashworth (AELP), and Teresa Frith (AoC) to outline the provider view – on impact of IfATE's work on apprenticeships and qualifications. Feedback from providers included impact of inflation / cost of living on providers, and the impact this was having on some Standards and wider product offer. Other areas highlighted by the speakers was the need to ensure that quality was assessed in the longer term rather than simply completion rates, employer accountability and the benefits of driving down on bureaucracy and improving career advice.
7. The committee discussed what role, if any, IfATE can play to address some of the themes highlighted by providers. The committee agreed that this be discussed by the strategy team to explore potential solutions.

Item 5. Assessor view: the impact of IfATE's work on apprenticeships and qualifications

8. The committee welcomed Terry Fennell (FAB) to provide an assessor view – on the impact of IfATE's work on apprenticeships and qualifications, to which AELP (Simon Ashworth) also contributed. Key themes to emerge were Inconsistency amongst EQAPs in their assessments; the instability that EQA transition had generated; whether the market was operating as intended, with competition between EPAOs; the uncertainty about the financial viability of HTQs; the desire for more data with regard to performance of EPAOs; and improving the visibility of version control of apprenticeships.
9. The committee agreed to provide formal feedback to AELP, FAB and AoC following their representations.

Item 6. Approvals activity and delivery issues update

10. The committee received an update on recent approvals activity and delivery issues. The committee heard that, on supplementary funding bands, the funds have yet to be determined. The review of the Health and Science T Levels are continuing – with two strands being worked on - (a) content review and (b) way in which assessment is adjusted in the interim period. On EQA development, IfATE continues to work with DfE/Ofqual to optimise the EQA system and ensure enhanced market management.

Item 7. Any other business

11. It was agreed that the next meeting will take place in the Darlington office, with potential wrap around activities.

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