

## Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the English UK Accreditation and Professional Services Board (APSB)

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

Date: 11am on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011

Present: Andrew Hjort (Chair), Alison Chambers, Sarah Cooper, Tony Evans, Janey Futerill, Geoff Hardy-Gould, Patrick Lawlor, Nigel Heritage, Sue Edwards and Tony Millns

In attendance: Tom Weatherley

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### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dawn Abbott.

### 2. Minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the APSB held on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the Meeting.

### 3. Matters arising

None (all matters arising were covered by the agenda for the meeting).

### 4. Matters for discussion and decision

#### 4a. *'Accreditation UK: The Time is Right for the Introduction of Self Evaluation'*

It was agreed that the size of the pilot group, 14 schools, was rather small if any decided not to participate, though the 14 are a good representative sample. TM noted that if the selection criterion for self-evaluation is to have passed three consecutive inspections with no 'not mets', the group could be the 75 who met that criterion. AH noted the possibility of expanding the group, and it was noted that it should be put to the BC at the follow-on meeting.

GHG asked what were the advantages to schools of undertaking self-evaluation in terms of cost. TM responded that self-evaluation could be a mark of differentiation, and self-evaluation should lead to a shorter and therefore cheaper inspection.

NH asked if there were plans to offer training or adapt Pre-Inspection Briefings. TM suggested a half-day session could be arranged to cover self-evaluation, but this needs to be arranged with British Council.

p.4 of report says 'it may be difficult for a seasonal provider to conduct a self-assessment process.' TE questioned why seasonal providers would be treated differently. NH noted that entire teams, including academic managers could be new. TM stressed the need to keep the process simple to include centres as equally as possible.

TE questioned the need to observe every teacher. Group discussion confirmed only a sample of teaching staff are observed in state sector. TM floated possibility of introducing observation criteria such as compulsory observation of new staff and a sample of others.

TE highlighted need to have a definite time for submission of forms for action to be taken. PL noted some points may need addressing within 12 months. AH commented on manpower implications - if schools submit forms, someone needs to read them. Group consensus that notes could be added to file and taken into account in next inspection

#### *4.b. Update on Statutory Accreditation and ISI*

TM reported that UKBA are saying that currently around 450 centres have applied for ISI, and 250 to QAA.

Of 900 ASIC and BAC centres and 400 Accreditation UK (private sector) centres, numbers going through ISI accreditation could in the end be as low as 300 centres. There are no accurate figures for English UK members but it is thought fewer than 200 had applied to ISI and perhaps as few as 150 which actually go forward to and through the inspection process.

QAA filter out applicants, and as a result it is thought that as time goes on, a significant number of centres will be told they are not eligible by QAA and thrown over to ISI.

TM and members expressed concern over the damage caused by the use of pejorative language (such as 'revoked') on the sector, and the reputation of UK Plc in general.

TM noted possibility of legal action on this point.

#### *4.c. Feedback from Accreditation Conference held on 1<sup>st</sup> September*

AH and SE confirmed it was a positive meeting. TM reported that the BC is in discussion with EAQUALS and NEAS to consider a similar event, perhaps in 2013. It was felt that we should not let EAQUALS take over the event.

#### *4.d. Feedback and comment on Accreditation UK EB minutes 28 July.*

TM confirmed that having a 'chief inspector' was agreed by the Board, as the general feeling is that inspection schemes are expected to have one.

NH asked about perceived silence from the British Council on accreditation issues. TM answered that the British Council are politically in a difficult place. TM noted that the BC did put out a robust defence of Accreditation UK. TM also noted that a surprisingly robust response was sent in response to a question from Keith Vaz MP. This has yet to enter the public domain.

PL mentioned a form which enables students to move between HTS centres without the need for a new CAS number. PL was asked to provide details.

GHG asked about the chances of Accreditation UK becoming an approved inspection body. TM responded that the choice of ISI as the inspecting body was made through a process carried out by UKBA. There are possible legal grounds for challenge if the process was not open and transparent, though there is a potential issue over which body would be the plaintiff in such an action since Accreditation UK is not a legal entity.

#### *4.e. Discussion of items relating to AUK EB meeting due to follow APSB meeting.*

Referring to paper 3.2.1 'Accreditation UK Handbook 2012 - 13'

NH questioned use of term '*current staff*.' It was thought this was to include cover / standby staff. NH questioned phrase '*any additional needs*.' It was thought this was kept vague to be a cover all term.  
**No change to either.**

NH also questioned the requirements for CRB checks and differing advice from EUK Helpline. Group discussion on different requirements for private or state providers. AH noted that terms of insurance may make CRBs compulsory. **Need to check advice given by EUK legal helpline.**

GHG questioned the use of Ofqual in phrase 'accredited by Ofqual or similar national regulators.' After discussion on it was felt the criterion was reasonable. **No change.**

Group discussion over validity of PGCE qualified teachers. Primary PGCE has language component so could be better fit in language schools. General consensus that if possible a mix of qualifications or buddy system is best to help staff with different backgrounds.

Referring to paper 3.2.2 'Inspection Criteria draft 2012 indicating changes and sections for areas of strength'

AH explained that 50% or more of strengths needed in each section for pass. Some criteria have been made more general rather than specific, to enable different centres to have a reasonable chance of fulfilling criteria.

Discussion on position of 16 / 17 year olds placed on adult courses. NH thought they should be included on same leisure programme, with limits on certain activities (i.e. no alcohol if on pub social). **No change.**

Discussion on point W40 'The provider will make every effort to obtain a 24 hour contact number for the parents, legal guardians or agent of students'. NH thought this should be an obligation.

**Agreed to change** W40 to 'The provider **will** obtain...' and add in group leaders, who should know how to contact students' next of kin.

Discussions over the 50% 'pass rate' for inspection. AH noted that all criteria can be met or not met, but only some can be strengths. **No change at present moment.**

## **5. Professional Services Updates**

### *5.a. Update on staffing levels in Professional Services*

TM updated the board that Nicole de Lalouviere will be working with the PS team as an interim manager for 10 to 12 days before Christmas. An advert or the DCE (PS) post should be released next week (w.c. 7 November) and English UK hopes to have someone in post by mid-Feb.

### *5.a. Update on Professional Services Training Days, Conferences and Qualifications.*

TW reported that some training days are already full, bookings are level with last year for the Teachers' Conference, Jodie Gray is organising the Marketing Conference and that both DELTM and WOCC courses are full.

An online booking system is currently being trialled and is almost ready to go live for training day bookings. This will ease the workload on the team and allow candidates to see availability and spaces online. TE questioned payment method. TW answered that while card payment or invoices are automatically processed, cheques and paper bookings can be accepted and input by the team.

## **5. Date and venue of next meeting**

Provisional dates are 20, 21 or 22 March 2012.

**Note: this IS during IATEFL Glasgow**