

Minutes, Board meeting of 13-14 November 2017

Present: Andrée Sursock, Chair (AS), Barbara Brittingham (BB), Robert Henthorn (RH), Ellen Hazelkorn (EH), Frank Quinault (FQ), Norman Sharp (NS), Erna Sigurðardóttir (ES), Philip Winn (PW), and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson (SÓS). Áslaug Helgadóttir (ÁH) on the morning of 13 November.

1. The Chair welcomes and introduces the new Quality Board members: Ellen Hazelkorn (Emeritus Professor and Director, Higher Education Policy Research Unit, Dublin Institute of Technology), and Philip Winn (Research Professor, Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences).

2. SÓS and NS provided an orientation of the Icelandic HE system and QEF2 for the new Board members.

3. Minutes from September 2017 Board meeting adopted.

4. The Board discussed possible complementary statistics to the Ministry Key Statistics gathered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC). For example, the complementary statistics could be on the social dimension of student data. Agreement was reached that asking for social dimension information should be part of the training of IWR teams and that the additional data should not be referred to as “QB indicators” because the data should be primarily useful to the institutions and policy makers. ÁH and SÓS will take up the discussion to the Quality Council, who should be driving this effort, and through the Council to the equality committees of the HEIs. The QB’s role is to ensure that the IWR evaluate how well the data are used. The issue of statistics could be the topic for a future Annual Conference.

5. Research Evaluation Advisory Committee (REAC): the first REAC meeting will coincide with the February 2018 meeting of the Board. Before the meeting, SÓS will circulate a note on funding structure for research in Iceland and on the various national and international funds open to Icelandic researchers. SÓS will work with PW (Chair of REAC) to get nominations for REAC members from the bodies listed in Annex 7 of the QEF2 Handbook. The nominations will be approved by the QB electronically.

Topics on the agenda will be the expectations of, and goals for, the core and extended models, and how to report the impact of research. Although the Board agreed that it is best left to the HEIs to develop that further, part of the remit of REAC will be to provide technical knowledge to the HEIs on this topic. REAC will have to provide units with some guidance on how to deal with interdisciplinarity, and on how to report on research strategy in the light of national and institutional priorities, etc.

In the first REAC meeting, it will be emphasised that, in creating REAC and including the management of research in QEF2, the Board was responding to pressure from the sector rather

than MESC. It should also be emphasised that the evaluation framework for research is kept deliberately broad in order to be able to incorporate and celebrate different kinds of outputs.

PW should attempt to meet the Rectors (or the Chair of the Rectors' Conference), the Quality Council, the Research Directors of the HEIs, and perhaps the Chair of the Science and Technology Policy Council, or her/his designee. Ideally, this would happen outside of the QB meetings. It would be best to synchronise the REAC and the QB meetings. This could happen either on the same dates, or 2-3 weeks before. Distance meetings could also be considered, if at all possible.

6. AS presented a document detailing actions needed to further ensure that QEF2 is in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, which is a prerequisite for passing the ENQA review and qualifying for the ENQA full membership.

6.1 For the activities that are commissioned from other parties and are not part of the QEF2 Handbook, it is necessary to clarify the principles to follow for such work. The Board decided to draft a document outlining those principles.

6.2 The following draft is provisionally agreed (further comments by email were requested):

The mission of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education is to safeguard the standards and promote and enhance the quality of teaching and research in Icelandic higher education through the application of its Quality Enhancement Framework.

The Quality Enhancement Framework rests on six principles:

- *supporting the autonomous higher education institutions in their management of quality and standards*
- *continuously enhancing the learning experience for all students in an inclusive way;*
- *involving students as partners in the learning process and as active participants in the assurance and enhancement of their learning to the partnership with students in their learning process and in the assurance and enhancement of their learning;*
- *being firmly rooted in the Icelandic context while maintaining an international perspective;*
- *working in partnership with all Icelandic stakeholders while retaining independence; and*
- *embracing transparency as an explicit value of the open consultative processes.*

6.3 A strategy is needed to complement the mission statement. This document would be prepared for the next Board meeting and will identify goals, objectives, priorities, and definitions/measures of success of QEF2 operations.

