

Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the English UK Accreditation and Professional Services Board (APSB)

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

Date: 11:30 on Thursday 13 June 2013

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

In attendance: Huan Japes, Alice Marcolin, Beth Okona-Mensah, Tom Weatherley and Annie Wright.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sue Edwards

2. Minutes of the 29th Meeting of the APSB held on 12 February 2013

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

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Professional Services Updates

a) *Training Days: review and planning for next season (HJ)*

There has been a significant increase in the number of attendees due to the online booking system. More days were offered in other parts of the country in the 2012-2013 academic year than before. HJ noted that the number of days that were cancelled is partly due to the new locations that in particular areas did not prove popular enough. The most popular sessions were noted from the written report. There was a good rate of feedback on training days this year, much higher than that provided for conferences.

HJ outlined a few of the new sessions to be held in the next academic year including continuous enrolment, sales and marketing, and budgeting for smaller schools. JF queried whether a training day on winning contracts would be run by someone from outside the industry, HJ replied that it would be but the trainer would be required to understand the industry in order to make the session relevant.

b) *Conferences: venues and scheduling (HJ)*

HJ discussed the English UK ELT Management and Business English Trainers' conferences, noting the relatively low attendance of 51 delegates at the latter. Both events received an overall rating of 3.87 out of 5 in post-event feedback, with delegates from the Business English event suggesting less of a focus on soft skills and more on areas such as how to teach negotiation skills. The Young Learners event in March with Pearson and Trinity was well received with 60 delegates in attendance. TE asked what the delegate profile for the Management Conference has been since the name was changed a few years ago. HJ replied that the majority of attendees are DoSes but there are also school principals and therefore the name change has fulfilled the goal of attracting higher level staff to the event.

HJ ran through dates and venues that have been agreed for the 2013-2014 English UK conferences as detailed in the written report, highlighting the return of the Student Experience Conference and the later scheduling of the Business English Trainers' Conference. HJ also noted that there is high demand to run the Young Learner event again, however it must be noted that due to the current changes at Pearson it is not yet known who will be managing their ELT promotion.

c) *Cert IBET, DELTM and Cert SSM: dates and cohorts (HJ)*

HJ highlighted that although the Cert IBET is a good source of income for English UK it has not developed much over the last year because the number of providers is relatively low. There are currently around 75 candidates a year taking the Cert IBET course. HJ suggested ways to increase numbers including feeding back with the providers to change the programme if necessary and discussing different ways to promote it with Trinity.

HJ informed the Board that the intention is to run two cohorts of both the DELTM and Cert SSM in the 2013-2014 academic year. Both qualifications will hold one cohort based in London with a maximum of 18 candidates. There will be a northern cohort of the Cert SSM to be held at Manchester International Centre and the second cohort of the DELTM is due to be held in Moscow as a blueprint for running more cohorts of the course globally, which HJ noted would be excellent for English UK's profile.

PL made reference to the fact that the Cert SSM had previously been called the WOCC and wondered whether this meant the qualification had a different status. HJ noted that although the name had changed the course is essentially the same programme and it is still not currently externally validated, although this is something that is being pursued with the possibility of OCR validation. PL commented that it is important now for courses such as this to have an external validation as it can influence pay structures for staff members.

d) *New qualification – Diploma in Soft Skills Training (HJ)*

With reference to the written report provided, HJ notified the Board of the proposed new Diploma in Soft Skills Training which is due to launch in November following exploratory talks starting in June. The qualification would be run by Emma-Sue Prince using innovative training techniques that would be specifically useful for Business English providers and taught through a mix of face-to-face sessions and online webcasts. A date has been set to engage interest with English UK London on 27th June. TE asked whether it was geared towards teacher trainers specifically and identified that there is a desire amongst teacher trainers and heads of these departments to offer courses worth their while but it has been difficult to find anything relevant. TE noted that longer serving staff are often looking for something fresh to develop themselves further and therefore there could be a market for such a qualification. GHG highlighted that Pilgrims run a number of courses like this for experienced teacher trainers but they tend to be mostly taken by overseas trainers, HJ noted his interest in this and suggested GHG could provide him with some further information concerning these courses.

e) *New online training offer – AF & T Solutions (HJ)*

HJ outlined a new initiative for English UK members that could offer level one online training in areas such as safeguarding and fire and safety training at a cost of around £85 per member centre for an unlimited number of places for one year. AH questioned whether or not level one could be offered online, NH commented that it would not be a problem to offer such training that way.

f) *Certificates: training days and conferences (HJ)*

HJ informed the Board that from September 2013 all training day participants will receive a certificate for their attendance. There will also be an optional e-certificate for conference attendance

5. Matters for discussion and decision

a) *Accreditation UK Handbook 2014 -2015: revisions to criteria and section headings (HJ & AH)*

With reference to the Board papers concerning the revisions to criteria, AH identified that it was better to present the amendments together in one document including his and Liz McLaren's comments. AH noted the two main changes proposed:

Care of juniors heading: AH noted that not all accredited centres deal with juniors so to have the criteria for this area in the general welfare section is too confusing and doesn't give enough prominence to the care of juniors. PL commented that the welfare section of the criteria is currently very long and asked whether the care of juniors section would have a separate summary box. AH confirmed that a separate box would be needed. PL queried whether the criteria would relate to situations concerning under 18s who turn up at the school and stay with relatives as this scenario is very different to those coming as part of a group. PL highlighted that accommodation is a different issue so that could be separate from the rest of the criteria in this section. AH noted that all under 18s are the same in terms of safeguarding.

