



Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Meeting of the Board of Directors

By Video Conference, 11:00 – 16:00

Minutes of the meeting on 15 December 2021

Present

Board Members:

Professor Simon Gaskell (Chair)
Professor Nic Beech
Dr Vanessa Davies
Ms Sara Drake
Ms Linda Duncan
Ms Hillary Gyebi-Ababio
Professor Maria Hinfelaar
Professor David Jones
Ms Angela Joyce
Professor Sue Rigby
Professor John Sawkins
Professor Oliver Turnbull
Mr Craig Watkins
Professor Philip Wilson

In attendance

Officers:

Ms Vicki Stott (Chief Executive)
Mr Alastair Delaney (Executive Director of Operations (Deputy CEO))
Mr Tom Yates (Director of Corporate Affairs)
Ms Caroline Blackburn (Finance Director)
Ms Millie Crook (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development) (Item 11)
Dr Ailsa Crum (Director of Membership, Quality Enhancement & Standards) (Item 15)
Ms Rachel Hill-Kelly (Assistant Company Secretary)

Welcome, apologies and Chair's opening remarks (Item 1)

1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and Rachel Hill-Kelly who had taken on the role of Assistant Company Secretary.
2. There were apologies from Eve Alcock, David Jones and Craig Mahoney. Nic Beech and Philip Wilson would miss part of the meeting.

Quorum and Interests (Item 2)

3. The meeting was declared quorate. No interests were declared beyond those previously notified and included in the Register of Interests.

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 October 2021, actions and matters arising (Item 3, BD-21/22-11)

4. The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021.
5. In relation to Action 13, Tom Yates confirmed that he had been in touch with TEQSA to follow up on discussions at the October meeting.
6. All other actions from the previous meeting were noted as complete, and the Board noted the updates provided.

Note of the Board away day held on 14 October 2021. (Item 3, BD-21/22-12)

7. The Board **approved** the note of the away day held on 14 October 2021.

Consultative Board Update (Item 4, oral item)

Meeting held on 22 November 2021

8. Notes from the meeting were available on the Board site for members. The Chair reflected that the Consultative Board offered an opportunity to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and its meetings were useful for all concerned.
9. Hillary Gyebi-Ababio commented that throughout the reports the contribution of students was evident. She welcomed the launch of the student network and emphasised the significance of student input into the work of the QAA.
10. Members of the Consultative Board from Scotland and Wales had provided updates from those nations, which had been welcome.
11. Ailsa Crum had given an abridged version of the presentation on 'What is Quality' which the Board had seen in October. Defining quality was a question that would be returned to over the coming year as part of the 25 year celebrations.
12. Hilary Gyebi-Ababio had flagged Jisc's work in relation to online teaching and learning and asked if QAA would be engaging with Jisc's work on national standards. Vicki Stott had agreed this should be considered.
13. The QAA's role as Designated Quality Body (DQB) in England had been discussed, including the establishment of a Working Group to review governance and working

practices to provide extra assurance in the light of Office for Students (OfS) concerns about a potential conflict of interest. This would be discussed in greater detail under item 17.

Chief Executive's Report (Item 5, BD-21/22-13)