6.4 Board Handbook: This handbook will contain relevant information about laws and regulations related to HE and quality in Iceland. It should not replicate the QEF2 Handbook, but discuss relevant issues from the point of view of the Board, and give a clear message about the integrity of its processes, how the Board addresses conflict of interest, fairness, transparency, confidentiality, and what are the limits of the Board's involvement before, during and after the IWR process, Mid-Term Progress Reviews, annual meetings, etc. A Board constitution should be included in the Handbook. One central question is who can commission and dissolve the Board; this needs to be discussed with MESC. NS offered to continue to work on this handbook.

6.5 The Board discussed creating an advisory committee to the Board with representatives of employers and other stakeholders. The Board agreed to organise focus groups that would be composed of different categories of external stakeholders each year. The first focus group will be comprised of the current external stakeholders on university boards. The Board will inform MESC of this plan and will ask QC to provide the relevant names.

6.6 QEF2 Handbook press release: the Board agreed to explore different options for how to communicate more effectively, and perhaps involve students in that work.

7. ENQA affiliate application deadline: SÓS reports that the Board can apply before the first meeting of ENQA's Board in 2018, as soon as ENQA publishes its new process for affiliate membership applications. The timing of the application for an ENQA review will be discussed at the February Board meeting. The Board will ask for an appointment with the new Minister of Education, Science and Culture as soon she/he is in place. The Board will also need to ask MESC for a clarification on whether there is money earmarked for the review process and for the full membership to ENQA.

8. 2018 Annual conference: The Board discussed the theme of the next Annual conference which should be linked to research. Several options were discussed including research degrees, the evaluation of research management, digitalization, data repositories, open access, etc. There should be an opportunity for dialog with attendees. SÓS will bring back information from the Thursday Nov. 16 Quality Council conference on what the sector needs. The Board will then communicate by email to confirm a programme and decide on external speakers.

9. SLR, IWR, and annual meetings: HEIs could be encouraged to include in their SLR teams a member that is external to the unit, but internal to the institution. QB may need to develop a template for the SLR summaries to be published in the public domain. AS noted that QQI (Ireland)

has such summaries, which consist of bullet points of strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. This is to be discussed further with the Quality Council. SÓS will monitor publication of SLR summaries.

10. Appointment of a Team for Reykjavik University IWR. The Board discussed several options for the chair and team members and asked SÓS to follow up.

11. For the training of Chairs and Teams for IWR, the following was agreed:

- Four Chairs will be trained in QEF2 and will undergo a 2-day group training in Iceland. Two days are needed to make time to meet with stakeholders and get a sense of the Icelandic HE landscape.
- 1-day Just-in-Time training for the full team.
- Ideally, the training sessions will coincide with the Board meetings, so as to allow Board members to be involved. The Board Chair should attend the training sessions if they do not coincide with a Board meeting.
- Draft training package for Chairs will be ready for the February 2018 Board meeting. FQ volunteered to prepare training materials for IWR Teams.
- The Secretariat and LÍS would provide training to the Icelandic student members of the Teams. RH volunteered to help LÍS obtain helpful materials on training of students.

12. Guidelines for Teams: This was discussed on the basis of a draft Table of Contents. This document should be read by the Teams' prior to arrival in Iceland. Some of the themes to address include what is meant by enhancement-led, that clarity is imperative in writing the report, that recommendations be actionable, and the status of the student member, who should be considered as a full member of the team and provide a student perspective on all aspects that are discussed. The document should also include clear instructions on seeking evidence and reporting evidence, writing the Headline letter, writing the collective judgments of the Team, and how to run meetings (in particular the open meeting). Before the Teams leave, all members will have to hand in to the Team Chair their respective sections in the form of outlines, bullets and key points for inclusion. The Chair will then do most of the writing.

13. Board discussed IWR Team members for individual institutions. If at all possible, teams should include a member who participated in the QEF1 IWR.

14. Board meeting dates in 2018:

- Meeting N°1 in February: Board to meet MESC and the student association presidents. RH and ES will discuss arrangements with LÍS. Ideally, PW and AS would stay one extra day to meet key people, such as research directors and Chair of the Rectors' Conference.
- Meeting N°2 in May: This meeting will involve both a conference and Annual meetings. SÓS will query members as to whether they can stay an extra day.

- Assignment of members to HEIs for annual meetings (Meetings between 9 am-12 pm, 1pm-4 pm) discussed.
- Meetings N° 3 or N° 4: The Board will explore possibility to hold either the September or November meeting in the UK. SOS to budget this option and conduct a doodle poll to explore dates.