

Minutes, Board meeting, 15 May 2019

In attendance: Andrée Sursock (AS), chair, Barbara Brittingham (BB) Norman Sharp (NS), Philip Winn (PW), Erna Sigurðardóttir (ES), Áslaug Helgadóttir (ÁH) (joined at 11:00, Points 6-12), Elísabet M Andrésdóttir (EMA) for the minutes (up to Point 12 below).

Apologies received: Ellen Hazelkorn (EH), Frank Quinault (FQ) and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson (SÓS).

1. The agenda was adopted without modification. ÁH will join at 11 am, when the private part of the Board ends, starting with Point 6 below.
2. Minutes from the last meeting were approved without modification.
3. Annual meetings: BB and PW/ES gave an update on the annual meetings held at Hólar University College (HUC) and Iceland University of the Arts (IUA), respectively. IUA mid-term report will be posted on the web as soon as some typos are corrected.
4. Board matters:
 - 4.1 The Board discussed the schedule of its September meeting:
 - On 16 September, PW will attend the Annual Meeting at the University of Iceland and chair the REAC meeting in the afternoon. EH will go to Bifrost for the Annual meeting.
 - The Self-Evaluation group (NS, FQ and ES, joined by BB) will meet during that time.
 - The Board meeting will take place on 17 September. The meeting with the rector of RU is tentatively planned for the morning of 17 September.
 - On 18 September, NS will visit the University of Akureyri for their mid-term review, and EH will visit the Agricultural University.
 - 4.2 The mid-term report of the Agricultural University is due now. To ensure an up-to-date report, however, the University is proposing to postpone its delivery until September, two weeks before the scheduled Annual Meeting to ensure that it is up-to-date. The Board agreed to this postponement.
 - 4.3 If an Annual Meeting falls just as a university is preparing its Reflective Analysis, Board members are requested to refrain from commenting and providing feedback on any draft and SÓS will remind the universities of the *Guidance note on Paragraphs 73-74*. Although the annual meetings could not be used to discuss the content of the Reflective Analysis, it is possible to discuss generic issues related to the IWR and the Reflective Analysis processes.
 - 4.4 The IWR report of Reykjavik University (RU) will be available in about six weeks; the Board needs to discuss it and organise a meeting with the Rector. Because of the summer break, the Board agreed to hold a discussion of the report and the confidence judgments it contains, via a conference call in the summer to which NS will not participate since he led the most recent Annual Meeting at RU. The meeting with the Rector is scheduled on 17 September; NS will attend that meeting because the

report would have been finalised by then (see *Guidance note on Paragraph 88*). The purpose of that meeting is to exchange views on how the IWR process went and the plans of the University in taking the recommendations forward.

4.5 Refreshing the Board. A prospective Board member was interviewed by NS and SÓS (ES could not join the conference call). The Minister will receive that name as soon as LIS identifies the student member.

4.6 The Board discussed the idea of appointing vice chairs for the Board and REAC in order to consolidate the working of these two groups. The vice chair should be able to replace the chair as required; therefore, s/he would participate in developing the agenda and preparing documents for the meetings. In both cases, the vice chair would rotate after four meetings. Board members decided that the vice chair of REAC would rotate between the two QC members, starting with Skúli Skúlason, who is the official QC representative on REAC. PW will present this to REAC on the next day. The Board vice chair will be Norman Sharp.

4.7 Board meetings in 2020: 2-3 March, 4-5 May, 7-8 September, 9-10 November. REAC will meet on the following Wednesday in each case.

5. Update on IWR

5.1. RU: The preliminary visit of the IWR team chair to RU went well. The panel chair used the occasion to discuss the Reflective Analysis and ask for additional documents. The training of the team went well. Questions were raised regarding the links of Annex 11 to QEF. The team chair proposed that each team member be responsible for one section of the report, while he would ensure that enough evidence is collected to demonstrate how the university meet the requirements of Part 1 of the ESG. It was also suggested that the introduction to the RU report be used as a template for all other IWR reports. The introduction would identify what, in QEF, sits within the ESG (everything that has to do with teaching and learning) and what sits outside (the management of research).

5.2. HUC and UI: The Board approved the IWR teams for HUC and UI. Both teams have good gender, disciplinary and geographical balance and each includes one member from a peer institution identified by the respective university. Those teams are missing the student members. The Board is waiting to be closer to the date of the site visit to ask LIS to identify current students.

6. Update on sector matters:

6.1. The Board complimented the secretariat for the written update.

6.2. The Board discussed the Guidance Notes and wondered if posting them on the web was sufficient. Are the Guidance Notes reaching the targeted audience? There is limited evidence that they do. The planned newsletter could be used to remind QC and the universities of these Guidance Notes and request that they are distributed further in the universities. The secretariat should develop a mailing list with the help of QC: it should include the rector, vice rectors,

deans, heads of quality. QC needs to get the information to the relevant people at the right time and get the actual documents to the people who are creating material and need the guidance notes.

6.3. Annual Conference on 31 August: AS will speak during the formal opening and ES will replace her for the presentation scheduled at 10:30; the title of the session will be changed.

7. ENQA and EQAR: ENQA is in the process of developing a new strategy. It is reassessing its role as a gatekeeper and has requested a review of its agency review process. EQAR will be reviewed as well. The next ENQA general assembly will be in Armenia. Although the trip will be long and expensive, the Board will need to be represented given the importance of this strategic discussion. It is unclear at this stage what the ENQA developments and the EQAR review will mean for agencies that are in the pipeline for their review.

