

MINUTES

IFATE PRODUCT ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting title:	IfATE Product Assurance Committee
Meeting date:	11 September 2024
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Dr Kate Barclay (KB) (Chair); Sir Robin Millar CBE (via teleconference) (RM).
IfATE officials present:	Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director (RC); Carmel Grant, Delivery Director (CG); Lucy Rigler, Deputy Director, Strategy and Communications (LR); Simon Love, Board Secretary and Head of Business Operations (SL); Mark Walsh, Head of Research and Analysis (MW) (item 4 only); Hannah Morgans, Head of Occupational Development and Reform (HM) (items 4-5 only); 2 members of the Digital and Analytical Services team (item 4 only); Governance Manager (Secretariat).
Other stakeholders present:	Godfrey Moger, Chair of the Sales, marketing and Procurement Route Panel (item 6 only); Tom Morgan, Chair of the Digital Route Panel (item 6 only).
Apologies:	Jane Hadfield (JH); Mark McClennon MBE.

Item 1. Welcome, introductions and conflicts of interest

1. The Chair welcomed board members and officials to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jane Hadfield and Mark McClennon, both of whom had reviewed and commented on the papers in advance of the meeting.
2. The Chair asked board members whether they had any new declarations of conflict of interest to make. The Chair reminded board members 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 new declarations were made.

Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

3. The draft minutes of the 12 June 2024 Product and Assurance Committee meeting were approved without amendment.
4. Members reviewed the action log, discussed progress against currently open actions and agreed to close all actions proposed to be closed.

Item 3. Operating context

5. Rachel Cooper introduced the item and provided the committee with an update on key issues in the skills landscape, including joint work with the DfE on the formation of Skills England and the recent announcement that the Education and Skills Funding Agency would be integrated into the core DfE by the end of March 2025.
6. Members were provided with an update on ongoing IfATE workstreams. They were informed that officials had completed work on the procurement of Generation 2 Wave 1 T Levels and continued to review and revise occupational standards. Members noted the importance of ensuring that any review of end-point assessments should take account of accessibility and inclusion to ensure that no learners faced a disproportionate barrier to completion of their apprenticeship.

Item 4. IfATE's oversight function: progress and applications

7. Rachel Cooper introduced the item and explained that IfATE officials had been developing a prototype dashboard which would provide officials with data-driven insights into the impact of IfATE's products, a key component of IfATE's oversight duty.
8. Mark Walsh and two members of IfATE's Digital and Analytical Services (DAS) team explained that the dashboard drew from several data sources and would in time provide insights of both an operational and strategic nature as well as provide an assessment the impact of IfATE's products over time. They demonstrated the prototype dashboard and its ability to visualise labour market data at varying levels of granularity considering geography and sector. A key factor in the success of the product would be ensuring that the data feeding into the prototype was high quality and robust.
9. Members noted that some of the insights utilised Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes as part of the analysis, and asked whether officials had considered alternative approaches. Members noted some sectors did not commonly use SOC codes, as well as noting some 4-digit SOC codes were very broad in scope. Mark advised that work had initially focused on SOC coding data in order to develop the prototype as this method of categorisation was used by several organisations, but that in time the tool would be

expanded. In addition, the newer 6-digit SOC codes could provide greater granularity in terms of specific occupations if they could be mapped accurately.

10. Members asked whether the prototype analysed all of IfATE's products and whether it could examine progression through occupations. Mark advised that the team had focused on apprenticeships initially but that there were plans to extend the scope of the tool to include technical qualifications and to show progression, including a link to the Occupational Maps.
11. Members thanked the DAS team for their work in this area.

Item 5. Deep dive: who uses IfATE's Occupational Maps?

12. Hannah Morgans introduced the item, which explored a deep dive into the users of the IfATE's Occupational Maps. This is a key tool in communicating the technical education system in England to stakeholders by making information available on routes, occupational standards and progression opportunities. In order to explore who used the Occupational Maps and for what purpose, officials had examined quantitative data on web traffic as well as qualitative feedback gained from user surveys and testimonials.
13. The data showed that IfATE continued to exceed its monthly target for the number of users accessing the Occupational Maps through its website. In addition to making Occupational Maps available to users directly through the IfATE website, a number of Application Programming Interface (API) keys had been issued to organisations to help them develop and inform their own products and services. Organisations that had been provided with an API key included government departments, local government and combined authorities, learning providers and employers.
14. Members praised the Occupational Maps and emphasised the importance of engaging with the widest pool of employers possible. They also highlighted the importance of using natural language in tools such as the Occupational Maps, in order that they can be easily understood by stakeholders.

Item 6. Occupational Maps: Route Panel Impact

15. Tom Morgan and Godfrey Moger, Chairs of the Digital Route Panel and Sales, Marketing and Procurement Route Panel respectively, joined the committee to provide their perspective on how the Occupational Maps had impacted upon the discussions at their respective Route Panels.
16. Tom and Godfrey informed the committee that they felt the Occupational Maps were, overall, an impressive tool which had been beneficial to Route Panel discussions. They advised that they were particularly useful when reviewing or revising an occupational standard to place it on the Map. In terms of suggested improvements, they suggested the maps could be clearer in showing career progression within and across routes, where there was commonality regarding the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements. Tom and Godfrey added that the Occupational Maps could be useful for the provision of careers advice in an educational setting, but that complexity could be off-putting and that it was important to ensure that the presentation of the Occupational Maps was tailored appropriately to each audience.
17. Members thanked Tom and Godfrey for their attendance, for their work on their routes and for providing their Route Panels' experiences of the Occupational Maps.

Item 7. Confirmatory discussion

18. The committee considered the prototype oversight dashboard, the reach and features of the Occupational Maps, and Route Panels' experiences of using the Occupational Maps and concluded that these products were overall fulfilling their purpose. Members noted that there were a number of ways in which further improvements could potentially be made, subject to technical and resource investment.

Item 8. Any other business

19. The committee agreed that the next meeting would be themed around T Levels.

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