

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundredth and second meeting of Council held on Wednesday 19 September 2012 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA HQ, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mrs H McClenaghan (Acting Chair) Mr J Clarke
 Mr J Collins Mrs D Black
 Mrs P O'Farrell Mr D Thompson
 Ms M Crilly

 Mr A Arbuthnott (DE Observer)

 Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)
 Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
 Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
 Mr J Daly (Finance Manager)
 Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager – Items 6 and 7)

 Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr R Hanna and Mr J Wilkinson.

2 Chair's Business

The Chairperson welcomed members to the meeting and drew attention to the revised agenda.

Interim Chief Executive

Members were informed that the interviews for the Interim Chief Executive would take place on Monday 24 September 2012.

ESA Update

The Interim Chief Executive updated members on the latest position regarding the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA).

FOI Requests

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 June 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 June 2012 were proposed by Mr Jim Collins and seconded by Ms Patricia O'Farrell as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chairperson.

Action Points

Members noted that the majority of the action points had been completed and were updated on the following :

Mathematics Correspondence : the Director of Qualifications (DoQ) advised this was ongoing, however, all questions were answered.

GCSE/GCE Developments : on the agenda for this meeting.

4 Correspondence

Members noted the correspondence in relation to :

- *Departmental end to CCEA Special Interventions* : the Interim Chief Executive confirmed he would follow up arrangements for the Internal Audit.
- *Budget Allocation Target* : members were assured that the difficulties encountered with CCEA in meeting this year's budget had been well documented and discussed with DE.
- *CCEA Work Programme*
- *Response to CCEA Advice on New Assessment Arrangements for KS1-3* : DE are content with progress CCEA has made to date on the new arrangements and hope to overcome the concern expressed by teachers on workload and timescale issues.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that one union had instructed its members not to be involved in implementing the new assessment arrangements and another union has expressed concerns about manageability.

He met with representatives from the INTO on 17 September to hear their concerns. A further meeting has been set up with the Director of Education Strategy and his Business Manager to get a greater understanding of the specific issues to allow them to be worked through. He commended the positive approach of the INTO representatives.

Council members welcomed the discussion with the Union and said it was important that all communication to teachers was clear and accurate.

5 Governance and Accountability

Accountability Review Meeting : Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2012

Clarification was sought on the outcome of the meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of Queens. It was confirmed that the meeting was part of a pre-consultation process conducted by DE. Meetings with UU and QUB had been encouraging.

Accountability Review Meeting : 11 September 2012

The Chairperson confirmed that :

- an invitation had been extended to the Minister to visit CCEA;
- QTR (Qualifications Technology Roadmap) developments were reported to DE. The benefits of continuing with this programme were acknowledged.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Roger McCune to the meeting.

6 Summer Examinations Series 2012

The DoQ gave a presentation on :

- Entries
- Market Share
- Overall Results
- Use of NI Predictor

A copy of the presentation was issued for members' information.

Market Share

Members noted that GCSE entries had decreased due to demographics. Some candidates were also lost due to the revision of specifications. The overall CCEA market share for GCSE is 72%. GCE is 74%.

The DoQ advised that from September 2013 CCEA will cease to offer qualifications in England. However CCEA will continue to promote the currency and value of its linear and modular examinations in Northern Ireland.

Entries

Members noted the rise in entries from 2008 to 2012 for GCE A2 entries.

At GCSE there was a substantial loss of entries in English (5,000) and a decline was reported in ICT (1,000).

Use of NI Predictor

The Interim Chief Executive outlined the use of the NI predictor. The DoQ paid tribute to the Communications team who worked hard to ensure that the communications around this area were clear and easily understood. She wished to place on record her thanks to the team.

It was confirmed that more work would be carried out on the screening of subjects to ensure that the GCSE predictor is accurate as this provides the baseline for GCE grades.

Malpractice cases

Members noted the information provided.

Clarification was sought on whether CCEA provided training and examples of good practice for examiners. The DoQ confirmed that training and packs were provided to each centre every autumn.

It was confirmed that CCEA would make it clear to OfQual that invigilators were not CCEA employees.

Performance 2012

195,000 results were successfully issued across the 3 general qualifications. 20,000 candidates had access to their results on-line.

76,000 scripts were marked electronically. 992 accelerated remarks were completed and submitted by 31 August 2012.

