

MINUTES

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting title:	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board
Meeting date:	31 January 2024
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Dame Fiona Kendrick (Deputy Chair); Dr Kate Barclay; Jennifer Coupland; Jane Hadfield; Mark McClennon MBE; Sir Robin Millar CBE; Neil Morrison; Bev Robinson CBE (via teleconference).
IfATE officials present:	Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director; Dr Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director; Rob Nitsch CBE, Delivery Director; Kristofer McGhee, General Counsel and Company Secretary; Avril Cooper, HR Director; David Wilson, Chief Financial Officer; Simon Love, Head of Governance; Karl Anderson, Head of Qualifications Policy (item 6 only); Chilufya Dawo, Deputy Director for Strategic Communications and Engagement (item 8 only); Phil Scullion, Head of Communications and External Affairs (item 8 only)
Other stakeholders present:	Sarah MacLean, Director, Skills Strategy & Engagement (via teleconference); Louise Wright, Deputy Director, Technical Education & Qualifications Reform; DfE Head of Lifelong Learning Entitlement team (item 6 only).
Apologies:	Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE; John Cope; Sir Peter Estlin; Professor Malcolm Press CBE
External attendee:	Steven Jewell, Registered mental health nurse, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (item 4 only)

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1. Dame Fiona Kendrick, (Deputy Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting. The Deputy Chair explained the Chair had been called away at short notice. In line with IfATE's Governance Framework, as Deputy Chair, she would be chairing the meeting.

Item 2. Declarations of conflict of interest

2. The Deputy Chair asked board members whether they had any new declarations of conflict of interest to make. All board members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests) 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 new declarations were made.
3. Jennifer Coupland updated the board regarding John Cope and his nomination as a prospective parliamentary candidate.

Item 3. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

4. The board agreed the minutes from the last meeting, held on 15 November 2023.
5. The board reviewed the action log and noted the progress on the open actions and agreed to close those actions which had been satisfactorily concluded. A board member questioned why the action relating to reporting had not been addressed in the paper. Kristofer McGhee explained that the priority had been to focus on the governance model with the available resources. He noted this was outstanding and that officials would make this the next priority focus.

Action 73: Officials to finalise the ESG proposal and share with board members before the next board meeting.

Item 4. Learner story

6. The Deputy Chair welcomed Steven Jewell who is a registered mental health nurse, and who had recently completed a registered nursing degree apprenticeship. Steven shared his powerful story on why he had entered the nursing profession and how he had been able to develop his career through apprenticeships.
7. Steven explained he had only heard about apprenticeships after speaking to his ward matron and she encouraged him to apply. He was of the view that apprenticeships needed greater promotion with an emphasis on how they were very different to previous apprenticeship models. Steven particularly highlighted how you could undertake an apprenticeship whilst in your current role and that this is a great 'safety net' for existing employees who would not otherwise be able to afford to study and gain new skills.
8. Board members asked further questions on his experiences, including the apprenticeship assessment. Steven confirmed he would like to continue to progress in his nursing career. The Deputy Chair thanked Steven for talking to the board so candidly and wished him well with his future plans.

Item 5. CEO report, strategic risks and finance updates

9. Jennifer Coupland, (CEO) presented this item and provided an update to the board on the current situation regarding T Levels, following the announcement on 30 January, that the Hair and Barbering T Level would not be going ahead in its current form. DfE colleagues explained that they were undertaking some further work on qualification reform in this sector

and Jennifer explained IfATE's focus would be on developing a robust route strategy to support further changes in the sector.

10. The CEO also highlighted IfATE's internal "Focus" programme regarding the organisation design, hybrid working and the work on IfATE's estates capacity. IfATE had submitted its case to DfE to retain a small central London presence alongside its network of offices across England. This will be reviewed by DfE and the Government Property Agency. DfE colleagues had helpfully provided additional guidance in support of IfATE's case.
11. The board asked whether there was an opportunity for the draft Strategic Guidance objectives to further emphasise certain aspects of IfATE's work such as T Levels, equity, diversity and inclusion and levelling up. The board also requested readability and accessibility to be considered in the final draft. The Strategy Director explained the supporting text would include more detail and that the objectives were still in draft so would look to address the points raised.
12. The board welcomed the ongoing work with the Gatsby Foundation relating to emerging skills and asked how this would link in with DfE's Unit for Future Skills (UFS). The Strategy Director explained that the two complemented each other with the IfATE/Gatsby work focussed on how to set up the operational processes needed to gather insight (including from UFS) and translate that into skills in occupational standards, apprenticeships, technical qualifications and other training offers.
13. The board asked how IfATE would ensure awarding organisations would continue to deliver on T Levels. The Delivery Director explained that lessons learned from the first generation of T Level contracts had fed directly into the procurement for Generation 2 as had the introduction of an adaptive pricing model which would impact how potential bidders viewed the contract.
14. The board commented on the learning and development (L&D) score from the most recent staff survey results. The HR Director explained the score encompassed three elements which included progression and opportunities, so not just focussed on training. The HR team had already implemented several changes as well as the CEO raising personal learning/development with new starters. The board asked whether it was possible to join with DfE's training. The HR Director explained that this had been explored but had been unsuccessful. However, early indications are that the other changes made are having an impact, and the HR team will continue to monitor.
15. The board asked for an update regarding the implications of a qualified audit opinion if IfATE's 2023/24 expenditure exceeded any of its delegated budgets. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) explained IfATE's 2023/24 financial position had improved which meant an overspend against any of its delegated budgets resulting in a qualified audit opinion was now less likely.
16. The board emphasised the need for IfATE to prioritise to manage within the constraints of a smaller workforce. The CFO acknowledged this point and noted that IfATE was seeking efficiencies in its back-office functions whilst prioritising policy and delivery. The executive leadership team believed that arriving at a reduced headcount as early as possible would assist in mitigating the risks of delivering IfATE's priorities with a smaller workforce.

