

Some items relating to personnel and financial matters have been withheld for operational/sensitive reasons.

C/M41

Minutes of the forty-first meeting of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council
which took place on Monday, 7 April 2008 in HETAC Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane,
at 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Chairperson:	Professor Séamus Smyth
Chief Executive:	Séamus Puirseil
Secretary:	Tadhg Ó hÉalaithe
Members:	Dr. Barbara Brittingham Mr. Michael Carmody Ms. Marion Coy Ms. Margaret Duignan Mr. Stan McHugh Mr. Paddy Murray Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan Mr. Norman Sharp OBE

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Bryan Maguire
Ms. Mary Sheridan (Item 7)
Ms. Caitríona Lawless

APOLOGIES:

Dr. Finola Doyle-O'Neill
Mr. Diarmuid Hegarty
Mr. Peter Mannion
Ms. Mary McGlynn
Ms. Marion Palmer

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 4 February 2008

The Minutes of the Meeting of 4 February 2008 circulated as C/M40 were confirmed and signed.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes

Item 2 – C/M40

Council NOTED that the Chairperson had REMINDED Council of the intention of the Chief Executive to retire from his post with effect from 31 August 2008. Council NOTED that 31 August 2008 falls on a Sunday and AGREED a revised date of 2 September 2008 as the effective date of retirement for the Chief Executive.

Item 3 – C/M40

Council NOTED that the Efficiency Review of Expenditure by Departments and State Agencies arising from An Tánaiste's 2008 Budget Day announcement would be referred to under the Chairperson's Business on today's Agenda as it has implications relating to matters arising under that heading.

Item 4 – C/M40

Council NOTED that the Honorary Conferring Ceremony would be dealt with under Item 4 of today's agenda.

Item 6 – C/M40

Council NOTED that an update on Complementary Therapies would be dealt with under Item 7.1. of today's agenda. Council AGREED to discuss the matter of titles for Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards under Item 5.2. of today's agenda, dealing with the minutes of the Tripartite Meeting of 26 February 2008.

3. Correspondence

- 3.1. Council NOTED the letter of 18 February 2008 from Ms. Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health and Children circulated as C/A41/3.1. regarding Physical Therapists. Council AGREED to discuss this letter under item 7.1. on today's agenda.
- 3.2. Council NOTED the letter of 21 February 2008 from Mr. Séan Ó Foghlú, Chief Executive of NQAI regarding the Authority's approval to HETAC's recommendations regarding the alignment of the awards made by the Open University in Ireland with the National Framework of Qualifications.

4. Honorary Degrees

Council NOTED that the Honorary Conferring Ceremony would now take place on Thursday, 24 April 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in the RCPI, 6, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Council NOTED that Members would be required to be in attendance approximately 20 minutes to half an hour prior to the ceremony for robing purposes etc. Council NOTED that the following Citators had been appointed:

Caroline Hussey (Vice-Chair of NQAI and former Registrar of UCD) for Nuala O'Loan
Michael Kelly (Chair of HEA) for Joe McGarry
Diarmuid Hegarty (Council Member) for Joyce O'Connor
Tom Mitchell (Former Provost of Trinity College, Dublin) for Peter Williams and
Bryan McMahon (High Court Judge) for Catherine McGuinness.

5. Chief Executive's Report

- 5.1. Council NOTED the Chief Executive's Report which was circulated as C/A41/5.1. Council NOTED that the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education had arranged a two week work placement with HETAC for two of its officers beginning on 7 April. Council NOTED that a meeting between NQAI, HETAC, HEA, IUA and the Department of Education and Science had been held in March 2008 to discuss unrecognised universities linked to Ireland plus associated issues. Council NOTED that a Memorandum of Understanding between HETAC and the

Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) was signed on 10 March 2008, a result of which is the recognition of Level 8 (and higher) cognate construction degree programmes accredited by HETAC as fulfilling the academic requirements for corporate membership of the CIOB. Council NOTED that Briefing Seminars had been held for the Defence Forces and FÁS in February and March respectively. Council NOTED that a workshop on External Examining will be held on 30 April 2008.