The DoQ confirmed that CCEA would remain a part of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) as they were part of the QTR initiative. This ensures that all awarding organisations communicate with all their centres in the same way, therefore alleviating confusion.

Issues in relation to GCSE Subjects

The DoQ gave a summary of the issues in relation to Music, Irish and Chemistry. She confirmed that in all cases questions could be answered and the issues had been resolved. She confirmed that revised procedures were now in place.

Controls have also been improved in the Question Paper Production area in line with the recommendations arising from the ASM Internal Audit.

GCSE English

The DoQ advised that she had been unaware of the loss of 5,000 candidates (43 centres) for GCSE English until the results were finalised. She confirmed that she has asked for a full report on the matter. However, early indications show that the reasons were difficulties in accessing the new specification and complex administration.

The Interim Chief Executive said it was unacceptable that this situation was not brought to his or the DoQ's attention when the subject officer became aware of it. He confirmed that this would not happen again.

The DoQ confirmed that a marketing campaign was being put in place to win centres back to CCEA GCSE English.

Members said it was important to make every effort to ensure that CCEA's specifications were more accessible and attractive to children going forward.

The Interim Chief Executive has asked for a full report on the revised GCSE English specification and the findings would be presented to Council once finalised.

2013 Targets

The DoQ said that work had begun on:

- the initiation of the change programme around QTR and A2C projects;
- securing zero defects in operations, in particular, question paper production;
- the initiation of a marketing campaign around the new entitlement framework qualifications and devising a recovery plan for GCSE English entries;
- continuing the roll out of on-screen marking and e-moderation.

She advised that 3 new members of staff had been appointed to senior positions and she would be supporting them fully to ensure they can fulfil their responsibilities.

The Chairperson and Council members paid tribute to the Director of Qualifications for the significant amount of work completed in the summer series. The Interim Chief Executive also paid tribute to the staff led by the DoQ and DoCS for the way in which they worked to ensure every aspect of the work was completed on time.

He said that the DoQ was working without key members of staff, and had worked long hours over a sustained period. to mitigate risk. The impact of vacancy control on the organisation had been significant.

He paid personal tribute to the Director of Qualifications for her commitment over this sustained period; and also wished to place on record his thanks to the Director of Corporate Services for the amount of work he and his staff put in to support the DoQ during this time.

He stated that further investment was required in technology and confirmed this had been raised with the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Secretary.

The DoQ paid tribute to all of the staff in CCEA who went the extra mile to ensure that all issues were dealt with efficiently and wished to place on record her thanks to all.

7 GCSE English Summer 2012

C/102/1

The Interim Chief Executive reported on the concerns raised about the number of candidates not achieving a Grade C in GCSE English due to change in grade boundaries by the English Awarding Organisations.

The Minister has asked CCEA's regulation team to look into the concerns and report any issues which may have impacted upon candidates in Northern Ireland. The interim summary has been provided at paper **C/102/1**.

The Regulation and Accreditation Manager reported on the detail and confirmed that when the final report had been issued to the Minister, members would receive a copy.

The Chairperson asked that Council be kept informed on any developments.

WJEC

The Interim Chief Executive reported that 64 candidates from 2 centres in Northern Ireland had taken their GCSE English with WJEC. He sought confirmation from Council on whether or not they wished CCEA to advise the Minister to ask for these candidates to be re-graded.

Following detailed discussion it was agreed, that to ensure fairness for all candidates, CCEA recommend re-grading to the Minister.

Clarification was sought on whether CCEA would be offering re-sits to their candidates in the light of the decision taken by the English Awarding Organisations to offer this. The Regulation & Accreditation Manager confirmed that it would be CCEA's advice to DE to allow candidates the opportunity to re-sit should they wish to do so.

8 Any Other Business

GCE/GCSE Review of Qualifications

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the English Baccalaureate would replace GCSEs in England.

It is anticipated that the Minister will make an announcement on whether he will ask for a review of GCE and GCSEs in the coming weeks.

Mr Adrian Arbuthnot said that he would be retiring at the end of September and this was his last meeting. He confirmed that David Hughes would be joining DE at the end of October.

The Chairperson and Council thanked Mr Arbuthnot for his attendance, clear advice and support of CCEA and wished him well for his retirement.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as **Wednesday 24 October 2012** at 10.00 am.

The Chairperson thanked members and officers for their input into the meeting.