14. The Chair noted this was Vicki Stott's first report to the Board as Chief Executive and thanked all involved for the smoothness of the transition.
15. Subject Benchmark Statements would be an important focus for QAA work in 2022. Chairs and Members for Subject Benchmark Statement panels had been recruited.
16. Expressions of interest for Collaborative Enhancement projects had been received. There had been a very strong response (43 from England, and two from each of Scotland and Wales), including from Russell Group universities, which had been under-represented the previous year. The membership team would review the applications, and escalate more complex decisions to the Senior Leadership Team.
17. The Office for Students (OfS) had provided sight of the draft "UK-ness" statement commissioned by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment. It was primarily intended for international audiences. Vicki Stott noted that in its current incarnation it was technically focused, and though it was designed to highlight the commonality of approach, this technical focus did little to demonstrate cohesion in the sector.
18. QAA had been working with partners across the sector on a new Characteristics Statement on microcredentials. Vicki Stott had met with Baroness Alison Wolf and discussed micro-credentials and credit; Baroness Wolf's view was that the modular credit level would need to be written into legislation in order for life-long learning to be funded properly. This would mean credit would become compulsory. QAA had offered to host roundtable discussions for pro-vice chancellors, including those from institutions that do not currently use credit. It was suggested that QAA engage with colleges on this issue as the Skills Bill would give them a role in this. **Vicki Stott to action.**
19. Vicki Stott's and Stephanie Sandford's visit to Dubai had been very successful, including a speaking engagement at a Heriot-Watt University workshop at the Expo, and meetings with federal and local agencies. It was clear that UK higher education and QAA had high standing in the region. Mohammed Baniyas of the Dubai agency (KHDA) had indicated that KHDA would require English providers to participate in the Quality Evaluation of Transnational Education (QE-TNE) scheme; there was also support for QAA's proposed international membership offer.
20. The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill was now at committee stage and QAA had productive conversations with the Department for Education about essay mills. QAA was also in discussion with devolved governments to extend the legislation to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Hilary Gyebi-Ababio asked whether the Bill would encompass overseas campuses of UK institutions and possibly result in criminal prosecution of international students. As the Bill would criminalise the essay mills rather than students this should be unlikely but the Board **agreed** further clarity was needed and Vanessa Davies offered to consider the legislation as drafted. **Vanessa Davies to action.**

21. Recruitment for the chair and deputy chair positions for the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment was underway. One Board member had been approached and had declined to express an interest; others might also be approached, and were encouraged to consider such a role if offered.
22. QAA continued to engage with the OfS and the Department for Education (DfE) ahead of the triennial review of the QAA as Designated Quality Body (DQB). It was not yet known how the OfS Quality Assessment Committee (QAC) would make its qualitative judgement. QAA would continue to engage co-operatively to assuage perceptions of conflict of interest; the Triennial review paper would be discussed in detail in item 16.
23. There was still concern that the QAA was not currently part of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) conversation, and that approaches to quality were diverging across the nations.

Report of policy developments and interactions with funders and regulators in the UK nations (Item 6, BD-21/22-14)

24. The Board received the report and noted that QAA had been politically engaged in Scotland and Wales in particular.
25. The three funders and regulators in the devolved nations had asked for a further tri-nation meeting in the new year.
26. Alastair Delaney and Maria Hinfelaar had attended the Senedd Education Committee evidence session on the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) Bill. This was an opportunity to put points across and follow up with the submission. QAA, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and Estyn are working together to develop principles to inform the future of quality post the enactment of the CTER Bill. There is disappointment there is not one single quality agency. Estyn will not charge whereas HEFCW has asked the QAA to charge providers.
27. QAA had now submitted a proposed specification for the development of a new approach to quality in Northern Ireland to the Department for the Economy (DfENI). A enhancement-led approach was proposed.

QAA Strategic Risk Register Review (Item 7, BD-21/22-15)

28. Tom Yates presented the Strategic Risk Register, and reminded the Board that it was reviewed monthly by the Senior Leadership Team. The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had reviewed it at its November meeting, and the Student Strategic Advisory Committee (SSAC) had considered a summary version. A format change was suggested, with ARC's support, to split the risks into those that were truly strategic and those that were more operational in nature but reported to the Board because their potential impacts had strategic implications.
29. ARC had provided a steer on the language used in some places, where misinterpretation could be unhelpful. Craig Watkins suggested a further change on risk S4, to refer to QAA's need to protect its independent position.
30. The DQB risk (S2) remained significant, and the mitigation of this would be addressed later in the meeting.