Action 74: IfATE to review the draft Strategic Guidance objectives in line with feedback received and propose revised wording.

Item 6. Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)

17. The Deputy Chair welcomed DfE's Head of LLE Policy and IfATE's Head of Qualification Policy, to the meeting. DfE's Head of LLE Policy explained the aim of the LLE is to bring all student finance into one system for all to access, from an 18-year-old to an existing employee seeking to upskill and develop themselves. IfATE's Head of Qualification Policy explained IfATE will play a key role, in the future, in ensuring that only IfATE approved technical qualifications will be eligible for funding for learners to access.
18. Officials confirmed an LLE consultation was live and would end on 1 April 2024. The board were told that officials hoped that the consultation outcome would show a general consensus regarding the types of qualifications which would be eligible for funding through the LLE. The consultation was also an opportunity for a call for evidence.
19. The board asked who were expected to respond to the consultation. Officials confirmed awarding organisations were expected to be the primary respondents but that they did expect some employer feedback. The board were keen to impress on officials the need for a strong information, advice and guidance campaign to ensure the focus was on the uptake of Levels 4 and 5 qualifications to stimulate demand, particularly regarding employers.
20. The Deputy Chair thanked both colleagues for their time.

Item 7. Review of IfATE's governance arrangements

21. Board members discussed the proposals set out in the paper regarding revised board and committee operations and agreed in principle with the proposals. On equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) matters, board members were keen to ensure that EDI matters retained the correct level of focus and asked officials to put forward proposals for this to be achieved.
22. The board agreed the proposal for APAC to be re-named Product Assurance Committee (PAC) and for it to pivot its focus to IfATE products and impact. Board members questioned whether the committee's workload was sustainable and asked officials to look again at the Terms of Reference (ToR) to ensure its objectives were sufficiently clear. Additionally, board members requested that all board members attend at least one PAC meeting per year.
23. The board agreed to increase the membership for both the Audit, Risk & Assurance and the Remuneration Committees. Board members agreed to the refreshed ToR for both committees and the proposal for board champions. Board members confirmed they were also content with the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in the paper.
24. Board members also requested that, as 2024 would be an election year, they receive information and guidance on the pre-election period.

Action 75: Officials to develop proposals for ensuring EDI retained board level scrutiny and visibility.

Action 76: Officials to revisit the ToR for PAC and share with board members.

Action 77: Officials to share, when available, information and guidance on the pre-election period.

Item 8. IfATE brand strategy implementation

25. The Deputy Chair welcomed Chilufya Dawo, Deputy Director for Strategic Communications and Engagement and Phil Scullion, Head of Communications and External Affairs to the

meeting. Chilufya highlighted key parts of the implementation plan which board members welcomed. Board members asked that officials consider the outputs and how this was measured to ensure these are truly employer focussed and to consider measures from a sector and region perspective.

26. Board members highlighted the importance in developing closer working relationships with route panel members to maximise sector reach.
27. Board members also highlighted the value of the IfATE logo and opportunities to link up with employers to use it in a quality mark form on their skills training. Officials offered to provide board members with further detail on this option. Board members approved the implementation plan for IfATE's refreshed brand strategy and thanked Chilufya and Phil for their work.

Action 78: Officials to consider opportunities for IfATE logo to be used on employer websites to demonstrate support of working partnership.

Item 9. Matters arising from the papers for information and any other business

28. Board members had no comments to raise from the papers for information.
29. The CEO requested board members complete the Cabinet Office request for equality information to improve the quality of the data the government collects and publishes on the diversity of public appointments. Additionally, board members were reminded to update their register of interests by 5 February.
30. The Deputy Chair thanked board members for their time and confirmed the next meeting would be held on 20 March.

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