

Minutes of the 29th Meeting of the English UK Accreditation and Professional Services Board (APSB)

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

Date: 13:30 on Wednesday 12 February 2013

Present: Andrew Hjort (Chair), Sue Edwards, Dawn Abbott, Sarah Cooper, Tony Evans, Janey Futerill, Nigel Heritage, Patrick Lawlor and Tony Millns

In attendance: Huan Japes, Annie Wright, Tom Weatherley.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Geoff Hardy-Gould.

2. Minutes of the 28th Meeting of the APSB held on 19 September 2012.

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

3. Matters arising

AH noted that Accreditation UK Board had recommended forming a board to look at formalising systems and processes for centres under review, removal of Accreditation and the publication of reports.

4. Matters for discussion and decision

a. DBS, Safeguarding and 'Best Practice' (HJ and AH) (paper ASPB 29/4a)

The new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is to replace CRB checks. The question is whether English UK themselves should produce a 'best practice' document. Should Accreditation UK strengthen or extend their criteria?

AH noted a question of mechanism – should the association be providing guidelines for AUK inspectors? JF thought it may help members if the association produced best practice guidelines, to avoid areas in handbook which are not clear. NH noted members often call on English UK first for guidance, before going to Accreditation UK.

AH commented that statutory requirements will be different from private / state centres and that the association should concentrate on best practice. Statutory Requirements often change, and can be source of wrangling over what is the letter of the law and the spirit of the law.

SC noted that state sector centres would already be covered through other statutory legislation and inspections.

There followed some discussion over should English UK or Accreditation UK should produce best practice guidelines. The consensus was that guidelines should come from Accreditation UK with strong English UK input.

Action: draft a proposal for AUK Board to look at producing best practice guidelines on how to approach safeguarding and welfare.

Update 15/2 HJ: we have now agreed to create a small 'task and finish' group to look at what needs to be included in an English UK-produced 'best practice' document, including recommendations that go beyond the criteria of the Accreditation UK scheme. The first meeting is provisionally scheduled for the morning of 26th March 2013, prior to the main board meeting that day.

b. Accreditation UK: (AH) (verbal report on meeting of 6/2/13)

AH reported noted here and in matters arising (above) that the Accreditation UK Board proposes a group to look at issues of mechanism and process for centres under review, and the publication of reports. It was suggested that English UK needs to have some input on what the priorities are for Accreditation UK.

In discussion it was noted that the Accreditation UK team is extremely busy and may need help in longer term planning.

Action: wait for next AUK Board meeting and then act if it is thought that important points are being ignored.

c. Training day and Year Planner 2013 / 2014 (verbal report)

HJ outlined plans to do away with the published handbook on grounds of time and cost for a document which has limited impact. One suggested alternative is a year planner that could be of more use in schools, with English UK training days and conferences in the relevant days.

SC suggested nothing should be printed and everything should be available online. The group agreed. AW suggested printing should be at a minimum – e.g. smaller flyers for promotional purposes.

AH asked if this would impact revenue. HJ responded that plans for a national training CPD calendar are moving forward, which would list as much CPD as possible, not charging not-for-profit groups but charging commercial providers. This is separate from an English UK-only online planner. There was group approval for this. AH noted that any CPD advertised would imply an English UK approval.

Action – HJ to look at printing smaller flyers, and to make more detailed information available online.

d. Training Day Offer to Regional Groups 2013 (ASPB 29/4d)

HJ outlined plans to license training days to regional groups. Regional groups would be responsible for bookings. The hope is to drive bookings as often days outside of London and SE area fail to sell well.

There was general approval for this initiative. AW noted this could be presented at the regional groups' meeting at the upcoming AGM.

Action – to deliver a proposal at the AGM for all regional groups. Regional groups to have control of prices (including price banding for non-regional-group members).

e. Training Day and Conference Certificates (HJ) (APSB 29/4e)

HJ spoke to paper 29/4e. Training certificates will show key session outcomes and CPD hours. These would be offered to all training day participants. Certification for conferences is logistically more difficult. SC suggested e-certificates as these are easy to administer for large events and could be issued on an opt-in basis only for conferences.

Action: PS to plan and administer e-certificates for training days and conferences in 2013/2014.

5. Professional Services – updates

a. Training Days 2012/2013 (paper ASPB 29/5a)

HJ confirmed a very good year so far for PS training days. The online booking system allows for greater flexibility and responsiveness. Teacher-focused sessions are harder to sell in the working week. SE commented that if regional groups take these on there is more scope for evening / half day sessions, which will be easier from a cover point of view.

Action – PS to consider alternative running times for training days (e.g. half day and/or evening sessions) and continue with licensing plans for regional groups

b. Qualifications 2012/2013: DELTM, CertSSM (paper ASPB 29/5b)

HJ spoke to the paper.

The DELTM and Cert SSM (formerly the welfare qualification WOCC) are both bigger groups than before at 18. Cert SSM demand is very high so PS is looking at running two cohorts next year, including one in the North of England. There are advanced discussions on licensing the DELTM to a centre in Moscow, which could if successful be expanded to other countries.

Action: PS to continue to promote the DELTM to other markets and look at additional qualification options (e.g. Soft Skills training)

c. Conferences to date (paper ASPB 29/5c)

HJ spoke to paper. Numbers for Teachers' Conference (Nov 2012) up slightly. Feedback excellent.

Marketing Conference in Feb 2013 saw more delegates than before, and exhibitor stands for the first time. AH kindly noted the conference was excellent until the power cut. HJ is keen to increase the number of panel sessions to try and ensure delegates can raise questions, and maybe alter the timings of sessions at the Marketing conference based on feedback suggestions.

d. Conferences to come (HJ) (verbal report)

The Management Conference has Eric Baber opening and more exhibitors than any previous event. The 'Excellence in Business English Training' award (EBET) due for presentation at the Business English Conference has not had a great response so far, so the deadline for submissions has been extended to March 15th.

Update 15/2/13: we have had our first two EBET submissions at last.

e. ACS 2012/2013 (HJ verbal report)

There were 12 ACS consultancies in 2012 and a further two to date in 2013. Six of the 2012 ACS centres have now passed with Accreditation UK, three have postponed their inspections, two are in progress and one has failed. A new leaflet is going to print. HJ stressed the need to have a meeting with new consultants – ideally this should be timed to coincide with the issue of new Accreditation UK guidelines.

AH asked if the pool of new centres was shrinking. TM confirmed that although the number is diminishing there are still around 250 centres either unaccredited or under other schemes which are potential members.

Action: send the updated ACS leaflet when available to all potentially eligible centres - e.g. ASIC, BAC, ABLS accredited centres, plus some public sector organizations.

f. SESF 2012 / 2013 (HJ verbal report)

The main payout in recent months has been for SNT Bournemouth, with £13,360 paid out so far. SNT have finally declared insolvency. There are (contradictory) reports that a non-English UK Accredited centre 'BeFluent' has closed in Southampton but so far there is no call on the SESF. TM stated the fund ended the year at about £50,000, with the finance panel recommending a further £50,000 top up. Non English UK Accredited centres have been billed for this.

There followed some discussion of the merits of continuing to allocate these funds to the SESF. The majority were in favour of continuing to use it to protect the reputation association members, especially as more schools are likely to close in the current economic and political climate.

6. Dates of next meeting

13 June at 11am was suggested - before the main board meeting.

7. AOB – none.

8. Dates and venue of meetings for 2013 (paper ASPB 28/6a)

HJ agreed to circulate a list of proposed dates for the APSB meetings in 2013.

The meeting concluded at 14:30.