GHG cited criterion W32 concerning identifying under 18s to adults working in an organisation and queried whether adult students would also need to be made aware of who the under 18s are, noting that this would be very difficult in practice. NH suggested that it should be done and many schools do this by pointing out the facts of law in this country in order to protect the adult students as well as the under 18 students. AH commented that this is covered in his school's induction procedure.

Action: the care of juniors section requires a separate summary box and the criteria in this section must be numbered starting from '1'.

Staff conditions heading: AH outlined his suggestion of three criteria being grouped together under a new 'staff conditions' heading, to demonstrate how to deal with staff training and other working conditions excluding pay. AH gave the example of professional development as one to include however he identified that this wouldn't mean new criteria were introduced, just that current criteria in sections R6, M10 and T11 be moved under the new heading. AH identified the significance of giving this a distinct sub-section within a section rather than its own section and noted that it would go under M22, staff management. He suggested that having only four sections means that they do become larger but it is better to have sub-sections than completely separate ones. AH added that this sub-section would be an 'area of strength' rather than a 'point of excellence'.

PL observed that agency staff may be a problem here because they come and go very quickly so something needs to be written in this section relating to permanent members of staff as opposed to temporary agency staff. AH highlighted that this would be the case with the criteria wherever it were placed. NH suggested that policy and procedures could address the issue of agency staff. HJ commented that focusing on the care of staff is a good idea and that it should include all staff, not just teaching staff.

GHG queried what the point of this change would be and whether the focus should really be on student outcomes, with an emphasis on looking after students and their learning. He also commented that the creation of this category could give rise to expansion over the years which might lead the focus to be more about staff than students. HJ highlighted that the criteria in question already exist. AH commented that this heading would not create an undue emphasis on the accreditation of staff, rather that it would put the topic on a par with the leisure programme criteria for example. He added that the advantage of putting a staff development section together is that it would show there is a commitment to it. TE argued that staff development already comes through as important in the way the criteria is at present. GHG summarised that he did not agree with the change in emphasis and would therefore not vote to include the staff conditions section.

TM agreed with GHG that grouping the criteria into one sub-section would cause this section to grow elaborately but suggested that a focus purely on outcomes would be very radical and have huge ramifications for the scheme. TM asked if GHG would argue for the criteria to be removed completely. GHG replied that the focus on outcomes in the ISI scheme is helpful and that he would not argue to get rid of the current Accreditation UK criteria but more to instigate a radical overview of the scheme in order to focus on outcomes.

AH asked the Board who would be in favour of pursuing the idea to have this as a new sub-section. The Board agreed it would not be necessary to group criteria R6, M10 and T11 together under a 'staff conditions' heading. AH noted the views of the board but stated that he felt they were missing an opportunity.

Individual criteria by criteria:

M4 – change agreed, including homestay and group leaders is fine

M5 – change agreed

W4 – agreed should be renamed M6

M6 – moved to under-18s section

M9 – agreed to replace word 'reviewing' with 'appraising'

M10 – moved elsewhere

T6 – agreed belongs here rather than in teaching and learning

MX – agreed to leave this one out

M14 – 'These will be accessible at all times' agreed

M15 – agreed to leave out 'regardless of visa status'

M16 – agreed should read 'will be clear and accessible to all staff and students'

M17 – agreed 'valid rationale' should be used in place of 'satisfactory'

M18 – agreed unnecessary change

M19 – TM argued it could be a video, recorded as opposed to just in writing could be ok as well

M21 – agreed 'policy will be accessible to all students and written in clear accessible English'

M23 – agreed change

R2 – TE noted this is an exact repeat of wording for the section – leave out R2?

R6 – 'sufficient space' rather than 'room' agreed

R9 – agreed it should say 'any' technology and 'where' used

R10 – change agreed

R12 – change agreed

T2 & T4 – agreed these should read 'TEFLQ qualification'

T6S – moved to M5, agreed belongs better in M5

T17 – agreed this should say 'develop independent learning'

T10 – TE argued this should be completely removed, HJ is of the opinion that the British Council will want to keep this, AH highlighted that T19 actually covers this anyway. PL suggested that T14 should be covered elsewhere.

T18 – change agreed

T19 – change agreed

T22 – change agreed, TE noted there should be a comma after 'progression routes'

T23 – agreed this should read 'and' not 'or' in case of under 18s

Action: in the knowledge section, 'students' needs to be changed to 'learners' throughout

T28 – agreed should say 'lesson objectives' or 'aims'

T32 – agreed should replace 'engage in meaningful communication' with 'communicate'

W1 – agreed that sentence with an asterisk should be moved away from in between W1 and W2

W4 – agreed this should be moved

W5 – agreed this is a wording issue and HJ will word it correctly

W6 – agreed to remove the word ‘enrolled’

W9 – agreed laundry point should include ‘a weekly laundry service’

W14 – agreed ‘whom’ should replace ‘who’

W18 – agreed word ‘of’ should go after ‘in writing’

W29 & W30 – agreed that ‘on-site’ and ‘off-site’ should be written in full on both points

W31 onwards – agreed it is only necessary say ‘safeguarding’ as this is a generic term which covers child protection and welfare.

b) *Accreditation UK: under-review category, removal of accreditation and the publication of reports (HJ & AH)*

AH confirmed that there is nothing to report at this stage for the ‘under review’ category.

c) *Accreditation UK Executive Board: minutes of the 29th meeting 8/5/13 ((HJ & AH)*

The Board made no comment about the minutes.

d) *Best Practice ‘Task and finish group: report on meeting of 26/3/13 and next steps (HJ, AH & NH)*

AH confirmed that the task and finish group has been tasked but not yet finished.

6. Date and venue of next meeting

To be confirmed

7. Any other urgent business

None

The meeting concluded at 13:17.