

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

C/M44

Minutes of the forty-fourth meeting of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council which took place on Monday, 8 December 2008 in HETAC Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, at 10:30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Chairperson:	Professor Séamus Smyth
Chief Executive:	Gearóid Ó Conluain
Secretary:	Tadhg Ó hÉalaithe
Members:	Dr. Barbara Brittingham Mr. Michael Carmody Dr. Finola Doyle-O'Neill Mr. Diarmuid Hegarty Ms. Mary McGlynn Mr. Stan McHugh Mr. Paddy Murray Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan Ms. Marion Palmer Mr. Bartley Rock Mr. Norman Sharp OBE

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Bryan Maguire
Mr. Joe Cox (Item 5)
Dr. Peter Cullen (Item 6)
Ms. Tara Ryan (Item 6)
Ms. Caitríona Lawless

APOLOGIES:

Ms. Marion Coy
Ms. Margaret Duignan

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 22 September 2008

The Minutes of the Meeting of 22 September 2008 circulated as C/M43 were confirmed and signed.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes

Item 2 – C/M43

Council NOTED that the Chief Executive had held several meetings relating to issues raised in the letter from the Labour Relations Commission in March 2008 and this would be discussed under item 4.1. of today's agenda.

Item 4 – C/M43

The Secretary briefed the Council on the outcome of the recent judicial review proceedings [REDACTED]. Council NOTED the legal costs

incurred by HETAC and an estimate of those incurred by the applicant.

Item 5 – C/M43

Council NOTED that the outgoing USI Education Officer and former Council Member, Mr. Peter Mannion had accepted Council's invitation to join the Academic Committee and had attended his first meeting on 20 October 2008.



Item 7 – C/M43

Council NOTED the adoption by the Qualifications Authority of the Quality Assurance Appeals Process at the Authority's Meeting on 24 September 2008.

Item 9 – C/M43

Council NOTED that the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services had met with officials from the Department of Education and Science regarding fees on 11 November and at a further meeting between Department officials and HETAC, FETAC and NQAI which took place on 14 November. This matter would be discussed further under item 9 of today's agenda.

3. Correspondence

- 3.1. Council NOTED the letter of 6 November 2008 sent to Mr. Michael Scanlan, Secretary General, Department of Health and Children by Gearóid Ó Conluain, Chief Executive, HETAC circulated as C/A44/3.1. regarding publication by HETAC of Standards for the Complementary Therapies sector. Council NOTED that the letter also informed the Secretary General of the stipulation that HETAC would validate programmes in this area subject to the establishment of a federation of professional bodies/associations within that therapy and that while HETAC has a role in the development of standards and validation of programmes of higher education and training, it is not a licensing body.
- 3.2. Council NOTED the letter of 10 November 2008 to Chief Superintendent Kieran McGann, Director of Training and Development, Garda College from Mr. Gearóid Ó Conluain, Chief Executive, HETAC circulated as C/A44/3.2. regarding the Titling Convention for Special Purpose Awards. Council NOTED that a small number (3) of providers had contacted the Executive following Council's adoption of the Titling Convention for Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards at its meeting of 22 September 2008, with issues relating to the revised titling. Council NOTED that the Executive had met with all those providers individually with a view to allaying any concerns which they raised.
- 3.3. Council NOTED the letter of 11 November 2008 from Ms. Áine Stapleton, Central Decentralisation Unit, Department of Finance, circulated as C/A44/3.3. regarding the Budget 2009, Decentralisation Announcement. This matter would be discussed under item 7 of today's agenda.