31. To mitigate the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) registration risk the QAA had improved its understanding of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) process and had increased resources, had a clear programme of work and a project manager to ensure cross-agency working. SWOT and gap analyses had been carried out and priority was being given to the actions required in relation to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The SAR would go to the Board for consideration and comments by circulation, as the tight deadlines involved in the drafting process mean it will not fall into the usual schedule of Board meetings.
32. Cyber-attacks would continue to be listed as a significant risk despite the mitigations in place, as it was not possible to absolutely mitigate against such a fast changing risk. Insight software had been introduced to detect and prevent vulnerabilities. Collaboration with Jisc was useful in this area and the Board noted that Jisc now offered a 'flying ambulance' team for those affected by ransomware attacks and that the register should be amended to include this.
33. The Board **approved** the Strategic Risk Register subject to the amendments.

Quarter 1 Monitoring and Performance Report (Item 8, BD-21/22-16)

34. The Board received the reports and noted that currently there was a smaller operational deficit than anticipated and the membership target had been exceeded by some £250,000. There were some deferred costs and revenues from the previous financial year; the impact of these on the rolling budget was not entirely clear as at Q1; Caroline Blackburn would report in more detail at Q2.
35. There was a strong pipeline of international work, and the focus was now on ensuring the resources were there to deliver the work. There had been recruitment of flexible part-time quality managers and more resource for the ENQA project.
36. The Chair queried the ease with which the QAA could recruit suitable staff and if notice of vacancies was reaching the right audiences. Caroline Blackburn responded that QAA had mixed success and some roles did not attract numerous or suitable candidates. The Chair noted it would be useful to have a summary of recruitment in general at the next meeting. **Millie Crook to action.**

Report on Financial Matters (Item 9, BD-21/22-17)

37. The Board received the report. Linda Duncan informed the Board that she and Caroline Blackburn would shortly be meeting the investment managers Rathbones for the annual update meeting, and would update the Board in March. On the basis of the current cash flow and cash position, further investments were likely.
38. Board members asked about the environmental and sustainability credentials of the investment portfolio would. Linda Duncan responded that since QAA's portfolio was a charity one, it had high levels of ESG criteria, but it would be discussed with Rathbones. Linda Duncan commented that ethical investment portfolios often outperform portfolios without that requirement.

External Audit Findings Report (Item 10, BD-21/22-18)

39. The Board received the External Audit findings and noted that QAA had a clean audit report; the going concern work had not been complete at the time of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, but was now complete and no issues had been found.
40. The audit had been carried out by Crowe. As chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Craig Watkins assured the Board that despite the longstanding relationship with the auditor, the process had been thorough with a focus on important matters such as going concern and fraud risk. Craig Watkins also thanked Caroline Blackburn and her team for a clearly well-run audit process; it was good to see mutual respect between the auditors and the Finance team.
41. Vanessa Davies welcomed the fact that going concern had been considered comprehensively, with the worst-case scenario considered.

HR Annual Reporting (Item 11, BD-21/22-19 and BD-21/22-20)

Millie Crook, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development joined the meeting

HR Annual Report (BD-21/22-19)

42. The Board received the HR Annual Report and noted that it both reviewed the previous year and provided a forward look. With the new HR system it was now possible to report on an increased number of data points should this be useful.
43. Figure 1.4 showed an inherent reluctance on the part of employees to record their ethnicity data. The Chair commented that this was an important metric for the organisation and staff should be encouraged to complete it. Sara Drake commented that it was notoriously difficult to get full disclosure on ethnicity.
44. The Flex+ working arrangements had been adopted across the organisation originally in response to the pandemic. Two surveys had been carried out relating to the Flex+ arrangements, and a staff wellbeing survey was in the pipeline.
45. Board members suggested it would be useful to monitor the impact on junior roles in terms of progression and recruitment. This could include looking at why those who decline offers did so, and data from exit interviews with a view to identifying trends. It was suggested that QAA consider benchmarking its HR data against other organisations.

