

Minutes of the 31st Meeting of the English UK Accreditation and Professional Services Board (APSB)

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

Date: 11:00 on Wednesday 25 September 2013

Present: Andrew Hjort (Chair), Tony Evans, Janey Futerill, Geoff Hardy-Gould, Nigel Heritage and Tony Millns

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sarah Cooper, Patrick Lawlor and Dawn Abbott. Sue Edwards was delayed due to traffic.

2. Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the APSB held on 13 June 2013

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

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Matters for discussion and decision

4a) *Best practice 'task and finish group': welfare and student services: oral report (HJ, AH and NH)*

The group decided that the following would be produced; a FAQ document covering statutory requirements, and a reference sheet for welfare criteria. These will be the basis for online documents to be edited as necessary. Timeframe - documents produced by the end of November to be shared with the British Council and inspectors. End of December – online and shared with English UK members.

AH added the documents are to leave out processes and the 'blindingly obvious'.

The APSB board approved of the report and the timeframe

4b) *Accreditation UK Handbook 2014/2015: draft final criteria (HJ and AH) (APSB 31/4b)*

AH reported that the only issues remaining are mathematical due to the distribution of 'areas of strength' among categories. However, this is difficult to resolve and nothing to be done.

The board welcomed this information

NH raised an issue with criteria W5 and use of the word only:

'W5 Students will be issued with a 24-hour emergency contact number for the provider in writing, except in the case of organisations enrolling only those students already settled in the local community and with a local support network'

Board discussed that this wording covers FE colleges where students come from the local, UK domiciled population. TM noted that if the emergency contact number is a blanket

provision, domiciled and non-domiciled must have the number. If the wording remains as above, it is only centres with only UK domiciled students which do not need to issue a 24-hour emergency number.

AW asked if it should be reworded. In discussion thought not necessary as this had been discussed and left as above.

The APSB board agreed to leave point W5 as it appears above.

Several issues about specific criteria

- M1 word missing – ...as well'as' awareness of... **agreed.**
- W8. TE noted 'student residences' is missing and should be included. After discussion **board agreed this is not needed as the criteria covers this term.**
- W8 After discussion about use of terms for accommodation in this criteria, AH suggested removing brackets from phrase '(homes accommodating more than four adult students should be described as private home/residential accommodation)' and to make clear in criteria that 'homes with more than 4 students cannot be described as homestay' **The board agreed this.**
- W9 TE concerned that the last point 'a weekly laundry service (especially in the case of under-16s) or clearly explained laundry arrangements.' Is too vague. After discussion **the board agreed not to change this**
- W17 TE noted the Accreditation Unit need to be alerted that the section in brackets is not for publication **agreed.**
- C4 TE noted second line '...infirm applicants that...' add'that' **agreed.**
- C7 TE noted third bullet should read '...normally be present...' - insert 'be' **agreed.**
- C8 NH queried the need for a 24-hour contact number for group leader – implies you do not need a contact number for students in the group. AH replied that the only way to strengthen this is to demands direct numbers – something not all groups are prepared to do. AH suggested this is best practice but no change needed. **The board agreed not to change this criteria.**

c) Accreditation UK Executive Board: minutes of the 30th meeting 24/7/13 (AH and HJ) (APSB 31/4c)

HJ is to follow up this meeting with an HE focus group to find out if the scheme meets their needs. At the moment a session as part of the March 2014 Management Conference is thought to be best. **The board agreed to this.**

TM reported on the issue of refund guidance. The Home Office had expressed a desire for a 'generic sector wide approach'. The Home Office is circulating a draft policy on this issue which is being heavily criticised due to issues of difference between fee protection, complaints procedures and refunds. **The board thanked Tony for this update.**

d) International accreditation and associate membership (HJ) (APSB 31/4d)

HJ updated the board that there have been discussions with contacts abroad, mainly Italy and Latin America, about providing an Accreditation service abroad. One option is to moderate existing schemes which may be close to Accreditation UK standards. This involves assessing existing criteria and possible joint inspections. A second option for other areas, where no prior accrediting organisation exists in any form, is for English UK to run the entire scheme.

HJ noted that cross moderation is preferred. TM noted that BiS Education is keen on exporting UK standards as a strategic move which may result in some support.

