MINUTES

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting Title-Institute for Apprenticeships & TechnicalEducation Board
Meeting Date-15 May 2019
Protective marking-Official

Board members present-Antony Jenkins (Chair), Sir Gerry Berragan,Kate Barclay, Bev Robinson, Paul Cadman,Robin Millar, Toby Peyton-Jones, ProfessorMalcolm Press
Institute officials present-Robert Nitsch, Peter Schild, James Matthews,Kristofer McGhee, David Aickin
Other officials present-Eileen Milner, Keith Smith, three members of theApprentice Panel
Apologies-Jessica Leigh Jones, Dame Fiona Kendrick

Welcome and introductions/declarations of interest

1. Antony Jenkins (Chair) welcomed Board members and participating officials to the meeting. The Chair asked Board members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. Board members confirmed that they had no interests to declare.

Minutes, actions from the last meeting, declarations of interest

2. The Board considered the minutes from the last Board meeting on 20 March 2019 and were content to approve them.

Apprentice Panel presentation

3. Two members of the Apprentice Panel provided an update on the Panel's work including their communications plan and feedback from their networks. The Panel members reported that they had:

   - worked closely with the Institute's Head of Communications to set out a

communication plan with a clear aim, purpose and outcomes and had agreed communication leads;

- met with the Department for Education (DfE) and Institute teams to gather feedback on T Level branding; and

- established a network with the American Embassy and had attended a wide range of events including the National Apprenticeship Week as well as more local events with a focus on smaller firms.

4. The Panel said they would also be working with the Institute's Chief Operating Officer, Robert Nitsch, to ensure that the voice of apprentices influenced the Institute's work in a tangible way.

5. The Panel also said they were planning to work with the Standards Development Team in the Institute, as they would like each Panel member to be linked to a Relationship Manager relating to that member's standard, to provide real life insight and feedback.

6. The Board was keen to learn what the Panel had done to gather apprenticeship insights and what more might be done to raise the profile of apprentices. The Panel suggested providing more avenues to feed back their experiences. The Board suggested that trade bodies could also be used to amplify the voice of apprentices.

7. The Panel noted that 'quality' mattered just as much to apprentices as employers and expressed concern about the quality of some training provision and the support offered to apprentices. The Panel suggested various approaches that could be explored to help apprentices better prepare for their end-point assessment. This included mock assessments, more regular reviews, tripartite meetings, a wider range of assessment methods and more peer-to-peer support.

8. The Board agreed it was important to invest in apprenticeship feedback and discussed where it might be possible to put in specific interventions. The Board thanked the Panel members for their excellent presentation.

ACTION 1: Board to write to the Apprentice Panel members to thank them for their work.

External Quality Assessment (EQA) Framework

9. Nikki Christie introduced a discussion on the EQA Framework by highlighting the good overall progress. The aim was to ensure that end-point assessment (EPA) delivery was high quality through a programme of EQA audits and visits. Nikki emphasised the importance of taking action when things go wrong and having an effective feedback loop through the system to drive improvements in end-point assessment plans, end-point assessment organisations (EPAO) and end-point assessment delivery.

10. Nikki explained that the Framework was built around 5 principles (Relevant, Reliable, Efficient, Positive, Learning). These were designed to ensure that the EPA effectively measured occupational competence (and success in the occupation after passing the apprenticeship) and resulted in the same grades across different cohorts, times and EPAOs.

11. Nikki introduced the proposed Digital System to be launched towards the end of June. This system would draw on data from the ESFA. This would mean that every EQA organisation would in principle be able to record digitally the outcome of assessments thus providing a rich source of data. This would include:

    - details about the apprenticeship standard;
    - the EPAO responsible for delivering the EPA;
    - apprentice information;
    - assessment methods; and
    - assessment plan recommendations.

12. Nikki asked that the Board note the activity being carried out to support and improve EQA.

13. The Board discussed the importance of communications. Nikki explained that throughout the development of the Framework there had been engagement with representatives of the EQA providers and other stakeholders. Institute staff had hosted forums, presented on the developments at conferences and events and had published blogs and op-eds to gather feedback. The Board noted that for the system to work properly there had to be a clear benefit for the people who put the data in and it was important to document what improvement to processes should be expected.

14. The Board thanked Nikki for her presentation and asked that this topic should be re-visited at the July Board meeting.

ACTION 2: The EQA Framework document to be added to the agenda of the July Board meeting.

Statutory Review – Digital Route and approach to future reviews

15. Ana Osbourne introduced a discussion on the Statutory Review. Ana reminded the Board that the Institute had a statutory obligation to regularly review apprenticeship standards to ensure they were high quality, properly aligned and met the needs of employers.

