

Minutes of the 24th Meeting of the English UK Accreditation & Professional Services Board (APSB)

Held at: English UK, 219 St John Street, London EC1V 4LY

Date: 13:00 on Tuesday 15 March 2011

Present: Andrew Hjort (Chair), Dawn Abbott, Alison Chambers, Sarah Cooper, Patrick Lawlor and Tony Millns

In attendance: Mark Rendell and Annie Wright

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sue Edwards, Tony Evans, Janey Futerill, and Geoff Hardy-Gould.

2. Minutes of the 23rd Meeting of the APSB held on 14 October 2010

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the Meeting. TM noted a typo in item 4c on page 2, 'exasperated' should be 'exacerbated'. The Minutes have been amended accordingly.

3. Matters arising

None (all matters arising are on the agenda for the Meeting).

4. Matters for discussion and decision

4a. Accreditation UK: The treatment of excellence

MR spoke to the paper which presented a summary of current issues regarding publishable statements and how Points of Excellence are awarded within the Accreditation UK inspection scheme.

The paper highlighted problems with the way an individual criterion is treated, in particular the implications of 'met but', which was discussed at the ASAC meeting held on 2 March 2011.

The method of allocating Points of Excellence and the use of criterion-referencing and norm-referencing were examined. MR noted that a norm-referencing approach was on the rise and becoming problematic. The paper recommended a criterion-referencing system should be used at all times. AC agreed with this recommendation. SC questioned whether a norm-referencing approach really was being used by inspectors.

MR outlined 6 separate recommendations to improve the scheme and its treatment of excellence, which included the proposal to set up a working party to investigate how Points of Excellence are grouped and transferred over to publishable statements. AC said she would be happy to be involved in the proposed working party. TM noted the working party would need to be formed and approved by the Accreditation UK Executive

Board and would consist of 6-7 individuals from the Accreditation Unit, the inspectorate, English UK and external bodies, such as Ofsted.

The Scheme's approach to classroom observation was discussed and SC proposed a sampling approach be used, which is the method used by Ofsted. The Board was in agreement with this proposal.

AC referenced the HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) approach to the evaluation of education and noted HMIE uses 'confidence statements' rather than grades.

The Board congratulated MR on presenting such a thorough synopsis of the situation.

4b. *A national CPD calendar and recruitment portal*

MR spoke to the paper which outlined how the portal (microsite) would work and be organised.

PL suggested publishers should be engaged in the initiative as they may be willing to provide free materials and information to visitors of the site.

SC and DA strongly supported the proposal and commented on how well it linked to the proposed development of a professional association for ELT professionals.

AW expressed a concern that the site could risk fragmenting the range of services offered by English UK, especially if access to certain information and services were no longer accessible via the main English UK website. AW informed the Board that the main English UK website is currently under review with various development plans under consideration, including the proposal to reposition the site as more general industry news site covering major news and events and giving member centres access to cheap classified advertising for staff recruitment and vacancies.

MR noted that the site would be a micro-site that could be linked to any website. In the case of the English UK website the site would be accessed through the training section and users would think it was part of the main English UK site. MR and AW agreed to meet and consider the CPD micro-site and the development plans for the main English UK site in more detail.

5. Professional Services - updates

5a. *Report on English UK Conferences*

MR spoke to the paper which provided a review of the Professional Services conferences held this academic year. Reports detailing the feedback received via the post-event online questionnaires were also included.

MR informed the Board he hoped to run the Student Experience Conference again in 2012, with a view to the conference becoming a biennial event. Of the 56 delegates who completed the post-event questionnaire 93% said they would recommend the conference to a colleague.

The Teachers' Conference, held in November 2010 was a sell-out with 272 delegates and 84% of the 95 delegates who completed the post-event questionnaire saying they would recommend the conference to a colleague.

The Marketing Conference, held in January 2011, attracted a record number of delegates (113 in total) and the content of the programme was well received. 91% of the 45 delegates who completed the post-event questionnaire said they would recommend the conference to a colleague.

The most recent conference was the ELT Management Conference, held from 4 – 5 March 2011. The conference was held in Manchester and attracted 80 delegates. MR reported on the positive atmosphere at the event with numerous delegates commenting favourably on the venue. DA supported this observation and AH congratulated the PS team on such a well organised event. Both DA and AH were in attendance at the event.