- 5.2. Council NOTED the Minutes of the Tripartite Meeting (Chief Executives and Directors of NQAI, FETAC and HETAC) held on 26 February 2008, circulated as C/A41/5.2. Council NOTED that the three bodies had made progress on a Communications/Marketing/Events campaign and also NOTED that a co-ordinated advertising campaign with individual advertisements for each body featuring common elements linking to the National Framework of Qualifications is scheduled to run in May 2008. Council NOTED that discussions had taken place on the matter of titles for Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards. Council also DISCUSSED the matter at length and requested the Executive to re-examine the situation as a matter of urgency. Council AGREED that the Executive should raise the matter for discussion at the next Tripartite Meeting of the 3 bodies.

6. Academic Committee of Council

- 6.1. Council NOTED the draft minutes of the fourth meeting of the Academic Committee held on 3 March 2008, circulated as C/A41/6.1. Council NOTED the amendment to item number 9.5.2. on page 6 of the draft minutes. Council REQUESTED the Executive to clarify for providers the arrangements pertaining to Postgraduate Diplomas which can lead to long standing Master degrees. Council NOTED that it is still early days in the relationship between the Council and the Academic Committee and that some teething problems were bound to arise. Council THANKED the Academic Committee for its work to date and its expertise in handling such a large volume of work. Council NOTED that some new providers applying for HETAC accreditation may already offer programmes of further education within the remit of FETAC. In such cases, the Quality Assurance manuals are reviewed by HETAC on the same basis as any other new provider.
- 6.2. Council NOTED the information notes circulated as C/A41/6.2., C/A41/6.3 and C/A41/6.4. relating to the following new providers which had their first programme validation(s) approved by the Academic Committee at the meeting of 3 March 2008:

- Grafton College of Management Sciences
- SQT Training Ltd.
- The Irish Payroll Association

These providers have now completed the final stage of their Quality Assurance assessment and Council AGREED their quality assurance procedures.

7. Academic Matters

Ms. Mary Sheridan, Head of Recognition and Information Management was in attendance for this item.

7.1. Council NOTED the Issues and Recommendations relating to Complementary Therapies circulated as C/A41/7.1. Council also NOTED the letter of 18 February 2008 from Ms. Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health and Children circulated as C/A41/3.1. (above) regarding Physical Therapists. Council AGREED that the organisation of a federation of relevant bodies could be a requirement for programme validation particularly if the programme outcomes are at Level 8 of the NFQ. Council NOTED the Executive's recommendation that HETAC would initially engage only with providers of programmes of higher education and training in certain specified therapies, by reference to the evidence base. Council NOTED that a revised set of standards, recommendations etc. would be on the agenda of an early Council Meeting for approval.

7.2. Council NOTED the Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion in, or Alignment with, the National Framework of Qualifications of the Awards of Certain Awarding Bodies circulated as C/A41/7.2. Council NOTED that a policy developed by the National Qualifications Authority on the Inclusion in, or Alignment with, the National Framework of Qualifications of the Awards of Certain Awarding Bodies was adopted nationally in the Summer of 2006. Council also NOTED that the Executive had developed its operational policy in this area during the same period and it was approved on an interim basis. Council AGREED to retrospectively adopt this policy.

8. Decentralisation Update

Council NOTED that the NQAI, FETAC and HETAC had furnished views regarding the revised office requirements for the 3 bodies to the Department of Education and Science in recent weeks.

9. Financial Matters

Council NOTED the Financial out-turn for the 2 month period to 29 February 2008 circulated as C/A41/9.1. Council also NOTED the tabled Financial out-turn for the 3 month period to 31 March 2008. Council NOTED that there is likely to be three lump-sum payments and increased pension payments during the current year. Council NOTED that the Executive had drafted a revised Fees proposal for the consideration of the Department of Education and Science.

10. Staffing

Council NOTED that as a result of the recent recruitment process, HETAC currently has a full complement of staff. Council also NOTED

that interviews for a Post Doctorate Research Assistant (2 year contract) will take place in the next few weeks.

11. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson UPDATED Council on developments in relation to the Chief Executive recruitment process. Council NOTED that the Department of Education and Science was in consultation with the Department of Finance to resolve some issues which are causing delays in the finalisation of the process. Council AGREED that should it take longer than two weeks to reach a resolution, a Council meeting to deal with the appointment of the successful candidate may be held at 2.30 p.m. on 24 April 2008, prior to the Honorary Conferring Ceremony.

12. Any Other Business

No business.

The next scheduled meeting of Council will take place at the Hayfield Manor Hotel, Perrott Avenue, College Road, Cork, on Sunday, 8 June 2008 at 17:00 p.m. and in the Boardroom of the Cork School of Music at 9:55 a.m. on Monday, 9 June 2008.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____