

Minutes, Board meeting 6-7 February 2023

In attendance: Andrée Sursock (Chair), Crichton Lang, Ellen Hazelkorn (online), Philip Winn, Riitta Pyykkö, Liv Teresa Muth, Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir, Þorgerður Edda Hall, (Minutes).

Guests: Howard Davies (online, 6 February at 11:00-11:30), Elín Díanna Gunnarsdóttir and Vaka Óttarsdóttir (7 February 10:00-10:45)

Observers: Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir (7 February, 15:00-17:15)

Monday 6 February 2023

The meeting convened at 9:00 in Borgartún 30

(1) Approval of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without modifications.

(2) Approval of the minutes of November 2022 meeting

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

(3) IFS review

(4) Budget update

Budget update for 2023 was provided by the Secretariat. Financial overview for 2022 was not provided due to delays in the accounting at the Ministry. The 2022 overview will be provided to the Board by e-mail. It was noted that a budget for the foreseen ENQA review should be discussed with the Ministry.

(5) Update on the Secretariat and the Board

- i) The Secretariat provided an update on the 2023 working plan. Key discussion points:
 - a. Update on the collaboration with the Ministry to revise working procedures and increase the operational autonomy of QB.
 - b. CL suggested looking into developing an operational risk register.
 - c. AS reminded of the work going on with leaders of NOQA agencies, creating a shared statement of values.
 - d. International networking was discussed. NOQA, ENQA, European Quality Assurance Forum – EQAF are important events for Secretariat staff to attend. QQI annual conferences are also recommended.
- ii) Chair provided an update on the Board.

(6) Update on current reviews and the QEF2

- i) The Secretariat met with the quality managers of all seven universities in December and January.

- ii) Organising the visit for Achim Hopbach in September (AS will send information on how this was organised in the QEF1 evaluation).
- iii) Planning of annual meetings on 6 September 2023:
- iv) Brief discussion on the role of the Student Board member at the annual meetings. It is important that there is a clear plan of the meetings that the Student Board member will attend in QEF3. It is also important to discuss the role of the student at those meetings.

(7) Preparing for meetings with stakeholders

Discussion on preparing meetings with Howard Davies, Rectors' Conference and Ministry.

(8) Meeting with Howard Davies on QEF2 Survey analysis

Howard Davies joined the meeting online at 11:00.

- i) Howard Davies identified the following significant issues in the QEF2 survey responses:
 - a. Concerns about the transparency of the quality processes at national and institutional level, including language and translations.
 - b. The three bodies (QB, QC and REAC) and the clarity of their roles.
 - c. Preparation and support of senior management in the institutions (they had not been prepared or supported).
 - d. Research management (no unified approach for all the universities).
 - e. The need for QA training and staff development at various levels.
 - f. On a methodological level:
 - Very low student participation in the survey.
 - HD was not sure whether the Board wanted to assign views to specific groups: the questionnaire wasn't designed for that, and it was difficult to attach opinions to constituencies.
 - The students were omitted from answering questions that HD felt they should have had the chance to answer. For instance, they were not included in the section on the Quality Council.
 - The questionnaire was very long and there was some fatigue, demonstrated by the fact that most responded to the beginning of the survey and then gave up.
- ii) Discussions on the QEF Survey analysis:
 - a. The Board recognises that it might have been too ambitious to include everything in one survey (addressing all stakeholder groups).
 - b. Important to revise the regular surveys (i.e., post-IWR).
 - c. Now it is important to look at how to engage with students.
 - d. Brief discussion on why academic freedom and institutional autonomy are coming up in the survey. It seems to be a common viewpoint of academics that a research strategy is a threat to their academic freedom.

Howard Davies left the meeting at 11:30

Meeting adjourned at 12:00

Tuesday 7 February

Meeting reconvened at 9:30 at Borgartún 30

(9) Discussion of commissioned follow-up report on Police Science at UNAK

- i) Report of the commissioned follow-up review of Police Science at UNAK is approved by the Board.

