**MINUTES**

**Meeting Title: Approval Policy & Assurance Committee**

**Meeting Date: 9 May 2022 – 14:00 – 16:00hrs**

**Protective marking: Official**

**Present:**

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| **Committee Members**  Kate Barclay (Chair), Malcolm Press, Bev Robinson, Jessica Leigh Jones  **Apologies**  Neil Morrison  **Institute Officials**  Beth Chaudhary, Robert Nitsch, Carmel Grant |

1. **Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest** 
   1. The Chair welcomed committee members and Institute officials to the inaugural meeting of the Approvals Policy and Assurance Committee.
   2. The Chair asked committee members whether they had any conflicts of interest to declare. All committee members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests or otherwise) then it must be raised at the outset of the relevant meeting which deals with the issue giving rise to the actual or potential conflict. No actual or potential conflict of interests were declared.
2. **Minutes and actions from the last meeting**
   1. Members of the committee who were previously members of the former Approval and Funding committee (A&FC) confirmed their approval of the minutes of the final A&FC meeting held on 03 March 2022. The minutes for the previous Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) will be approved via correspondence.
3. **Terms of Reference**
   1. The committee considered its terms of reference. The committee requested clarification that only board members count towards quoracy. It also requested that quality was referenced in the early clauses to ensure the continuation of the focus on quality previously provided by QAC. The committee agreed the terms of reference and review plan.
4. **Forward Plan and meeting review** 
   1. The committee considered the proposed forward plan of work, which had been developed in view of key upcoming IfATE milestones; the purpose of this was to ensure that the role of the committee was optimised, and value added. The committee requested that ‘apprenticeships’ are added to the future themes, as this was a key IfATE product, and this would ensure that Board views are incorporated at a strategic level in apprenticeship development.
   2. The committee requested that the delivery of the forward plan is designed to be mindful of (a) what IfATE is discharged to do and (b) any ministerial commissions/directions to ensure that committee focus remains on governance/providing strategic direction and that IfATE is fully discharging its duties rather than the committee moving into a management /operational space.
   3. The committee agreed to the proposed theme for the June meeting – External Quality Assurance / Assessment.
5. **Confirmation of impact effectiveness** 
   1. The committee considered the proposals to measure impact effectiveness. The purpose of this work was to crystalise IfATE’s objective from a product point of view into a dashboard so that the committee can (a) effectively approve IfATE processes, (b) be assured on these processes and (c) ensure there remains alignment with government ask of IfATE. The committee recommended that the measures be reduced to around 50% of their current volume and are optimised around areas that have the most impact and baseline analysis is undertaken to ensure robust analysis is concluded. The importance of measures being measurable was also stressed.
   2. The committee in principle agreed with IfATE proposal on measuring impact effectiveness and made suggestions for further improvements by ensuring measures used are both optimised and focussed.

1. **Mandatory Qualifications** 
   1. The committee considered an update on IfATE’s approach to and policy for mandatory qualifications in apprenticeships, prior to consultation in Summer 2022. The committee was asked to provide views on the 4 principles underpinning this work (a) mandates are specific, (b) there is coherence between the outcomes of the post-16 qualifications review at Level 3, (c) mandated qualifications be integrated into the End-point assessment (EPA) and (d) qualifications used as part of apprenticeships uphold the principles of EPA.
   2. Members noted the importance of retaining and emphasising the inherent value of an apprenticeship and were in favour of the presented principle of bearing down on unnecessary qualifications being designed into apprenticeships.
   3. The committee noted that established qualifications can be valued by both learners and employers and recommended the value to learners, in terms of future transferability, should be factored into the future policy.
   4. The committee raised the point around value of EPA in the context of displaced/hanging EPAs, where learners gain a qualification as part of the apprenticeship, however, do not take their EPA.  Officials noted that this was a stakeholder view, however, the limited data available does not seem to support such a view. There was agreement (committee and officials) that integrating qualification and EPA assessment would nonetheless be sensible; removing unnecessary assessment and preventing whatever current volumes of EPA displacement were leading to early withdrawals.
   5. The committee heard that IfATE will be consulting in Summer 2022 with consideration and final decisions leading to updated policy in Autumn 2022. IfATE will consider the best way to implement the policy to ensure the positive changes are felt as soon as possible.
2. **Future facing – Emerging Skills** 
   1. The committee were briefed on the progress of the future facing – emerging skills work. The committee welcomed the work being undertaken around emerging skills, however, highlighted the potential risk around unknowns and noted linkages with apprenticeship starts – emerging skills needs and skills shortages. The committee heard that IfATE has created a team focussed on future skills which will inform the emerging skills areas.
3. **Occupational Maps** 
   1. The committee received an update brief on the occupational maps project. The committee requested a RAG rating system to provide high-level assurance to the committee on progress against the occupational map project milestones. The committee noted that the language used in the context of occupational maps was very important, and this needs to be employer and learner friendly.
4. **Approvals Activity** 
   1. The committee considered the proposed data tools and information requirements for the committee to fulfil its functions. The committee welcomed this work and requested data pack at every meeting, and to include.

* intelligence on level of qualification, numbers/percentage of each and trend,
* data on starts/ completions
* data on trends (including historical) more widely mapped across the sectors/ routes.
* inclusion of any intelligence on regional breakdowns.

9.2 In addition, the committee requested intelligence on funding band model (recommendations) and data on percentage of learners aligned to an EPAO, including learner experience, broken down by regions, apprenticeships, and employers.

1. **Any other business**

10.1 The committee thanked colleagues for the work in developing material for the inaugural meeting and provided feedback for the development of future meeting material.