

MINUTES



INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting title:	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board
Meeting date:	15 November 2023
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE (the Chair); Dr Kate Barclay; John Cope; Jennifer Coupland (JCoU); Sir Peter Estlin; Jane Hadfield; Dame Fiona Kendrick; Mark McClennon MBE; Sir Robin Millar CBE; Neil Morrison; Professor Malcolm Press CBE; Bev Robinson CBE (via teleconference).
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 Company Secretary (KM); Avril Cooper, HR Director (AC); David Wilson, Chief Financial Officer (DW); Simon Love, Head of Governance.
Other stakeholders present:	Kate Ridley-Moy, Director of Apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps (KRM) (via teleconference), Sir Ian Bauckham, Ofqual Board Chair and incoming interim Chief Regulator.
Apologies:	None

Welcome and declarations of conflict of interest

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting, being held at London South Bank University (LSBU), following the board strategy event. The Chair also welcomed Jane Hadfield and Mark McClennon to their first board meeting as new members of IfATE's board.
2. On behalf of the board, the Chair thanked LSBU for hosting the board over the last two days. The Chair also thanked IfATE officials for facilitating the smooth running of the board strategy event.
3. 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.

Minutes and actions from the last meeting

4. The board agreed the minutes from the last meeting, held on 21 September 2023.
5. The board reviewed the action log and noted the progress on the open actions and agreed to close those actions which had been satisfactorily concluded.

CEO report and finance update

6. JCOu presented the CEO report. Additionally, JCOu reported that as part of the planning process for 2024-25, IfATE had received a commission which was for arm's-length bodies to put forward a proposal for retaining a central London presence as part of the Government's Places for Growth strategy. The board confirmed its desire to retain a central London presence and identified the need to consider this in the context of flexible and hybrid working. JCOu confirmed IfATE, as well as all civil service organisations, had received Cabinet Office guidance that all staff should work from home for no more than 40% of their time, and senior civil servants for less than this.
7. JCOu provided an update regarding future T Levels and explained the timeline for these being offered by providers. JCOu also highlighted that when IfATE launches procurement for the second generation of T Levels, it is intending to include a new adaptive pricing model which may stimulate competition for each of the contracts.
8. The board questioned the progress update regarding the revision to the employer engagement model for the development and revision of occupational standards. JCOu explained that the leadership team had asked staff to review proposals to make it as attractive as could be for employers to work with IfATE and it was this which had caused the delay.
9. The Chair invited DW to update the board on finance matters. DW commented on the key variances between the actual expenditure and year to date budget. DW summarised the differences between the full year forecast and full year budget noting the lower than budgeted expenditure on T Level contracts and capital expenditure on leases.

Update on IfATE's approach to headcount reduction

10. JCoU set out the work which IfATE has undertaken to date. This has included talking to staff to identify potential efficiencies across the organisation as well as efficiencies through the investment in increasing the digitisation of more processes. The board questioned whether there was an opportunity for IfATE to stop doing certain things, for example, any work which could be undertaken using a partnership model with the partner undertaking the work on IfATE's behalf.
11. The board was keen to understand the implications to IfATE being able to deliver its core services. JCoU confirmed IfATE would ensure that resource for delivering core services would be protected. The board was keen to ensure that IfATE did not lose capability unnecessarily.
12. The board asked what would happen if IfATE exceeded its delegated budget. Several scenarios could play out, including the possibility of DfE agreeing to adjust the delegated budget in line with the forecasts submitted by IfATE or the NAO qualifying its audit opinion on IfATE's annual report and accounts. The board felt this issue of managing within the delegated budget was particularly important, given that it is possible that future pay awards could differ from the planning assumptions used to set delegated budgets. JCoU agreed to revisit the budget assumptions regarding future pay awards and update the board at the next meeting.
13. The board also recommended looking to the future and what work IfATE would be undertaking and focus on this. The board offered support and assistance to the leadership team to develop this line of thinking further.

Review of IfATE's governance arrangements

14. JCoU set out the proposal contained in the paper. The board recognised and agreed with the principles in the paper to ensure the continued evolution of the IfATE board as IfATE itself continued to mature. JCoU explained that in reviewing the board and committees, our agreement with DfE required IfATE to have a remuneration committee and an audit and risk assurance committee.
15. The board considered whether there was an opportunity for the board to gain further assurance regarding IfATE's products, which currently was one of the functions of the Approvals, Policy & Assurance Committee (APAC). The board discussed the merits of APAC and were keen to continue interacting with key stakeholders such as employers and learners. The board requested that the terms of reference for APAC be re-visited ensuring the focus on IfATE's products be retained.
16. The board discussed and agreed that the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee (ARAC) be retained in its current form but be flexible in attendance from those board members who do not currently sit on ARAC. There was agreement for the terms of reference to also be reviewed.
17. The board debated the appropriateness of continuing with the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC). The board were of the view that the initial objectives of the EDIC had been met, with the positive work IfATE had undertaken and the publication of IfATE's EDI strategy. The board agreed to close the Committee but required that in its place, IfATE should complete a regular review against progress on the strategy with the results being reported to the board, directly, or to a committee on an annual basis. The board also

agreed a nominated board member undertake the role of employee champion to ensure the employee voice is heard at board level and that appropriate whistleblowing arrangements would be in place.

18. The board requested that a revised governance model be presented to the board at the next meeting in January.

Ofqual's perspective and priorities

19. The Chair welcomed Sir Ian Bauckham, Ofqual's current Chair and incoming interim Chief Regulator to the meeting. Sir Ian set out Ofqual's functions as the statutory regulator for qualifications in England to the board. He explained Ofqual's role regarding the securing of standards for regulated qualifications, over time and across the awarding organisations it also regulates.
20. Sir Ian welcomed the opportunity for both IfATE and Ofqual to be involved in the development of the Advanced British Standard (ABS) and noted both organisations' differing functions and specialisms.
21. The board and Sir Ian discussed other opportunities which the introduction of ABS could deliver and agreed it would be beneficial to all for IfATE and Ofqual's boards to continue engaging with each other, as well as the strong existing operational connections the organisations have. On behalf of the board, the Chair thanked Sir Ian for joining the meeting in person.

Matters arising from the papers for information and any other business

22. The board asked whether considering the budget and headcount challenges IfATE will face in the next 12 months, it may be appropriate for a board working group to be established. JCoU agreed to consider this and report back to the board.
23. The Chair requested that KRM feedback to DfE colleagues on the board's concerns regarding the challenges IfATE may face regarding delivery capability considering the scenarios discussed during the item on headcount reduction.
24. RN informed the board that Ofqual had made a request for its logo to be included on apprenticeship certificates. He informed the board that the leadership team would consider the request and make a recommendation to the board at the right time.
25. The Chair thanked the board for their time and confirmed the next meeting would be held on 31 January.

Author	Secretariat, Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education
Date created	23 November 2023
Version	Final