

Meeting of the Icelandic Quality Board for Higher Education

January 31, 2016.

Present: Norman Sharp (NS), Tove Bull (TB), Barbara Brittingham (BB), Rita McAllister (RM), and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson (SÓS).

Present via phone: Frank Quinault (FQ),

1. QB decided to give HUC an opportunity to alleviate Limited Confidence in its November 2015 meeting. RM gave a brief overview of the submitted documents from HUC. BB gave an update on BU's materials submitted for alleviation of limited confidence.
2. Discussion about procedure for alleviation of limited confidence.
3. Conversation about QB transition arrangements.
4. Discussion of a possible Memorandum of Understanding between QB and MESC. Suggestions made about alternative wording of "Purpose", "Communication", and "Responsibilities". It was also noted that the Handbook for QEF2 will have a role in defining the responsibilities of the QB and MESC.
5. Magnús Diðrik Baldursson (MDB) joins meeting., Discussion of QEF2 handbook draft. NS introduced the document and explained how the document was created, for example based on documents prepared for other meetings. Discussion followed about the accessibility of QEF2 draft Handbook in terms of language, and criteria for judgments in the draft. NS also cited the fact that QEF1 had resulted largely in satisfaction in the Icelandic Higher Education sector, and that he would prefer to stick with with the principles established in QEF1 as much as possible. Those sentiments were echoed by other QB members.
6. Discussion about SLRs in QEF ensued. Discussion about whether executive summaries to be published should be published, and who would write them? MDB suggested that any or all of the following could be published: 1) external expert remarks, 2) executive summary, 3) basic data set, 4) action plan. RM suggested that no self-reflection be included, but general strengths and action plans published, that would be signed off by external. BB suggested that the published information could be simply a description of the SLR process in that given unit, and then in the next round (QEF3), more information could be included if the QB, HEIs, and MESC want to.

February 2, 2016.

Present: Norman Sharp (NS), Tove Bull (TB), Barbara Brittingham (BB), Rita McAllister (RM), and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson (SÓS).

Present via phone: Frank Quinault (FQ),

1. NS read appointment letter from MESC. Hellen and Una and Stefán met with NS on Monday Feb. 1.

2. HUC alleviation of limited confidence on student learning experience. TB and RL came back late afternoon, and reported on their meeting with HUC. NS moved that HUC should get limited confidence lifted. All QB members agreed.

3. BB reports on meeting with BU. Board agrees that BU will be lifted to a judgment of confidence for standards of degrees and awards.

4. Discussion about the state of the HE sector. Management of Quality and Standards has become more public, consistent, and better. Still a number of issues that require discussion that are common across HEIs. The QB agrees that a report on QEF1 and challenges ahead in QEF2 should be drafted. Some possible themes and discussion points include:

A. Distance learning. BB suggests that it may be useful to think of resource sharing. Maybe there is an opportunity to do a review of each university and highlight opportunities for resource sharing, and involve externals. Would be good to have somebody who has been on many campuses already, if possible.

B. Benefits of collaboration, for small amounts of money. NS wants to identify good examples of collaboration. TB notes that QC also needs administrative help, preferably from somebody that could be neutral.

C. FQ argues that MA and PhD. programs should be a theme in any HEI report from the QB, as well as postgraduate supervision. TB argues that criteria for accreditation for doctoral studies have to be addressed, and need to be clear.

D. RM suggests that outreach should be another theme for sector-wide analysis.

E. RM argues that it would be important to highlight areas that are most improved, like assessment, staff development, and student counseling. NS agrees.

F. TB argues that externality in general should be a theme in the report.

G. NS suggests a chapter at the end of the report on the Quality Council and a chapter on LIS.

H. SOS raised the issue of lack of resources in Icelandic for quality work. He mentioned requests for more training/resources for SLR preparation in terms of action and strategic planning. BB stated that there is an opportunity for the

universities to visit each other and learn and share. NS noted that HEIs need help in identifying whom to look for help. The Secretariat should not be too much of a resource, and the QB needs to help the HEIs through money to discover resources. At least some of it has to be in the language of Icelandic.

5. NS provides updates on his February 1 meetings with MESC; LIS; Jón Atli Benediktsson; and Einar Hreinsson and Magnús Diðrik Baldursson about QEF2 drafting work.

6. Magnús Diðrik Baldursson (MDB) joins meeting. Discussion of QEF2 draft, led by NS. NS explains that the idea of annexes is ultimately is to keep the main document short, and to not get caught up in detail. In addition, annexes are more handy for groups of students, reviewers, etc. At the end of the day, annexes may have a different status than the handbook main text, but this needs to be clearly stated at the beginning of each annex. NS will draft a mission statement, in response to a suggestion made by Andrée Sursock at a previous meeting. Discussion of changes to draft text follows. In terms of criteria for judgments, NS suggested that a reference framework could be created that teams could use in considering their judgments. That framework would have detail from ESG, and potentially could have reference or resemblance to Finnish or other models. NS noted that this will ensure consistency across IWR judgments.