Gender Pay Report (BD-21/22-20)

46. The Board received the Gender Pay Report and noted that while QAA was not a large enough organisation to be required by law to produce the data it was useful to report on it.
47. As the organisation was small, the median and mean gap were not very meaningful measures, so more detailed figures were given for a clearer picture. The entry level positions were female dominated and this was reflected in the applicant pool. The report included anyone on the QAA payroll, and the Board suggested that in future

reports it would be clearer to show the figures for the reviewer pool separately. **MC to action**

Millie Crook, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development left the meeting

Calling of the AGM

Twenty- Fourth Annual General Meeting of the QAA

Minutes of the meeting on 15 December 2021 by videoconference

Present

Authorised Company Members' representatives:

Claire Bannister (representing Universities Scotland)
Alex Bols (representing GuildHE)
Rowan Fisher (representing UUK)
Chris Laity (representing Universities Wales)

Board Members:

Professor Simon Gaskell (Chair)
Professor Nic Beech
Dr Vanessa Davies
Ms Sara Drake
Ms Linda Duncan
Ms Hillary Gyebi-Ababio
Professor Maria Hinfelaar
Professor David Jones
Ms Angela Joyce
Professor Sue Rigby
Professor John Sawkins
Professor Oliver Turnbull
Mr Craig Watkins
Professor Philip Wilson

In attendance

Officers:

Ms Vicki Stott (Chief Executive)
Mr Alastair Delaney (Executive Director of Operations (Deputy CEO))
Ms Caroline Blackburn (Finance Director)
Mr Tom Yates (Director of Corporate Affairs)
Ms Rachel Hill-Kelly (Assistant Company Secretary)

The Chair welcomed Company Members to the meeting, confirmed that a quorum was present and declared the meeting open.

Resolutions

Resolution 1 – Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 16 December 2020

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 December 2020 were **approved** as a correct record.

Resolution 2 – Report to the Company Members from the Chair

The Chair reflected on a year of transition for the QAA as Vicki Stott replaced Douglas Blackstock as Chief Executive, and noted that the process had gone smoothly. The Board had made positive contributions to the running of QAA and had fulfilled its role in supporting and holding the executive to account and in providing constructive criticism. Company Members and Vicki Stott added their thanks to Douglas Blackstock for his efforts over the years for the QAA.

The Chair expressed the view that QAA added good value to the sector across the UK. The diversity in the approaches taken by the four nations could be a strength of the UK sector as well as a challenge. In England, the confidence of the Office for Students (OfS) in QAA did not match that of regulators and funders elsewhere in the UK; this arose from an OfS perception of conflict of interest between QAA's role as Designated Quality Body (DQB) and its work supporting the sector as it seeks to enhance quality and maintain standards. The Board and the QAA do not recognise the alleged conflict, but were working to address the concern by considering substantive changes in governance arrangements.

Resolution 2 – Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2021.

The QAA Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2021 were received and **approved**.

Resolution 3 – QAA Letter of Representation

The Letter of Representation was received and **approved**.

Resolution 4 – QAAE Directors Report and Annual Accounts

The QAAE Directors report and Annual Accounts were received and **noted**. QAAE accounts had been approved by the QAAE Board on 7 December 2021. It was the view of the QAA Board that it was better to direct all activity through QAA, though it was useful to keep open the possibility of using QAAE in the future should this position change. With this in mind the Board had **agreed** that QAAE should enter dormancy.

Resolution 5 - Re-appointment of Auditors

It was resolved to re-appoint Crowe as auditors of the Company to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company.

Resolution 6 – Signing of Reports

It was **agreed** that the Chair and Company Secretary be authorised to sign the Annual Reports and Financial Statements and Letter of Representation for the QAA and QAAE.

