

CCEA

## **COUNCIL MEETING: [ADVICE ON STANDARDS 2023](#)**

**Minutes of the 154<sup>th</sup> Council meeting held Thursday 13 October 2022 via MS Team  
4pm – 5.30pm**

### **Present:**

Mr T O'Reilly (Chair)	Ms P Leitch
Mrs S Sellars (Vice Chair)	
Dr L Caul	Mrs Kathleen O'Hare
Mr B Wilson	Ms M Corrigan
Mr H McCarthy	Mr R Smyth
Ms A Kingsley	Mrs D O'Connor
Mr N Wardlow (Apprentice)	

Ms L Scott (Interim Chief Executive Officer: ICEO)  
Mr J Daly (Temporary Director of Finance & Corporate Services TDoFCS)  
Ms S King (Head of Regulation HoR)  
Mr M McAuley (Temporary Business Manager, Qualifications)  
Mr J Trueman (Temporary Business Manager, Qualifications)

Ms J Cassells (DE Observer)

Mr Colin Coffey (DE Assessor)  
Mr T Stevens (DE Assessor)

Ms Jacqui Burns (Temporary Manager, Council Secretariat)

## ***MINUTES***

The Chair welcomed Council Members and Senior CCEA Management Team to the meeting.

### **1. Apologies:**

#### **Apologies were received from:**

Ms P Slevin, Mr P Hanna, Ms C Fitzsimons, Mr R Smyth, Ms A Swann, Mr M Crossan

### **2. Conflict of Interests**

Ms A Kingsley declared that she has children of examination age.

### **3. Chairs Business**

The Chair introduced Mr Colin Coffey and Mr Tony Stevens to Council and CCEA staff as newly appointed Assessors to Council by the Department of Education. He said that as part of their induction, they will be meeting with Council members and senior CCEA staff over the coming weeks. Some Council members commented on the reasons for their appointment and lack of clarity in relation to their role on Council. Mr Coffey explained that he understood the issues and hoped to clarify this over time.

### **4. Advice on Standards 2023**

Ms Leah Scott (ICEO) presented to members advice and recommendations for approval on awarding arrangements for 2023.

The ICEO informed Council that a letter had been received from the department on 06 September formally commissioning CCEA to provide advice to the Department on standards for 2023. She explained that the Department wished for CCEA to take account of information available on the approaches taken by England and Wales and that each option should consider the impact on comparability and portability of qualifications across the three jurisdictions.

The ICEO said the options were developed by both education and the regulation staff and the recommendation to Council was that CCEA would take a stepped approach back to pre-pandemic standards and that this recommendation considered the AS and A2 culminating into one qualification (**Option 3a**). She confirmed that the objective was to deliver results that would equate to grades being higher than 2019 and lower than 2022. She confirmed that the precise delivery for this approach was yet to be finalised. The ICEO said that OfQual have decided upon a more direct approach to moving back to pre-pandemic standards, but that Wales and N Ireland would take a more gradual stepped approach.

The ICEO also stated that CCEA intends to engage with stakeholders for young people such as NICCY and Parentkind for feedback on the recommended approach.

A Council member asked Ms Sharon King (HoR) if there are any major risks or pitfalls involved with this option and also asked the ICEO if the Minister decided to change direction in March, would CCEA be able to facilitate this. The ICEO responded that if the Minister decided to change the approach, that a Ministerial direction would need provided outside of normal policy. She said that the current Minister has been kept informed and appears to agree with the approach recommended. The ICEO also said that regarding pitfalls, the main concern would be public acceptance of the outcomes, hence the engagement with stakeholders for feedback. Sharon (HoR) said that all the options would carry a risk.

A Council member raised a concern around fairness between linear and modular examinations during this transitional period. The ICEO responded that CCEA have discussed fairness as they journey back to pre-pandemic standards and that this preferred option was the fairest way for learners to ensure their achievements are recognised.

A Council member raised a risk regarding the CCEA brand as the advanced information and easier papers posed a risk to grade boundaries and the reputation of CCEA exams. She also requested clarity over whether the recommendation referred to cohort level or each grade. CCEA Council members debated this risk and discussed the importance of returning to 2019 standards. Council members agreed that stakeholder input needed to be managed and CCEA needed to be clear about what they were doing and why.

Council members approved option 3a.

**Proposer – Les Caul**

**Secunder – Kathleen O’Hare**

The Chair asked the ICEO to ensure that the Corporate Risk Register was updated in terms of risks.

## **5. Any Other Business**

Council members thanked and congratulated CCEA staff on the Investors in People staff event that took place earlier in the day.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 24 November 10am Room 115 (in-person meeting)