

### **Minutes, Board meeting 14-15 November 2022**

**In attendance:** Andrée Sursock (Chair), Crichton Lang, Ellen Hazelkorn, Riitta Pyykkö, Norman Sharp (on Zoom, until lunch on Nov 15), Þorgerður Edda Hall, Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir (Minutes).

**Observers:** Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir (15 Nov 13:00-15:00)

**Apologies:** Philip Winn

The meeting convened at 9:30 on 14 November.

#### **(1) Approval of the agenda**

The agenda of the meeting was adopted with minor modifications.

#### **(2) Approval of the Minutes of September 2022 meeting**

The minutes of the last Board meeting (19-21 September 2022) were adopted with minor modifications.

#### **(3) Update on the Secretariat and the Board**

- i) Liv Teresa Muth has been nominated by LÍS as a student member to the Quality Board and has accepted to join the Board. Her first formal meeting will be in February.

ÓGS and ÞEH leave the meeting for discussion on update on the Secretariat.

#### **(4) Update on current reviews and QEF2**

ÓGS and ÞEH join the meeting again.

- i) Status report on QEF2 activities and UNAK Police Studies Review.
  - a) UNAK will deliver SLRs for Nursing and Occupational Therapy in autumn 2022. HU will deliver SLRs for Rural Tourism and Aquaculture & Fish Biology autumn 2022.
  - b) AUI IWR team visit took place 1-3 November.
  - c) BU follow-up review visit will take place 12-13 December. The first orientation team meeting has been held online. The BU status report has been submitted.
  - d) UNAK police studies follow-up review will take place 21-22 Nov. The team has met twice online. The chair has met with the rector and quality manager online. The UNAK status report has been submitted.

- ii) RU annual meeting was discussed briefly.

The next annual meeting at RU is scheduled in September 2023.

#### **(5) Budget**

#### **(6) Toward QEF3: Achim Hopbach's analysis of the QEF2 Handbook against the ESG**

- i) The analysis was discussed.
- ii) Achim's report will inform the process of developing QEF3. Achim will join the QB in September for a discussion as well as meeting with stakeholders on QEF2, as per his

contract. The Secretariat will run another doodle for the May meeting as it is currently scheduled on a bank holiday (1 May). It should include Elsa Nunez.

**(7) Toward QEF3 continued: Key themes, planning and milestones**

- i) CL presented slides on key themes for moving forward in the development phase of QEF3, including principles for the work ahead, early messages from the QEF2 survey and thoughts following the September QB meeting (further information in the slides circulated to QB members).

**Tuesday 15 November 2022, 9.30 – 15.00**

**9.30 – 12.00 Private meeting**

**(8) Take stock of QEF3 discussion and prepare afternoon discussion**

**(9) Update on commissioned work (Norman absent)**

**i) Greenland**

CL provided an update on work with Greenlandic institutions to support the development of internal QA processes.

**ii) Masters and online studies and Arni Magnusson**

- a) Masters and online studies update: the Board approved the proposed budget by the Secretariat, within original limits by the Ministry.
- b) Arni Magnusson update: the director and her team are planning a seminar on the review findings next spring (dates TBA).

**(10) AOB (Norman present)**

**i) Mid-term and year-on reports**

- a) One year following the publication of the IWR Report, the institution will produce a brief year-on report indicating early reactions to the IWR Report and associated early developments. This report will be discussed at the first appropriate annual meeting. In this way, the year-on report is meant to be a vehicle for discussion and communication between the institution and the QB.
- b) A mid-term progress report (MTPR) for each institution is expected three or four years following the publication of their IWR report. This exercise will be conducted as part of the annual meeting that year. In the year of the mid-term progress review, the Board representative will be joined by a member of the IWR Team (normally the Chair). This exercise will lead to a brief report which will be published alongside the original IWR Report on the QEF website. The IWR team member will write a cover letter accompanying the MTPR.

**ii) Key dates on upcoming report submissions:**

- o UI will submit their year-on report in spring 2023 and MTPR in Autumn 2024.
- o UNAK will submit their year-on report in early Autumn 2023 (16 months after publication of IWR).
- o HU will submit their MTPR in Spring 2024.

- RU will submit their MTPR in Autumn 2023.

### **(11) Meet Liv Teresa Muth online**

Liv Teresa Muth, the QB student member to join as full Board member in February 2023, met the Board members briefly.

**Tribute to Norman Sharp:** This portion of the Board meeting ended with a session in which Barbara Brittingham, Jean-Marie Hombert, Rita Langdon, Frank Quinault and Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson joined the Board to celebrate Norman's achievements as he is stepping down from the Board. Fond memories were shared with Norman and Margaret Sharp and Norman was thanked most sincerely for his extensive contributions to Icelandic higher education.

**13.00 – 15.00 Public meeting.** Vaka Óttarsdóttir (QC representative) and Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir (LÍS representative) enter the meeting.