Meeting of the Board of Directors with Company Members**Update on Current Issues from the Chief Executive**

1. Vicki Stott thanked the Company Members for their continuing support and engagement with the work of the QAA and for their insight and advice.
2. A report was being presented to Board on the triennial review of the QAA's role as DQB. This was proving to be a robust and challenging process; the Board would be reviewing QAA's submission to the Office of Students.

3. An early draft of the “UK-ness” statement for the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment was being discussed with OfS, which was keen for QAA to engage on Transnational Education and the QE-TNE Scheme in particular. The statement was designed to highlight commonality of approach, though it was not obvious that the current draft achieved this.
4. Discussions had taken place with **Baroness** Alison Wolf around proposals to write modular-level credit into statute which would oblige providers to use credit.
5. 295 providers were members of QAA, an increase of 17 from last year. A discussion around reshaping the membership offering would be discussed later by the Board.
6. 14 Subject Benchmark Statement reviews had closed and the new statements would be published in early 2022. Chairs and deputy chairs had been appointed for a further 13 reviews.
7. There had been a strong response to Collaborative Enhancement Projects, including 43 expressions of interest from English members.
8. The recent UK-China education summit had helped assuage concerns about the quality of online and blended provision. Further work would follow in biennial summits going forward.
9. Vicki Stott had recently visited Dubai with QAA’s Director of International and Professional Services; this had been very successful. UKHE and QAA had high standing in the region. There was strong support for the QE-TNE Scheme; the Knowledge and Human Development Authority was likely to require membership of institutions offering transnational education.
10. In Northern Ireland the Department for the Economy (DfE-NI) had asked for a QAA specification for a new approach to quality, which QAA had provided. Alastair Delaney was meeting officials, and the Department was drafting a new method.
11. Alastair Delaney and Maria Hinfelaar had attended the Senedd Education Committee evidence session on the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) Bill. The Bill was likely to be enacted by the summer of 2022, with the prospect of a new agency being in place by 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed

Discussions of Current Issues and Service Report (Board Members only)

Ailsa Crum, Director of Membership, Quality Enhancement & Standards joined the meeting

Service Presentation- Membership (item 15, BD-21/22-23)

Membership update report

48. The Board received a presentation from Ailsa Crum on the current membership. There are 295 members and Ailsa Crum provided data on the composition of members for nations and institution type.

49. Income from memberships was healthy at more than £2.3m, and a survey of views of the QAA showed an organisation that was regarded as international, respected, collaborative and trusted by the sector.
50. Good progress had been made in broadening the reach of QAA beyond the sometimes narrow network of key contacts in provider quality teams.
51. Members saw the value in being part of the QAA network. A new membership area was being developed on the same platform as the website, with improved routes to pages. Searches through search engines would now show the existence of materials behind the log-in though not the materials themselves, creating greater visibility of membership benefits.
52. Key challenges for the membership team would be retaining and recruiting members, and building and maintaining relationships with sector bodies, and sustaining the pace of delivery with the available resource now the team was at full strength.
53. 47 applications for collaborative projects had been received, up from 32 last year. QAA could not financially support all of them. Those that were not successful would be encouraged to proceed without QAA support. The financial support offered was small, about £10,000, and HEIs brought a lot of resource with them to the projects. As applications had increased the Board sought reassurance as to the clarity of the selection criteria for successful projects. Selection criteria were communicated at the time of invitations to bid, including a spread of members; some providers had submitted multiple project applications which had in part increased the numbers, and QAA did sometimes join projects together.

