

### **Minutes of the Board meeting, 4-5 March 2019, 9.00 am to 17.30 pm**

**In attendance:** Andrée Sursock (AS), chair, Barbara Brittingham (BB), Ellen Hazelkorn (EH), Frank Quinault (FQ), Norman Sharp (NS), Philip Winn (PW), Áslaug Helgadóttir (ÁH) until 11.15 on November 26, Erna Sigurðardóttir (ES) and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson (SÓS).

#### **4 March**

1. Agenda was approved, with item 14 (discussion about stakeholder meeting) moved, for practical reasons to the afternoon of 5 March.
2. Minutes of the November 2018 Board meeting approved without amendments.
3. Updates provided on Board business and Icelandic Higher Education sector since last Board meeting in November 2018.
  - NS is part of a working group to create a quality assurance framework in Greenland and will present on the Quality Board at a seminar at University of Greenland on 20 March 2019. Skúli Skúlason from Hólar University College will present on internal quality assurance at that same seminar.
  - The Board congratulated the Icelandic University of the Arts (IUA) for its strategic document.
  - SÓS updated the Board on a new Rector at the Agricultural University of Iceland.
4. Discussion about the conference to be co-hosted this year by the Board and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Board discussed possible dates, keynote speakers, discussants and chairs. The overarching theme of the conference is *Higher Education – Its Relevance to Students and Society*, with two sub-themes: assuring quality in work placements and higher education engaging with society. Board members will be kept updated about future developments of the agenda.
5. The Board was pleased to receive an update from ÁH on the Quality Council's work. The Council identified 21 possible quality indicators for universities and defined them. They included indicators for student progression, HR, research and social dimension. The Council plans to reduce that number as it continues this work. The Board looks forward to discussing this work at the next joint meeting of the Council and the Board. Some suggestions by the Board for these indicators included projecting trends; looking at qualitative data at school level (e.g., Top-5 publications, Top-5 impacts); and using these data for informal benchmarking within the Council. The Board also stressed that there is a need for core statistics and overlap with MESC is not a problem as long as indicators are defined in the same way. Finally, the Board suggested that it may work best to have a common set of indicators, with supplemental indicators that are specific to individual universities. The Board supported the notion that it is more important that these data work for the institutions in their internal quality work and national benchmarking than that they form a comprehensive standardised data set.

6. The Board discussed the new Regulation on Quality Assurance in Icelandic universities and the points that varies with the QEF *Handbook*. The Board noted the following inconsistencies: to ask the institutions for a report three months after the publication of an IWR when the *Handbook* requires a Year-on Report and referring to 'research' rather than 'management of research'. In addition, the new regulation maintains the notion of a three-year student appointment to the Board, which appears to be too long.
7. The Board received a request from University of Iceland for guidance on reviewing central support units. The Board discussed a draft guidance note as a response to this request. The guidance note was approved with minor changes. It will be discussed by the Quality Council and the final version will be published on the Board's website.
8. The Board discussed a request from University of Iceland to review management of research at the level of school in addition to unit-level in subject-level review. ÁH explained the rationale for this proposal, which was mainly that units rarely have research strategies, but schools do. The process would be the same as described in the QEF2 Handbook for individual units, and in accordance with the guidance note on reporting on management of research in SLR. Each school would send these reports to the team of externals for the SLRs in that school for comment. After ÁH left the meeting, the Board approved this request, and noted that it would have the additional benefit of looking at interdisciplinary research. The Board will respond formally to the University of Iceland and emphasise that it would be very important not to lose the link with the individual SLRs and the connection between research and teaching & learning.
9. Discussion of the minutes from the November-2019 meeting of REAC. There was no quorum at that meeting. However, all items that were approved provisionally in the meeting were subsequently sent to absent members and their approval secured. The main discussion had been on the guidance note for reporting on management of research in SLR, and REAC had agreed a draft, which will go to the Quality Council for consultation. The Board discussed the role of REAC in Iceland as a stakeholder in research management policy work and research evaluation in Iceland. PW will bring ideas to the next REAC meeting about possible approaches to clarify that role, including the possibility of assisting in the roll-out and implementation of a national CRIS system for Iceland.
10. MESC asked the Board to conduct an impact assessment of the Icelandic Research Fund. PW introduced a draft proposal and explained that this project would be important in the context of the upcoming CRIS roll-out in Iceland and the evaluation of research management in IWR. The budget was carefully constructed, because there are risks that this type of exercise tends to snowball and become more expensive. PW, AS and SÓS will continue to work on the draft and send to MESC once it is ready.
11. The Board discussed a draft 2018 annual report of QB activities. The Board agreed to add a section on the Quality Council and the list of events in which the Board was represented during the year.