The Board agreed, tentatively, to file a formal request with ENQA for a review in December 2019 and request a visit in November 2020 to coincide with the Board meeting. This means that the self-evaluation report should be finalised by 31 July 2020. NS will take on the task of drafting the first preliminary draft with contributions from ES and FQ. Both BB and PW agreed to contribute to the drafting during the summer. The aim is to have a first draft ready for 8 November 2019. Depending on the progress made, the timing of the QB application to ENQA can be reassessed then.

8. Guidance note on substituting SLR with the report of a professional accreditor. AS will take on the task of rewriting it with the aim of showing that such a report is an integral part of, rather than a substitute to, a SLR.
9. Update on REAC and next meeting. PW reminded the Board that a note was sent to the Ministry showing how REAC can be involved in the implantation of CRIS. There are many issues that will need to be resolved. A representative from both MESC (who later cancelled) and the National Library will join the REAC meeting on the next day. The Board was informed that the Icelandic Research Fund will set aside some funding in order to co-fund international research projects in which Icelandic researchers are participating.
10. The Board was informed that two stakeholders instead of three will attend the meeting in the afternoon. The possibility of inviting QC to future meetings was discussed (but see the conclusion of Point 13 below).
11. The Board received a request from an Icelandic-US researcher to join the pool of IWR experts. The Board reasserted its policy that teams will comprise international experts and clarified that “international” rules out Icelandic nationals living abroad and foreign residents in Iceland, who do not qualify in order to avoid any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict of interest.
12. AOB
 - An overview of the SLRs to date was circulated. It showed how the secretariat is monitoring their production.

- ÁH gave a brief report about QC:
 - a. Two meetings have been held since the last Board meeting. The issue of coming up with a common set of indicators has been discussed. The challenges include coming up with a common terminology and translation of terms; translation seems to diverge a great deal from one institution to another. The discussion on indicators has now been postponed because a Nordic report on indicators will be available soon.
 - b. QC members shared information about progress with their SLRs and have agreed to also share information about the IWR process.

13. Meeting with external stakeholders

In attendance: Guðbjörg Hrönn Óskarsdóttir, Department Director, Innovation Center Iceland and manager of Iceland Aluminium Cluster, and Maria Guðmundsdóttir, Education Manager at the Travel Industry Association, Andrée Sursock, chair, Barbara Brittingham, Norman Sharp, Philip Winn, and Erna Sigurðardóttir.

Apologies were received from Ingi Björn Sigurðsson, Project Manager, Icelandic Startups.

Guðbjörg Hrönn Óskarsdóttir explained that strengthening links between the aluminium industry and universities is part of her responsibilities in promoting the Icelandic Aluminium Cluster. One of her goals is to bring attention to the universities that the aluminium sector, although very mature, is looking to create innovative solutions and, for that, it needs the universities. Industry are happy with the engineering graduates but there is an opportunity for universities to get ahead of the curve and focus on the next generation of solutions linked to increased automation in the sector.

The Cluster's links to universities include internships for students, the organisation of innovation days, and a focus on students' involvement in industry projects through an "idea bank". Industry post ideas that students can use for their final project. At the moment, there is no fixed structure for internships, but the Confederation of Industry would like to streamline them.

Maria Guðmundsdóttir's The Icelandic Travel Industry Association (SAF) promotes a holistic approach to education geared toward tourism, which is the most important economic sector in Iceland. At the moment, however, the university graduates are facing difficulties finding jobs in the sector. There is a mismatch between supply and demand and little room for university graduates, particularly if they have no business skills.

Developing practical skills and graduates at different levels of the NQF is a major goal of the association's project titled "Skills Center" (www.haefni.is). It has developed modules to address those needs. This was ben funded by the Ministry of Industry and has recently attracted the attention of MESC. There is a need to create a tourism college or a body to recognise those modules. The association would like to see a process for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in universities because 31% of employees in the sector are foreign; some of them come with (some) university-level education. There is also a need to do

outreach to schools and develop bridging programmes and more vocational and professional education for the tourism sector.

Generic background information on Iceland included the following:

- Entrepreneurs in Iceland tend to be older than in other countries. This has a positive side in that they come up with solutions to current needs that they have identified in industry.
- Gender issues: there is overall gender balance in both sectors but there is a higher proportion of males on the factory floor (aluminium) and in outdoor activities (tourism). In both cases, women are occupying desk jobs.
- Iceland is doing quite well in lifelong learning (LLL). There are seven government-funded centres distributed across the country and the universities are also offering LLL courses. SAF cooperates with them.
- Universities are willing to work with industry, but they need a matchmaker and funding incentives.
- Industry does not seem to be often represented in course reviews.
- There is no official body in charge of skills forecasting in Iceland.

The meeting concluded with a discussion about which organisations the Board could meet next year. Suggestions included the Ocean Cluster (lots of start-ups grouped in an incubator); the Geothermal Cluster; the Federation of Industry. (Earlier in the Board meeting, it was suggested that the Board meets with a group of recent university graduates.)

The Board was advised that a meeting of two hours in the afternoon was not very convenient to industry. It was suggested that pairs of Board members could be dispatched to meet in the offices of several organisations for one hour at a time rather than meet in the current format.