Proposed Changes to the Membership offer in England

54. The Board received the paper on proposed changes to the membership offer for England, and noted the proposal to change the membership categories from three packages to two. The proposal was to remove the 'core only' option and leave two options - core plus the current Quality Insight package, and the same plus International Insights.
55. The membership team had been consulting with members who currently had a core-only package. There were only 38 such providers. Modelling had been carried out to look at the financial impact for QAA; overall the proposal would increase income. The Board cautioned that 38 of 295 providers represented a significant percentage.
56. Small institutions which are most likely to be financially affected would have the option of a slimline offer of resources but limited access to events if they did not want to opt in to the full membership offer.
57. In relation to FE colleges delivering HE, QAA had seen an increase in the numbers taking membership. QAA had established networks for Colleges as well as invitations to engage with the wider HEI network which had contributed to the increased take up.
58. The Board cautioned that losing even a few institutions because of the changes was undesirable and could have the potential to snowball. Ailsa Crum agreed: she was keen to avoid losing members, and keenly aware of the financial pressures in the sector. She had spoken to virtually every institution, and some had provided written feedback.

59. While the Board thought the proposal was a sensible one given the evidence and the modelling, concerns remained. At present QAA could say it was increasing its reach but this would not be the case if members started leaving.
60. The Board **approved** the proposal, but noted some residual nervousness and a recognition of the importance of continued dialogue with the institutions likely to be impacted.

Ailsa Crum, Director of Membership, Quality Enhancement & Standards left the meeting

Triennial Review of Designated Quality Body (DQB) Function: QAA Submission (item 16, BD-21/22-24)

61. Vicki Stott presented QAA's draft submission to the OfS, alongside a presentation. The paper reflected on the QAA's role as Designated Quality Body (DQB) over the past three years, and as part of that included reference to the proposed changes in DQB governance.
62. There had been further changes to the paper since it had been circulated to the Board. The forward look in the paper was now at the beginning to cover issues raised by the Quality Assurance Committee of the OfS (QAC), which had expressed concern that QAA did not have a strategy to address its view about a conflict of interest, and had indicated that it was minded to make another judgement of limited confidence in QAA as DQB provider.
63. A strict ethical barrier had been maintained between the DQB function and the QAA's other activities, however the review is designed to increase this transparency and clarity of DQB governance to provide enhanced assurance of the performance and operational independence of the DQB function. Whilst the QAA does not share the perception of a potential for a conflict of interest, it is imperative the OfS has confidence in the DQB to undertake its function.
64. The Working Group had considered models from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) dealing with such dual roles in other professions. QAA was looking to ensure a fundamental separation in relation to the DQB, but within the QAA so the DQB could continue to benefit from QAA expertise.
65. The staff deployed would need to meet current and future requirements of the DQB and be headed through a newly defined director role. The Chief Executive would line manage the role and retain final responsibility for the DQB, but operational responsibility would lie with the new director. Vanessa Davies noted that autonomous delegation such as this had precedent and agreed to liaise with Vicki Stott to include specific examples in the paper. **VD to action.**
66. The paper would be submitted to OfS in December and separately to the DfE. Small revisions to wording were suggested for paragraphs 36 and 39. The Board **approved** the Triennial Review subject to the revisions.

Update from DQB Working Group on DQB Governance (Item 17, BD-21/22-25)

67. The Board received the draft proposal from the DQB Working Group, and noted it proposed to create a DQB England Board and included draft terms of reference.

68. Tom Yates talked through the key points of the proposal. The Working Group had adopted nine principles to ensure that any changes were consistent with the QAA's vision and strategy, would continue to meet the statutory requirement of having the confidence of the sector, but would provide enhanced assurance of independence.
69. The proposal is to reconstitute the DQB team, and move all non-DQB activity out of the team to elsewhere within QAA. The DQB would remain part of QAA and would benefit from the cost savings generated through sharing support functions but would be separately governed from the rest of the organisation.
70. The existing DQB committee would be replaced by a new DQBE Board with a wider composition. Its chair could either
 - a. Be separately appointed and then become a QAA Board member *ex officio*
 - b. Be separately appointed but invited to attend QAA Board meetings on an ad-hoc basis when relevant
 - c. Be drawn from the existing Board.

