

Minutes of September 2017 meeting

Present: Norman Sharp, Chair, Tove Bull, Barbara Brittingham, Robert Henthorn, Rita McAllister, Frank Quinault, Erna Sigurðardóttir, Andrée Surssock and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson.

1. Introduction of new student member (Henthorn) and new student observer (Sigurðardóttir). The chair clarified that students are acting in their personal capacity and not representing their constituent organisations when serving as Quality Board members. Chair also clarified the confidentiality rules with respect to the discussions of the Board.
2. The minutes of the May 2017 Quality Board meeting were adopted without amendments.
3. The Board discussed the dissemination of print copies of the Handbook (HB) to QA agencies. Paper copies of HB will be disseminated informally at the General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), which Sigurðsson will attend in October. Copies will also be sent to the University of Faroe Islands and the Greenland Ministry of Education.
4. A press release will be developed to announce the publication of the QEF2 Handbook. The preface on p. 4 could serve as a guide for that. University World News is a possible outlet, as well as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
5. The Board agreed to buy the url www.qef.is. Sigurðsson will attend to that before the QB November meeting.
6. Sigurðsson provided an update on the Icelandic translation of the Handbook. It is expected to be ready before the Quality Council workshop and conference scheduled for mid-November.
5. Sigurðsson provided an update on a student guide for QEF2 that the National Union for Icelandic Students (NIS) has been working on, with input from Sigurðsson. Sigurðardóttir volunteered to participate in the writing of the guide and will contact the union.
6. The Board discussed the university Key Statistics of the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC), and whether they will be comparable across the whole cycle of QEF2. Sigurðsson will contact the relevant staff at MESC, and find out what the institutions are doing with those data.
7. Sigurðsson provided an update on the Quality Council. Magnús Diðrik Baldursson has resigned from his position as chair because he is no longer Quality Director for the University of Iceland. Áslaug Helgadóttir is now serving as Quality Director for the University of Iceland, and will be their representative at the Council. A new Chair for the Council will be elected at its next meeting later this month. The Quality Council has scheduled a workshop in November on Subject-Level Reviews, with half the agenda devoted to the topic of reporting on the quality of management of research.

8. The Board prepared the discussion that was planned between Una Strand Viðarsdóttir from MESC, and Sharp and Sursock and clarified the conditions required to apply for ENQA membership.

9. Sursock presented an analysis of the extent of compliance with the ESG, in the perspective of applying to ENQA membership.

In sum, the following are issues requiring attention:

- QEF needs a mission statement
- QEF needs to enlarge the circle of stakeholders to include employers
- QEF has a legal basis but no legal status as an entity and no corporate identity
- QEF needs to develop system/thematic reviews
- The Board should have a say in the recruitment and evaluation of staff
- There should be sufficient human and financial resources

All agreed that this analysis was very important and much needed. A suggestion was put forth to create a working group about a future ENQA application. This could be two members from the Board, two from the Quality Council, as well as the student representatives (member and observer).

The Board agreed to apply for ENQA affiliate membership for calendar year 2018, if possible. Sigurðsson will follow up with ENQA on timeline and inform Una Strand Viðarsdóttir at MESC about this plan.

10. The Board discussed the need for a manual/handbook for members of the QB. Sharp proposed to present a draft paper for the November meeting of the Board on this topic, and Brittingham will share the handbook of her organisation.

11. The Board discussed the induction of new members. Sigurðsson will mail to Phil Winn and Ellen Hazelkorn the QEF Handbook in anticipation of the upcoming November meeting. The Board will organize a 90-minute orientation to new members on Sunday preceding the meeting on the following topics: the Icelandic HE landscape (Sigurðsson), QEF2 (Sharp) and practical aspects such as fees, travel, per diem, etc. (Sigurðsson). Sigurðsson will include the two new members in a poll to plan the 2018 Board meetings. At the November meeting, the Board will also assign which board member goes to which institution for the 2018 annual meetings.

12. Sigurðsson provided a summary of plans from all HEIs in Iceland for the timing of their Subject-Level Reviews. In light of discussions on these suggestions, the following will be communicated to the HEIs, through the Secretariat:

A. Timing of Institution-Wide Reviews:

- Reykjavik University: Autumn 2018
- Hólar University College: Autumn 2019

- University of Iceland: Spring 2020
- Bifröst University: Autumn 2020
- University of Akureyri: Spring 2021
- Icelandic Academy of the Arts: Autumn 2021
- Agricultural University of Iceland: Autumn 2022

B. Timing of Mid-Term Progress Reports:

- Reykjavik University: Spring 2022
- Hólar University College: Spring 2023
- University of Iceland: Spring 2023
- Bifröst University: Spring 2023
- University of Akureyri: Spring 2018
- Icelandic Academy of the Arts: Spring 2019
- Agricultural University of Iceland: Spring 2019

C. Subject-Level Review Plans: institutions will receive comments for the Board as required.

Sigurðsson will create (1) a QEF calendar containing dates for all Institution-Wide Reviews, Subject-Level Reviews, Year-on Reports and Mid-Term Progress Reports and (2) individual calendars for each institution.

13. The Board discussed possible IWRs Chairs. They should be senior people, preferably with some experience in Iceland. There might be a possibility for some chairs do two IWRs for the sake of consistency.

14. The Board discussed the training of Institution-Wide Review teams in QEF2. Interactive sessions should be included, and training should include elements on how to respond to various challenges that may arise during the process. All review team members need to be trained specifically in conducting an enhancement-led review; the coverage of research will most likely need a special session. A session for preparing the site visit should last at least half a day.

The Board Manager will provide most of the training, with possible support from the team chair. A session providing an overview of the Icelandic HE sector would ideally have co-presenters from the Quality Council and LIS. The Chair of Quality Council could present the experience of previous reviews. Sigurðardóttir expressed an interest in contributing to training the students and will collaborate with LIS on that.

Sigurðsson will develop a plan for evaluating the training's effectiveness, looking towards Kirkpatrick's four criteria for example. Sigurðsson will prepare cost estimates of various training options for Chairs and Teams (including training in other parts of Europe rather than in Reykjavik) and present at the November Board meeting.

15. The Board discussed site visits and report writing for the Institution-Wide Reviews. A very brief review manual could be developed, with sections for example on code of conduct and the report writing process. The report writing process would involve designated primary and secondary responsibilities for chapters. Primary person writes, and secondary reads and gives feedback before it goes to the Chair. Students can be secondary reads on the student learning experience sections.

16. The Board discussed the website and a new communication strategy. Sigurðsson will prepare a PowerPoint template and electronic letterhead for the Board.

17. Agenda items for the November Board meeting were suggested. They included the Research Evaluation Advisory Committee; the Board conference in May 2018; milestones towards an ENQA application; sector-wide issues and Board-led thematic/system-wide reviews.

18. As outgoing Chair, Sharp welcomed Sursock as the new Chair the Quality Board and thanked Bull and McAllister for their service, emphasising that the Board has been lucky to have them and that it has been a privilege working with them. Sigurðsson read a note from Magnús Diðrik Baldursson, outgoing Chair of the Quality Council, in which he thanked Sharp, Bull and McAllister for their invaluable contributions to the Icelandic higher education, their professionalism and farsightedness.