### **(12) Icelandic, European and international update**

- i) The Minister of higher education, science and innovation published a document titled 'Progress for Iceland' (Árangur fyrir Ísland), based on the minister's vision as well as the coalition government agreement from 2021. The aim is to promote the knowledge economy in Iceland, including innovation, science and research. Main points of interest for the QB include:
  - a) The document reflects a strong encouragement for HEIs to collaborate. It includes an explicit statement that Iceland is too small for seven universities. At the same time, there is no direct plan to merge universities at this point. In this regard, it should be noted that the ISK2-billion fund seeking to promote collaboration across universities has been launched, with a December deadline. Twelve focus areas have been identified and are grouped under three themes:
    - administration, quality and support services for students
    - relations to society
    - research, innovation and dissemination of knowledge
  - b) The document presents actions aiming to make brain power the number one export in Iceland and a key to progress the prosperity of Icelandic society. These are the same actions reflected in the coalition government agreement since 2021. Main objectives for 2022-2025 are:
    - To increase the quality of provision and the learning environment, especially at the graduate and postgraduate levels as well as online provision.
    - To enhance strategic policy making and coordination within science, technology and innovation.
    - To increase collaboration between the professional fields and universities in the domain of research and development.
    - To enhance research and boost the recruitment of young researchers.
    - To increase support services in order to decrease overhead.
    - To encourage collaboration in research infrastructure.
  - c) Significant emphasis is placed on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics).

- d) The document emphasises three sectors: health, teacher education and telecommunications.
- e) It presents the following plans for Icelandic HE:
  - To create one centralised registry portal for all universities.
  - That the Science and Technology Policy Council becomes Science and Innovation Policy Council, now under one ministry instead of two previously.
  - To introduce a new performance-based funding model for the HE sector in Iceland.
- f) The document discusses the importance of EDI (equality, diversity, inclusion) in the context of equal opportunities and access to education in terms of financial background, different physical and mental abilities, immigrants and students of foreign background, gender imbalance (70/30 ratio women/men particularly in health and education), the challenge of young males with little formal education and male dropout rates, the problem of gender imbalance in relation to female progression and tenure within the Icelandic HE system. The document emphasises online provision as a way of ensuring equality in HE.
- iii) UI appointed Katrín Frímannsdóttir to the role of Strategy and Quality Manager, starting 1 December.
- iv) Issues around EDI were discussed with emphasis on students with additional learning needs. Board members expressed concern over access. How far can the universities go in providing flexible learning paths for students with additional learning needs while this is underfunded? UI offers a diploma for students who have not completed a high school diploma.
 

There is a need to map out the existing support structures already in place for students with additional learning needs. This work will require the active involvement of the equality officers at each university. A meeting could be organised with them in the future.
- v) European update: the ESG are going to be revised. The Board will respond to a survey in relation to the revision.
- vi) EQAR will be organising a webinar on Nov 23. AS will send the link to Riitta.

### **(13) REAC agenda and minutes**

No comments.

### **(14) Annual conference 2023**

The theme of the annual conference in May will be *Digitally-Based Learning*. Main discussion points:

- i) The Board agreed to focus on online education in general rather than narrower issues, such as micro-credentials, AI as an equity tool or any particular student groups with additional needs. The Board stressed the need to address online education in relation to flexible learning, vocational learning, students enrolling in online study programmes coming from the workplace and going back to the workplace after studies.
- ii) Keynote ideas: How can we create social aspect of online learning, what does the learning environment and student support look like for online/remote students, access to Wifi, computers etc. Suggestion keynote: Paul Leblanc.

### **(15) Toward QEF3: an update**

Visions for QEF3 were discussed with the two observers. Main discussion points centred on how to work better with the QC and LÍS in QEF3 and on current issues?

- a) VÓ: there is need to clarify what is meant the term 'quality'. We need a common understanding between the QC, the QB and the Ministry on what constitutes measures of quality and how to create a common language amongst all stakeholders.
- b) VÓ: There is a need to look at QA in relation to joint degrees with international universities.
- c) Issues of prior learning recognition also come up, how many ECTS can be transferred between universities?
- d) KKK: a comprehensive 17-page document on the student loan system has been submitted to the Ministry, developed with all the HEIs, LÍS, SíNE and other stakeholders.

### **(16) Complaints and appeals**

A statement will be published on the QEF website that aims to clarify the complaints process. The Board has no mandate to deal with complaints that relate to the internal operations at individual universities. A guidance note will be published accordingly. Edda will revise the statement to clarify the role of the open sessions in IWRs.

### **(17) AOB**

- i) AS updated the Board on the leadership summit and NOQA conference
- ii) Ellen updated the Board on her participation in an UI conference on the societal impact of research last September.
- iii) AS informed the Board that the USA is imposing new measures on evaluating the transfer credits of international medical students. AS will send the information to Kolbrún, Vaka, the Secretariat and Ellen.

Meeting adjourned at 15:00