The Board considered the status of the DQB Board chair in relation to the QAA Board. The Board **voted** that the proposed Chair of the DQB Board could be invited to QAA Board meetings, but would not be a member *ex officio* or be appointed from among the QAA Board members.

71. The DQB function would have a new director, which would likely result in one redundancy of the existing post; Vicki Stott commented that the current Director was now likely to leave QAA. An interim director was being sought to cover the existing role.
72. The new director would be operationally accountable to the DQBE Board; QAA's Chief Executive would line manage the post only for routine matters, but would retain accountability for the DQB function. To simplify the channels of communication to OfS, the director would also send ACDAP advice to OfS where it related to England.
73. The Board noted the challenge of creating a governance structure that allowed for the autonomy of the DQB while also allowing for the collective wisdom of the QAA to underpin the DQB function. Vicki Stott added that the ideas had been tested with the Department for Education, Universities UK and GuildHE, and that all agreed the direction of travel was correct.
74. The ethical separation of QAA and DQB would be reflected in a separate brand and website for the DQB, which need not wait for any governance changes.
75. The Board felt that the timing of any visible change should reflect the substantive changes proposed, to avoid any appearance of window-dressing. Following a discussion the Board **voted** to defer the launch of the website until the governance changes could be announced.
76. Board members broadly supported the proposals, stressing that it was important to be clear why QAA being the DQB was the right outcome; the tone should be confident and the QAA's independence should remain clear. It was important not to throw off track QAA's work in the other UK nations and internationally, which was held in high regard.

77. The Board agreed that a further revision of the proposal should be circulated by email following incorporation of comments from the Board. Comments on the draft would then be sent to Vicki Stott by Monday 20 December. **TY to action.**
78. The Board asked that the Triennial paper also be amended in line with these comments before going to the OfS, and that the DfE be copied on both papers. **TY to action.**

Board and Committee Business

Annual Report on Complaints, Appeals and Legal Actions (Item 18, BD-21/22-26)

79. The Board received the report and noted that there had been a small number of representations (appeals) in the last year, but if the DQB role remained with QAA this was expected to increase. The QAA hoped to have one long running legal matter dismissed and would continue to monitor complaints and appeals for trends.

Committee Reporting (Item 19, BD-21/22-27)

80. The Board received and noted reports from the committees. The Chair thanked Board members for their work over the year in these committees. Hilary Gyebi-Ababio noted the positive impact of student representatives within the committees, and welcomed strong and diverse new student membership of the Student Strategic Advisory Committee (SSAC) and other committees with student members.

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to the Board (Item 20, BD-21/22-28)

81. The Board received the Annual Report from the Audit and Risk Committee and noted that further consideration would need to be given for where best to consider the DQB going forward, and if it should still come under the purview of the ARC given the proposed new DQBE Board.

Any Other Business (Item 21)

82. The Chair noted that the papers for this meeting included a retrospective note of an item approved at the previous meeting relating to directors' performance and pay; in future years this would be circulated before the Board was asked to make any decision.
83. The Chair thanked Board members for their service in 2021.

Date of the Next Meeting (Item 22)

84. The Chair confirmed the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday 9 March 2022**. It would be confirmed early in the new year if this was to take place in person at the JISC offices in London or by videoconference. The meeting was closed at 16.10

Board of Directors Action List				
Minute:	Action:	Owner:	Due Date:	Update:
15/12/18	VS to engage with Colleges on microcredentials.	VS		
15/12/20	VD to investigate position of TNE students in relation to essay mills legislation	VD		
15/12/36	MC to provide summary of general QAA recruitment at next meeting	MC	09/03/2022	
15/12/47	MC to include reviewer paragraph in future HR reports to Board	MC		
15/12/65	VD to contact VS with examples	VD	20/12/2021	Completed
15/12/77	TY to circulate amended DQB WG paper and Triennial review to Board for further comment	TY	15/12/2021	Completed
15/12/75	TY to copy DfE in Triennial Review and DQB papers	TY		Completed