(10) Meeting with UNAK Pro-rector Elín Díanna Gunnarsdóttir and HR and Quality Director Vaka Óttarsdóttir

EDG and VÓ joined the meeting at 10:00

- i) UNAK confirmed that the recommendations in the report were useful. The site-visit went well and UNAK felt that they had a fruitful communication with the expert panel. Two members were on the panel for the first review and could validate the progress. The other two new members were well received and had relevant experience and background. The preparations were helpful, especially the ToR and the Guidelines for the team, which UNAK felt was helpful clearly laying out the process.
- ii) UNAK was informed that Riitta Pyykkö will take over for Norman Sharp as Board liaison for UNAK. The next annual meeting will be on 6 September. RP will go to UNAK, and the Board is proposing that Elsa Nunez (new US member) joins. This was accepted. There will be a discussion on follow-up of recommendations from this report on the agenda of the annual meeting.

(11) Towards QEF3

- i) Discussion on the Handbook framework. Key points included how to approach the handbook by only focusing on the EQA process with instructions for the HEIs and Teams, and not to describe the whole system to the whole sector. Further guidance material will be provided with hyperlinks to the QEF website (such as guiding principles for IQA). Use of abbreviations will be as limited as possible and visuals will be used to describe processes. Timeframes for processes will be indicated.

(12) AOB

- i) QAA has produced a briefing note about academic integrity in relation to Chat GPT. QC might be interested in discussing this. The Board will need to discuss whether the issue of integrity should be included in QEF3.
- ii) Brief discussion on the annual meetings and student role.

(13) Icelandic European and international update

Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir and Vaka Óttarsdóttir joined the meeting at 15:00

- i) Supplementary updates to the written news update distributed to the Board before the meeting:
 - a. In January the president of the student union in the Faroe Islands had a meeting with KKK at LÍS to learn about quality processes in Iceland. The Faroese student president discussed this with his rector at the University of Faroe Islands and said that the quality unit of the university had wanted to reach out to the QB.

- b. LÍS demands on the revision of the Icelandic student loan system have been sent to the Ministry and the Student Loan Fund office.
- c. LÍS is organising a project to support refugees to apply for university studies in Iceland. LÍS received a grant for this project. The project is based on a Danish model and the students working on the project have received training to take on their role.

(14) REAC agenda, minutes and meeting documents

- i) REAC is planning a webinar in end of May on the CRIS system.
- ii) The February REAC meeting agenda includes a discussion paper about collection and evaluation of the impact of research and how this is done in the UK. There is some experience from the UK to learn from. It is important to have a discussion on how to capture the impact of research. Important questions will be asked, such as whether everyone should do it in the same way? Are there processes in place to be shared? Can the impact of research in Iceland be systematically captured? This discussion will feed into the development of QEF3. It is important that there is the approach is adapted to Iceland.
- iii) This is linked to the discussion about the tenure system. The current system favours publications as a basis for promotion, while the universities are emphasising societal engagement in their strategies, they do not provide incentives to encourage staff in this area.

(15) Annual conference

- i) Update on the programme and the speakers. Martha Cadell will attend as a speaker, and she would like to meet colleagues from the Icelandic sector. Secretariat will organise this in collaboration with QC.
- ii) Kolbrún Lára will confirm the student speaker soon. She will also help get students to attend the conference.
- iii) The secretariat will look at the possibilities of providing financial support to students who live outside the Reykjavik area to attend the annual conference. This could be combined with getting students together in a focus group to discuss QEF3. KSK (LÍS) will ask the unions to nominate two students from each institution.
- iv) The event will be on-site (not online).

(16) Update on Board membership

LTM is the new student member. A new Board member starts in September (Elsa Nunez from the US). Another person has been vetted by the Board but might not be offered a Board seat because there is an issue with the gender balance. EH and PW will step down after the November meeting, so it is important to find a new Board member to chair REAC and another one would have expertise in applying to ENQA/EQAR. The new Board members must support the enhancement approach. CL will be the next chair, starting in May when AS chairs her last meeting.