AW asked if this involves Accreditation UK (British Council unit). TM answered that Accreditation UK senior management have decided not to proceed due to issues of a government agency imposing influence. It would be an English UK version of the criteria, with a separate membership category. This would carry an implicit definition of quality, rather than explicit (certificates, etc.).

TE asked how the scheme would run. HJ answered that it would be similar to UK – yearly fee, inspections, and re-inspection. However, English UK in most cases would be monitoring another scheme so would be some split in income.

TM noted if English UK were to be dealing with an area directly (second option) there would need to be careful consideration of the numbers of centres in an area to make any trip cost effective.

The board approved of these moves, the answers in the discussion and the approach set out in the paper.

5. Professional Services

a) Training Days and Programme Calendar 2013-2014 (HJ, TW and BM) (APSB 5a)
For 2013 – 2014 the Professional Services team have not produced a handbook, and instead opted for a larger wall planner with conferences and training days listed. HJ explained this was due to concerns that the handbook became redundant after November and was a large cost financially and in time for the team. It is hoped the new calendar is more practical for schools.

AW asked if a key was needed. HJ answered that a key had been considered but was not included partly due to space, partly due to simplicity. It will be considered for future variants.

HJ spoke about the training day programme. More members had been canvassed and this resulted in more days with a focus on visas, risk assessments and managerial/administration matters. The number of days outside of London has been increased, and the start time moved back to 11am to allow attendees from further away to reach London on cheaper ticket tariffs. Certificates have also been introduced.

The board welcomed this report

b) Conference Programme 2013 – 2014 (HJ, TW and BM) (APSB 5b)

HJ ran through dates

- Teachers' Conference, Prospero House, London, Saturday 9 November 2013
- Marketing Conference, One Great George Street, London, Friday 7 February 2014
- Management Conference, Bristol Marriott Royal, Friday/ Saturday 7/8 March 2014
- Annual Conference and AGM, Hotel Russell, London, Wednesday/Thursday 7/8 March 2014

So far bookings are exceptionally strong for Teachers' Conference – looks to be the biggest year yet. The conference will be used to launch the Cambridge Action Research Project, with English UK assisting– it will include tutorials and possibly publication for participants.

Marketing Conference - Andy Lopater ('Mr Network') has been lined up as plenary speaker. AW asked about drinks reception options for the Marketing Conference. HJ answered that this is under discussion as it is partially dependent on how the British Council would like to launch market reports at this time.

The board welcomed this report

c) Qualifications 2013-2104: DELTM and Cert SSM (HJ, TW and BM) (APSB 5c)
HJ reported that the Diploma in English Language Teaching Management (DELTM) was again running at full strength with 18 participants. There are some small chances that the DELTM may roll out to Russia and Italy. Discussions fairly advanced with a provider in Russia, but are difficulties in getting enough participants to run the course.

The Certificate in Student Services Management (Cert SSM, formerly the Welfare Officer Certificate Course) has a full group of 18 in London, and for the first time is also being run in Manchester. There are currently 9 bookings on the Manchester course.

Modules for both courses have been revised, with some major changes to be made for several modules on the DELTM course next summer.

NH asked about the possibility of validation for the Cert SSM. HJ answered that finding validation for such small numbers is difficult – and may require a large fee. Unfortunately due to the nature of the course there is limited potential to move it overseas so difficult to expand.

The Certificate in International Business English Training (Cert IBET) currently has a low take up. English UK assists in moderating the course – recently there has been interest from potential new providers which may provide a boost to numbers and student recruitment. HJ is planning a survey of providers to try and see how to give the Cert IBET a better international presence.

The board welcomed this report

d) Antioquia, Columbia: governor visit and education parks (oral report) (HJ)
HJ Antioquia government is planning 40 to 80 'Education Parks' which will offer continuing education for adolescents, which includes ELT provision. May be opportunities for 3rd parties to get involved with software, teacher training and possibly course delivery. BiS is organising a task group of interested organisations. However, BiS are not providing any financial support. It appears no one is prepared to travel at their own expense, but this situation may change. English UK are interested in the project, but difficult to justify large expense at the current moment.

The board welcomed this report

6. Date and venue of next meeting

A doodle poll will be circulated

7. Any other business

The board sends best wishes and a 'get well soon' to Patrick Lawlor, who has recently undergone surgery and is understood to be recovering well. We are all looking forward to welcoming you back Patrick.

Meeting finished 13.30