16. A pilot review on the Digital Route was launched in September 2018 with an external consultation. Digital was chosen due to the fast-moving nature of occupations on the route, continually impacted by changing and emerging technologies.

17. Ana explained that it had been important to clearly communicate the legislative underpinning to their work on the Digital Review but important to remember the Institute was also acting on behalf of industry. Key communication points included:

    • extensive, positive engagement with employers, including a broad public consultation and input from the original trailblazer groups which was overseen by the Digital Route Panel and the Institute's Board;
    • reviews aim to raise the quality of existing apprenticeships by ensuring that all are based on genuine occupations and included the most up to date content employers need; and
    • the outcomes of the review taken forward by trailblazer groups and new apprenticeship standards should be ready to deliver early next year.

18. The Review involved early direct engagement with trailblazer chairs and intensive workshops to discuss the outcomes of the Review.

19. Ana concluded by outlining the programme of reviews on the other 14 routes. These will begin later in the summer starting with Hair & Beauty; Creative & Design;

Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care; and Engineering & Manufacturing. These reviews will take into account the lessons learnt from the pilot.

20. The Board noted the proactive approach taken to communicate the outcomes of the Digital Review and expressed strong support that consultation and engagement should be at the heart of all future reviews.

Review of Appeals Procedure

21. The Institute's Head of Legal, Kristofer McGhee, introduced a discussion on the appeals procedure. He noted that while there was no expressed statutory requirement for an Appeals Procedure, the senior management team considered it important to have a vehicle for trailblazer groups to challenge certain decisions of the Institute. The Institute had also committed to review the Appeals Procedure annually.

22. The Institute now had over a year's experience of the current Appeals Procedure. Key learning from historic appeals had led to improvements in systems for recording the decision-making process, communication with trailblazer groups and handling standards that were transferred to the Institute shortly after the Institute was created.

23. Kris proposed a number of further refinements to the Appeals Procedure to ensure that the process was (a) responsive to trailblazer groups' feedback, (b) more streamlined and (c) clearer.

24. The proposed refinements included:

   - re-categorising the Appeal Procedure as a Review Procedure so that it more accurately reflected the function it was intended to serve;
   - modifying the timeframes for submitting a review to enable trailblazer groups more time to prepare for a review;
   - adding a materiality condition to the ground for review i.e. the issues raised by the trailblazer group must be of sufficient materiality as to be capable of giving rise to a different decision; and
   - revising the guidance for Independent Reviewers to reaffirm their role and focus.

25. The Board was keen that the Institute should capture insights from rejected appeals and Kris confirmed that 'lessons learnt' was built into the Independent Reviewer appeal report template.

26. The Board approved the new Review Procedure which will be uploaded onto the Institute's website on or after 1 June 2019.

Funding band recommendation improvements

27. Anna West updated the Board on the measures being implemented to improve the robustness and transparency of the funding band process. Anna asked the Board to note the improvements already in place and the Funding Teams approach for further fundamental changes to the funding process.

28. Anna confirmed that the Funding Team had already:

- replaced the initial funding band with alternative information to give trailblazers a better early indication of likely funding when the Occupational Proposal is approved;
- developed a dedicated funding section in the trailblazer workshops to help them to understand the process, and give them the opportunity to meet the relevant funding manager and pass on knowledge about costs in the sector;
- published a decision-making flowchart on the Institute website, showing how the data points in the funding band recommendation process are prioritised and used;
- made quote forms easier to use, published model forms and FAQs and improved website guidance to make the funding process clearer to stakeholders; and
- reviewed correspondence with stakeholders to ensure that funding information is provided at useful times and in an easy to understand form.

29. Further work would focus on developing options and better understanding of the evidence base (including considering how other countries, and other sectors, run similar funding processes). The team will then refine the options into one proposed approach, developing and testing the detailed process.

30. Anna explained that work was underway to better understand margins and costs across the different sectors. The Board highlighted some areas of cost they felt it was important to consider including raw materials, duration, cohort size, equipment usage, and the impact of urban and rural delivery. The Board were also keen that the quality of training provision, not just cost, should be one of the key factors in driving funding band recommendations.

31. Anna explained that the team was engaging with trailblazer stakeholders and with other representative groups (e.g. of employers, sectors and training providers) and considering how best to use a series of regional workshops or roadshows.

32. The Board noted the improvements that had already taken place and offered to help with the process where possible.

Next Board meeting

33. The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday 17 July 2019 at the Institute's London offices.