12. SÓS brought to the table a question from a Director of Quality Management at one of the Icelandic universities about whether the annual conference would include a discussion of IWR outcomes for each of the universities, as was done in QEF1. The Board decided that the annual conferences should not be about IWRs. However, SÓS will discuss with the Quality Council the possibility of having short two-hour conference/events subsequent to each of the IWRs.
13. Una Strand Viðarsdóttir (USV) from MESC joined the meeting. The agenda for this part of the meeting included the following items: special reviews, hosting the Board; status of students on the Board; update on REAC and Board developments.

PW briefed USV on the work of REAC, including the guidance note on reporting on management of research in SLR that USV had commented.

USV reported that she was not intimately involved in the implementation of CRIS, but that there were funds set aside for rolling-out the system. The plan is to roll out and implement CRIS during the next academic year but this would be a gradual process. USV will send roll-out plan to PW and inform her colleague at MESC about REAC's interest in contributing to the implementation of CRIS. SOS will invite USV's colleague from MESC and a staff member from the National Library to the next REAC meeting to discuss if and how REAC can contribute to this work.

AS presented to USV the Board Constitution, Board Handbook, Board's Guidelines for IWR Teams, IWR training materials, a number of guidance notes to assist in implementing QEF2, as well as a draft Board strategy and mission statement. AS asked for feedback from USV on the Board constitution, and if MESC's legal department could review it as well.

## **5 March**

14. Discussion of the Board's strategy and action plan. The approved draft will be up for consultation with the Chair of the Rectors' Conference, MESC and the Quality Council.
15. Discussion of logistical issues surrounding the establishment of operational independence of the Board. IT, financial management and document management are some of the issues that need resolving. SOS will look into options for transferring Board website and consult the Quality Council on whether the language of the site should be English and Icelandic, or if English is sufficient. The Board agreed that updating the website should be a priority. AS and SOS will ask MESC if excess 2018 Board funds will carry over to 2019 for the upcoming ENQA review. The Board will explore possibly renewing its logo and branding as soon as the budget situation becomes clearer. The Board agreed that it should publish a newsletter, for example every 3 months. The language of the newsletter needs to be discussed with the Quality Council, but the main audience would be Icelandic. If written in English, the newsletter could be shared with ENQA membership, Greenland, Faroe Islands, and possibly other countries or stakeholders.

16. Discussion of 2019 annual meetings. AS will withdraw from annual meetings so she can deliberate on IWRs for all universities in QEF2 and thus ensure consistency of treatment. On May 13, BB will go to Hólar University College; PW to the University of Iceland and Icelandic University of the Arts; and NS to University of Akureyri to hold a one-day meeting to discuss their Mid-Term Progress Report as per Paragraph 101 in the QEF2 Handbook. On September 18, EH will go to the Agricultural University of Iceland and Bifröst University. On November 13, NS will go to Reykjavík University, possibly along with a new Board member.
17. Three guidance notes were adopted and will be dated 5 March 2019. These guidance notes serve to clarify the following paragraphs in the QEF2 Handbook: 26, 49, 73-74, 88.
18. Discussion about meetings with employer and job market stakeholders in Iceland. These meetings would have two goals: (i) for the Board to know more about the Icelandic context, and (ii) to understand better the relationship between universities and working life. SOS will contact *Innovation Centre Iceland*, *Startup Iceland* and *SA - the Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise* (an umbrella organisation for many employer associations) to inquire about their interest in a meeting.
19. Discussion about the Board's self-evaluation process for ENQA review. The Board's self-evaluation report will be written by NS and FQ; the student member will be heavily involved in sections on student engagement and be first commentator on all other sections. The report should be approximately 40-60 pages, not including annexes. Board agrees that FQ and NS will begin the writing of the first draft with SOS providing secretarial support. ES will serve as student member of the drafting team. The rest of the Board will receive the first draft when it is finalised and provide comments. In May, NS, FQ and ES may meet an extra day in Iceland to work on the draft.
20. Discussion about SLRs and what should be done if SLRs are not delivered on schedule. SOS will write to universities to remind them that the Board has not received the report(s), and ask for an update on the delayed SLRS and the new deadline. SOS will also check that SLR summaries are posted on the universities' websites.
21. ES leaves meeting. Update on the Institution-Wide Review (IWR) of Reykjavík University. Chair Alan Davidson will visit RU on March 27 to discuss an agenda of the visit and request additional information to be added as annexes to the Reflective Analysis as appropriate. The site visit of the entire review team is scheduled for May 14-16.
22. Discussion of IWR of Hólar University College. Three international members have been appointed for the review team of Hólar University College: Team will visit Hólar University College on November 19-21.
23. Discussion of IWR of University of Iceland. The University has identified three peer institutions. The date of the visit will be discussed with the university (between February and April 2020).

24. FQ announced that he wishes to retire from the Board, effective after the May meeting. If needed, he could attend the September meeting as well. AS thanked FQ for his work on the Board and wished him well in all future endeavours. These sentiments were echoed by all those present. AS introduced a document the profile of a new member, along with possible names. The new member should ideally be Nordic, have senior experience in a university, be committed to the enhancement approach, have experience with reviews and current experience in managing quality and standards at a university.

Meeting adjourned at 17:30.