4. Chief Executive's Report

- 4.1. Council NOTED the Chief Executive's Report which was circulated as C/A44/4.1. Council NOTED that following on from the Labour Relations Commission letter of 18 March 2008, the Chief Executive had met with staff either individually or in small groups to discuss his plans for the organisation

and their perspectives of working for HETAC and his intention to have a re-engineered structure in place by early in the New Year. Council NOTED that several meetings with the entire staff had taken place and the Chief Executive would be holding another meeting focusing on PMDS the following day, Tuesday, 9 December 2008. Weekly meetings between the Chief Executive and the Directors had been established and meetings of the Senior Management Group were occurring with greater frequency as well. Council NOTED that a 2 day meeting of the Senior Management Group has been arranged for mid December and would focus on the restructuring of the organisation and professional development relating to strategic management, leadership capacity and team building. Council NOTED that the Chief Executive had kept Council Members appointed by Council at its meeting on 9 June 2008, to progress matters in this area, informed throughout this process. Those Council Members INFORMED Council of their satisfaction with the progress made to date and suggested that responsibility for further progress should revert to the Chief Executive. Council AGREED with this suggestion and the Chairperson on behalf of Council THANKED Paddy Murray and Mary McGlynn for their assistance and input in this matter.

- 4.2. Council NOTED the Draft Minutes of the Tripartite Meeting (Chief Executives and Directors of NQAI, FETAC and HETAC) held on 4 November 2008, circulated as C/A44/4.2. Council NOTED that these meetings would prove to be extremely useful in light of the recent Government decision to amalgamate the three bodies and as a result would continue to be a recurring item on the Council agenda. Council NOTED that the issue of fees had been discussed at the November meeting and also NOTED the minute regarding proposed amendments to the fan diagram. Council NOTED the intention to develop a policy for the strategic co-ordination of the three bodies with regard to international engagements and representation.

5. Academic Committee of Council

Mr. Joe Cox was in attendance for this item.

- 5.1. Council NOTED the draft minutes of the seventh meeting of the Academic Committee held on 20 October 2008, circulated as C/A44/5.1. Council NOTED that the first Institutional Review site visit had taken place at Institute of Technology, Sligo the week beginning 1 December 2008. Council NOTED the members of the Review Panel involved in this visit and NOTED the Panel is currently preparing its report. The Executive is hoping to submit the completed report to the next Academic Committee Meeting scheduled for 19 January 2009. It would then be forwarded to Council for its consideration at the next Council Meeting scheduled for 16 February 2009. Council NOTED that to ensure some continuity and retention of expertise, Panel Chairs and Secretaries will each be appointed to 2 – 3 Panel Reviews per year.

Council REQUESTED the Executive to examine its methods of communicating decisions to its providers with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

- 5.2. Council NOTED the Explanatory Memorandum together with the Report of the Evaluation Group on the Application for Extension of Delegated Authority to make Awards by the Institute of Technology, Carlow, circulated as C/A44/5.2.1. and 5.2.2. Council NOTED that the Evaluation Group visited Institute of Technology, Carlow on 20 June 2008 and NOTED the recommendation of the Academic Committee to adopt the Evaluation Group's

findings. Council ADOPTED the report of the Evaluation Group on the Application for Extension of Delegated Authority to Make Awards by the Institute of Technology, Carlow in respect of research programmes at Levels 9 and 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications in the specified field of Biotechnology and Molecular Environmental Sciences and REQUESTED the Executive to seek the agreement of the National Qualifications Authority to be satisfied that Institute of Technology, Carlow, meets the criteria determined by the Council for the extension requested.

6. Academic Matters

Dr. Peter Cullen, Head of Research and Policy Analysis and Ms. Tara Ryan, Head of Programme Monitoring were in attendance for this item.

