

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundred and sixty-fourth meeting of Council held on Thursday 29 February 2024 at 2.30 pm via hybrid arrangements.

Present: Mr T O'Reilly (Chair) Mrs S McClelland
Professor P Hanna Mrs P Leitch
Mrs D O'Connor Mrs A Kingsley
Mr B Wilson Professor S Morison
Mrs M Thompson

CCEA Executive

Mr G Campbell (Chief Executive)
Mrs L Scott (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)
Mr M McAuley (Interim Business Manager, Qualifications)
Mrs S King (Head of Regulation)
Mrs J Burns (Temporary Council Secretariat)

In attendance

Mr R Caldwell (DE Observer)
Mrs V Leyden (Boardroom Apprentice)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr H McCarthy, Dr M Johnston, Mrs J Bartley, and Mr M Crossan.

2 Conflict of Interests

Members confirmed there were no conflict of interests.

3 Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed all members to Council and specifically welcomed the five new members to Council.

New and existing members along with CCEA staff introduced themselves.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provided an update on senior management vacancies and confirmed the recruitment process for a Director of Finance and Corporate Services was underway. He also confirmed that interim arrangements for the Director of Qualifications were to be put in place.

The Chair and several Council members flagged concerns regarding added pressures that the CEO will face due to the departure of two Directors and asked if Council members could provide additional support. Another Council member enquired as to where the Curriculum function currently sits in the absence of a director. The CEO confirmed he was managing curriculum directly through engagement with the Business Manager but that the situation would remain under review.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Corporate Services (Leah Scott) for her service and wished her well in her new post. The Chair also thanked Mr Michael Crossan for his service over the past twelve years and wished him well in his new post.

The Chair informed Council members that he would be reaching out to them for their assistance on participation in future interview panel discussions.

The Chair also informed Council members that the Minister of Education will visit CCEA on 28 March for a briefing on the progress of Summer 2024 Examination arrangements and to meet with staff and Council members. He also advised that this was the date of the next Council meeting and encouraged members to attend the meeting in-person.

Correspondence

The Chair referred members to the range of council correspondence received since the previous meeting.

Members noted the correspondence from the previous meeting.

4 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2024 and associated Action Points

The ratification of the minutes of the 25 January 2024 Council meeting were formally proposed by Mrs P Leitch and seconded by Mr B Wilson as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5 Governance

Committee Membership and Schedule

C/164/1

The Chair updated members on a proposed schedule for Council and committee meetings as well as the proposed committee membership and committee Chairs.

The Chair informed that new committee appointed Chairs are required for two years, however they will have an option to break at one year. The Chair also indicated that the Council Secretary would be writing to Council members seeking volunteers to participate in the Examinations Appeals Panel.

Council members formally agreed to the schedule and membership and this agreement was proposed by Mr P Hanna and seconded by Mr B Wilson.

6 Education

Summer 2024 Awarding Update

C/164/2

The Chair invited the CEO and Head of Regulation to present a paper updating Council Members on the arrangements for awarding in summer 2024.

The CEO gave an overview of the situation as it progressed following the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the Three Country agreement to return to pre-pandemic standards by 2024. The CEO emphasised the importance of a 2024 return to pre-pandemic aims in order to ensure that CCEA's qualifications remain portable.

Council members asked questions relating to tolerance levels and the HoR explained that the tolerance levels would be relative to a return to pre-pandemic results.

The Temporary Business Manager (Qualifications) commented that it would be CCEA's intention to hit those targets and if this was not achievable then there would be a justification for the tolerance level required.

Council members discussed in detail the potential impact on results at GCSE and AS/A levels.

A Council Member asked if the AO were content that the plan was deliverable. It was agreed that the AO were happy to have a planned approach to go forward with.

The Chair asked Council Members if they were content to approve all seven recommendations:

- Agree that the Summer 2024 GCSE, AS and A level subject and qualification level outcomes across all grades will aim to be as close as possible to 2019 outcomes and outcomes should not fall below 2019.
- Agree that there will be no tolerance for grading outcomes that are above and/or below the 2019 target in the larger entry subjects.
- Agree that the judgemental grade boundaries will be used in AS to achieve the aim of outcomes as close as possible to 2019 and not falling below 2019.
- Agree +3% tolerance above 2019 levels for small entry subjects (those with 500 and under entries) with the understanding that any outcomes above the 3% will be exceptional and fully justified.
- Agree that outcomes across the grading scale in each subject and at qualification level in small entry subjects should not fall below the 2019 outcomes and if this happens, there should be full and detailed justification.
- Agree all grade outcomes at subject and qualification level will be reported to the regulator with a justification where 2019 outcomes are not met.
- Agree that the qualifications report to Council in early August will reflect as close as possible the final published figures on the CCEA website by using the 2023 SPC levels as a proxy.

These were proposed by Mrs P Leitch and seconded by Mr P Hanna.

10 Any Other Business

No further business was identified.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 28 March 2024

He thanked members and officers for their input into the meeting.

This concluded the business of the Council.