

MINUTES

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting title:	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board
Meeting date:	21 September 2023
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE (the Chair); Dr Kate Barclay; Dayle Bayliss; John Cope; Jennifer Coupland (JCou); Sir Peter Estlin; Dame Fiona Kendrick; Sir Robin Millar CBE; Neil Morrison; 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); Carmel Grant, Deputy Director, Commissioning & Development (CG) (item 6); Jonathan Mitchell, Deputy Director, Portfolio & Partnerships (JM) (item 8); Phil Scullion, Head of Communications & External Affairs (PS) (item 8); Simon Love, Head of Governance.
Other stakeholders present:	Kate Ridley-Moy, Director of Apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps (KRM); Craig Myers, DfE Deputy Director, T Level Policy (via teleconference); Head of Creative Service, MHP Group (item 8); Head of Strategy, MHP Group (item 8); Design Director, MHP Group (item 8).
Apologies:	None

Item 1. Welcome and declarations of conflict of interest

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting. The Chair asked the board to join her in thanking Jessica Leigh Jones for her service to the board over the last five years following her resignation. The Chair also asked the board to thank Dayle Bayliss for her support during her three years on the board as this was her last board meeting before her term ends on 31 October.
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 board agreed the minutes from the last meeting, held on 19 July 2023.
4. The board reviewed the action log. KM noted there had been progress made on all open actions, some of which IfATE expect to conclude in the near future.

Item 3. CEO, finance and strategic risk update

5. JCo presented the CEO report and reported IfATE had held a successful meeting with the Secretary of State regarding the second generation of T Levels. IfATE will launch the process in November.
6. JCo also reported on the work being undertaken regarding the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE). The board queried the number of qualifications or products which could be impacted by the introduction of the LLE. The Chair requested that the DfE LLE lead be invited to a future board meeting to provide further detail regarding the policy position.
7. The board gave positive feedback regarding the significant level of media activity IfATE had undertaken on T Levels results day and acknowledged the substantial work which had gone into making the day a success. The board asked how staff were feeling. JCo responded that overall, staff were feeling generally okay. IfATE had undertaken a recent survey of staff satisfaction levels. Overall, there had been a slight increase but not as much as the senior team would have liked.
8. The board questioned the information provided in the finance update. DW set out the context of the current financial position for IfATE and acknowledged that, going forward, the budget, both for the rest of this financial year, and 2024-25 could become challenging. The senior team and DfE were discussing the situation to identify available options and workable solutions.

Item 4. Learner story

9. The board heard from a student from Havant & South Downs College who is studying the Health T Level. The student is in their second year, currently on their industry placement working and shadowing in a children's A&E department. The student detailed their experience, highlighting the more practical nature of the qualification. The board asked the student several questions about their experience and were pleased to hear the student talk so positively. The student plans to enrol on an apprenticeship when they finish the T Level. The board thanked the student for their honest reflection and for their time.

10. The board reflected on what they had heard from the student and identified opportunities to be explored further regarding the industry placement element of the T Level.

Item 5. T Level awarding organisation risk

11. The Chair welcomed Carmel Grant (CG) to the meeting. CG introduced the item, highlighting key elements of the paper, including a number of risks, some of which extend beyond awarding organisation (AO) risks. CG emphasised that the reforms in the post-16 space had resulted in some unexpected outcomes, for example, the number of submissions IfATE received in the first approval window for level 3 qualifications.
12. The board enquired as to whether the design of the T Level qualification was too academic. Some feedback received highlighted the volume of content within the qualification itself, and that assessment burden was also an issue in some T Levels. CG confirmed that several changes to the qualifications were already in-flight. The board questioned whether there was appetite from DfE for structural changes to the T Level and CG confirmed there was.
13. The board questioned the opportunity to learn lessons from the first generation of T Levels. CG confirmed that lessons learned had been considered from each wave, so in the case of a few occupational specialisms which had seen low or no demand, these were not being taken forward in the next iteration. The board were of the view two-way engagement was needed, between employers and providers and vice versa.
14. RN highlighted feedback from AOs who had used more resources compared to that which AOs had provided in their bids. The board questioned the financial model which had been developed and whether the model used was appropriate in an education context. The board noted there are risks attached with putting a new product to market but again highlighted the need to ensure there is strong demand for the product. The board considered the various aspects to demand, for example, the strength of careers advice and management, as well as various other factors. The board noted that strong demand for T Levels from employers, providers and students could also increase the potential number of AOs bidding to offer a T Level.
15. The board were reassured to learn that, in the event an AO experienced a financial issue, students would not be disadvantaged as there were tried and tested methods to address a situation of this nature. The board welcomed the news that generation 2 contracts would be longer than the first-generation contracts to give AOs additional commercial certainty. The board were reassured to hear that feedback from students studying T Levels was overwhelmingly positive which aligned with the student who the board had heard from in the previous agenda item.
16. The board were keen to understand the available options to increase demand, both in terms of student voice as well as provider and employer engagements. IfATE colleagues were asked to explore this with DfE colleagues and for the board to receive an update at its next meeting.

Item 6. IfATE strategy reflection

17. Beth Chaudhary (BC) and Rachel Cooper (RC) introduced this item as a preliminary discussion ahead of the board strategy event in November. BC highlighted the three-year plan. IfATE was at the mid-way point of this plan and posed the question as to what else should IfATE be including in the second half. Additionally, there are the current financial

year's key performance indicators (KPIs). The board discussed the appropriateness of the measures and questioned IfATE's impact on the system and how it knows it is making a difference, suggesting this could be a focus area for future discussions. The Chair asked if board members had further observations, they should provide feedback to the senior team.

Item 7. Brand Strategy

18. The Chair welcomed Jonathan Mitchell (JM), Phil Scullion (PS) and representatives from MHP, the consultants IfATE have procured to develop and advise on IfATE's brand strategy.
19. JM briefly set out the process and work which IfATE and MHP had undertaken since the board had received an update at July's meeting and handed over to the consultants to present their findings with the board. The consultants explained they had spoken with several stakeholders and were seeking approval on four aspects: brand strategy, value proposition, brand values and next steps.
20. The board considered the proposals put forward by MHP. There was broad support for the overall approach with the proposed brand strategy and brand values being well received by the board. The board requested that the value proposition be subject to further stress testing with employers to ensure it will be effective.
21. JCo set out the next steps and the priorities to ensure the maximum productivity is achieved in the time left with MHP. As the approach must be finalised at the end of October, there would be no further opportunity for between MHP and the board before the next meeting. The board, therefore requested IfATE colleagues provide a further update at the November meeting.

Item 8. Matters arising from the papers for information and any other business

22. The board commented that the papers for this meeting would have benefited from additional analysis. The Chair asked for any specific feedback to be given to IfATE colleagues.
23. The board noted there was an opportunity for it to re-structure the Annual Report & Accounts which would be laid before Parliament in June 2024. Board members were asked to give thought to how IfATE could evidence its achievements.
24. The Chair presented Dayle Bayliss with a gift to mark her final board meeting and confirmed the next meeting would be held as part of the board strategy event on 15 November at London South Bank University.

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