- 6.1. Council NOTED the Explanatory Memorandum and Draft Policy on Registration of Providers and Draft Procedures for the Registration of Providers, circulated as C/A44/6.1.1 – 6.1.3. which had been considered and revised by the Academic Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2008 and ADOPTED the draft Policy and Procedures subject to comments and revisions suggested by Council Members and legal advice. Council AGREED that the final decision on the registration of Providers should rest with Council assisted by the recommendations of the Academic Committee and REQUESTED the Executive to inform the Academic Committee of this.
- 6.2. Council NOTED the Explanatory Memorandum and the Draft Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Trans-national Programmes and Joint Awards, circulated as C/A44/6.2.1. and 6.2.2. which had been considered by the Academic Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2008 and ADOPTED the draft Policy subject to comments and revisions resulting from the discussion by Council Members. Council NOTED that this document replaced the existing Policy for Collaborative Programmes and Joint Awards and the Overseas Awards Policy. Council NOTED that the new Policy allows explicit provision to extend delegated authority to Trans-national programmes and provisions for delegated authority to make Joint Awards.
- 6.3. Council NOTED the proposal from the Chief Executive regarding the appointment of a Head of Function to the Academic Committee, circulated as C/A44/6.3. Council NOTED that the Chief Executive had discussed the matter with the Committee Chairperson and several members of the Academic Committee, whose unanimous views were that the appointment would be useful and would enhance communication between the Committee and the Head of Function level within the organisation. Council ADOPTED the proposal and REQUESTED the Chief Executive to appoint a Head of Function to the Committee at his discretion and also AGREED that the Director of Academic Affairs should remain as an *ex officio* member of the Academic Committee.

7. Decentralisation Update

Council NOTED the letter of 11 November 2008 from Ms. Áine Stapleton, Central Decentralisation Unit, Department of Finance regarding the Budget 2009, Decentralisation Announcement as mentioned under C/A44/3.3. above. Council NOTED that the proposed decentralisation of HETAC to Edenderry had been deferred pending a review in 2011. Council also NOTED that there is no longer any obligation to include a decentralisation condition in any further recruitment or promotion contracts until the outcome of the Government review in 2011 is known.

8. Amalgamation of Agencies (HETAC/FETAC/NQAI/IUQB) working in Quality Assurance in Education and Training

Council NOTED the Information Note on the Amalgamation of Agencies working in Quality Assurance in Education and Training, circulated as C/A44/8.1. Council NOTED the Government announcement made in the Budget on 14 October relating to the amalgamation of NQAI, FETAC and HETAC. The new organisation to be established would also take responsibility for the external quality assurance review of the Universities, a function which is currently performed by the Irish Universities Quality Board and the Higher Education Authority. Council NOTED that a meeting of the Amalgamation Advisory Group, on which HETAC has two representatives, had met with officials of the Department of Education and Science on 14 November. The Terms of Reference for this Group had been finalised. Council NOTED that a meeting of the Chairpersons of the 3 bodies had recently taken place and a further meeting of the Chairpersons and CEOs would be arranged if there were any further developments. Council NOTED that the Executive would keep Council informed on this matter.

9. Financial Matters

9.1. Council NOTED the Financial out-turn for the 11 month period to 30 November 2008, tabled as C/A44/9.1. Council NOTED that additional funding had been received from the Department of Education and Science and this was primarily to cover the costs of lump sums and pensions of three former employees who became pensioners in 2008. Council NOTED the Department of Education and Science's desire to introduce a new fees structure on 1 January 2009 and an update on the fees issue would be given to Council at its February 2009 Meeting.

9.2. Council NOTED the oral report on the Audit Committee Meeting of 18 November 2008 given by the Chair of the Audit Committee. Council NOTED the Committee's concern regarding risk of inadequate funding being provided to cover HETAC's growing expenditure on staff pensions. The Chairperson, on behalf of Council, THANKED the Audit Committee for its work to date.

9.3. Council NOTED and APPROVED the Draft HETAC Budget for 2009, circulated as C/A44/9.3. and NOTED that no provision had been made in the estimated income figure for a revised fee structure coming on stream in 2009.

10. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson extended best wishes to Council Members and Staff for the festive season.

11. Any Other Business

Council NOTED the concern raised by a Council Member regarding the possible change of brand name for HETAC awards which may result from the amalgamation of the three bodies as discussed under item 8 above. Council NOTED that some providers had spent a significant amount of money particularly aimed at attracting overseas students to Ireland, on advertising and promoting, the HETAC brand name since its establishment in 2001 and AGREED that this was a valid concern for providers.

The next meeting of Council will take place in the Boardroom of HETAC Offices, 26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2 on Monday, 16 February 2009 at **10:30 a.m. (10:00 a.m.)**

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____