5b. Accreditation Consultancy Scheme and ASAC

MR updated the Board on the latest ACS subscribers and the recent ASAC meeting. Two ACS subscribers gained accreditation with Chine Academy gaining accreditation for just one year. MR noted that he was concerned about the use of offering one year accreditation in general instead of the usual four year period and felt that although Chine Academy only had a few students at the time of inspection that this should have been a reasonably realistic sample on which to base a firmer judgment.

At the recent ASAC meeting 13 of the 20 candidates successfully gained accreditation. TM recommended the ASAC process was in need of streamlining in order to reduce the burden on individual committee members. PL questioned the process regarding the reading of reports and implied those who sent their apologies in advance were not required to read reports, thereby increasing the burden on those who did attend. He also stated that he felt many members who may be absent might still like to read the reports and submit their comments. TM suggested PL contact Liz McLaren to clarify the process and make any recommendations.

6. Accreditation matters - updates

6a. Self-evaluation

TM spoke to the paper which was put together by William Callaway, chair of ASAC. The paper went to the Accreditation UK Executive Board Meeting in February 2011.

The paper outlined the possibilities for incorporating institutional self-evaluation into the Accreditation UK inspection process. The Accreditation UK Executive Board felt the paper was a good first step and suggested a working party be established to look into recommending a way forward and to propose answers to the questions outlined in item 7 of the paper.

DA, who attended Liz McLaren's session on self-evaluation at the ELT Management Conference, reported that there was a mixed reaction from attendees. Some thought it was a good idea but others were concerned that it would result in a further burden on management and staff.

PL remarked that a number of established groups of schools are already conducting some form of self-evaluation. AC reported that FE colleges in Scotland are already doing it and PL confirmed FE colleges in England are too.

6b. Young learners group proposal

MR spoke to the paper, which was a proposal written by the group Young Learners English UK (YLEUK), for the Accreditation UK Executive Board. The paper was presented to the Accreditation UK Executive Board February 2011 meeting. YLEUK

proposed that the criteria for qualifications of academic managers employed on short vacation courses for junior should be reviewed.

TM reported that the Accreditation UK Executive Board recognised the demands and challenges of recruiting diploma qualified academic managers for summer schools but had rejected the proposal.

6c. Accreditation UK Executive Board, 1 February 2011

The Board noted the minutes of the Accreditation UK Executive Board Meeting on 1 February 2011.

7. Industry updates

7a. CPD Steering Committee

MR spoke to the paper updating the Board on the second meeting of the ELT CPD Steering Committee held on 18 February 2011. The committee discussed a proposed ELT CPD framework consisting of 6 key stages. The development of a national annual award for ELT CPD was also raised.

MR noted that he had also delivered a plenary session at the ELT Management Conference which covered both the proposed CPD framework and professional association of ELT professionals with members. AH remarked that union functions were raised during the session and acknowledged this was a difficult area to deal with.

7b. Vetting and Barring Scheme

MR updated the Board on the Vetting and Barring Scheme. It was reported that the scheme has been scaled back considerably with the CRB and ISA merging into a single agency. The register will only list those who have been barred from working, as opposed to listing all workers vetted by the scheme. The register will also cover only those who are engaged in regular contact (regulated activity) with juniors/vulnerable adults. The full extent of regulated activity is yet to be defined.

7c. AISLI meeting in Italy

MR informed the Board of his intention to attend the AISLI annual meeting in Italy at the end of March following an invitation to speak at the event. AISLI is an association of accredited language schools.

7d. BSI Standards

MR informed the Board that he had received an invitation from the BSI Group to join a UK committee who are looking at new international standards specifically designed for language providers. The full group are meeting in Beijing in June 2011 and Richard Rossner (EAQUALS) will represent the UK.

7e. Cambridge ESOL Staffing

MR informed the Board that Henry Tolley is no longer at Cambridge ESOL having moved back to Pearson.

8. Next meetings

Thursday, 16 June 2011 at 10am
Wednesday, 2nd November 2011 at 11am

9. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting concluded at 14:30.