(17) Toward QEF3: an update

- i) Feedback from VÓ on AS's meeting with QC on 1 Feb 2023: QC members do not have the same viewpoint on what is the best approach for QEF3. They recognise that QB is committed to enhancement, supports the diversity of the universities and is respectful of university autonomy.

Generally, QC was positive to what they heard. However, QC is hoping that QEF3 will offer continuity with QEF2, ensure a common understanding of key terms and ESG standards, whilst being flexible and understanding the context of each university.

- ii) The Board confirmed that QEF3 is not about ranking universities or about standardisation of processes. It respects diversity. This was discussed in the meetings with the rectors and with QC. There is consensus on having a framework that allows diversity.
- iii) QB has explored in more detail how the processes could be presented in the next handbook. The issue of term usage and definitions will be explored with QC as well as how quality outputs are articulated and the criteria that will be used in the IWR. These will be mutually agreed with QC, REAC and the RC.
- iv) QC has been thinking about how to discuss common QA issues. They would like QB to recommend experts that could give presentations to QC on certain themes. They would like to initiate comparative discussions about QA and how it is done in different countries, etc. This could be in the form of short webinars.
- v) QEF2 survey results will be made public in the coming weeks.
- vi) QB would like to explore how to work with LÍS to support and train students better in QEF3.
- vii) QB plans to make an analysis of all the IWRs in the coming months to identify trends. This could be useful for the sector.

(18) Documents for adoption

- i) Guidance note on Mid-term progress reports is adopted without modifications and will be published on the QEF website.
- ii) Annual report is adopted with minor modifications and will be published on the QEF website.

Meeting adjourned at 17:15.

Minutes, Board meeting 21 February 2023

In attendance: Andrée Sursock (Chair), Crichton Lang, Riitta Pyykkö, Philip Winn, Liv Muth, Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir (Minutes).

Guests: Margrét Jónsdóttir Njarðvík, Rector of Bifröst University (from 10:20)

Apologies received: Ellen Hazelkorn

The meeting was held via video conference call and convened at 10:00, Icelandic time.

1) Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2) Discussion of BU follow-up report

- i. The BU follow-up review visit took place 12-13 December 2022, and a draft report was sent to the BU Rector for fact checking before a final draft was submitted to the Board.
- ii. The report was approved without modifications.

3) Meeting with BU Rector re. follow-up report

BU Rector, Margrét Jónsdóttir Njarðvík, joined the meeting at 10.20.

- i. The Rector appreciates the positive outcome of the follow-up review and emphasises how proud she and the team are of the good results.
- ii. The Rector agrees with the general sense of the report and welcomes all suggestions and comments from the Team, most of which were already in the BU action plan:
- iii. The Rector noted her satisfaction with the quality of interactions with the review Team and their professional approach, as well as with the Secretariat.

Meeting adjourned at 11.30.

Minutes, Board meeting 11 April 2023

In attendance: Andrée Sursock (Chair), Crichton Lang, Riitta Pyykkö, Philip Winn, Liv Muth, Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir, Þorgerður Edda Hall (Minutes).

Guests: Ragnheiður I Þórarinsdóttir, Rector of Agricultural University of Iceland (from 9:45-10:45)

Apologies received: Ellen Hazelkorn

The meeting was held via video conference call and convened at 8:30, Icelandic time.

1) Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2) Discussion of the IWR report of Agricultural University of Iceland

- i. The IWR review visit took place 1-3 November 2022, and a draft report was sent to the AUI Rector for fact checking before a final draft was submitted to the Board.
- ii. The report was approved without modifications to its content. A few minor grammatical edits were done after the meeting.

3) Meeting with AUI Rector Ragnheiður I Þórarinsdóttir re. the IWR report

AUI Rector, Ragnheiður I Þórarinsdóttir, joined the meeting at 9:45

- i. The Rector emphasises her appreciation of the process. She appreciates the validation of AUI's efforts to make gradual improvements to its quality system and to become fully bilingual. The Rector is committed to keep moving in the right direction as fast as possible. She is proud of her staff, which were very open during the review visit meetings and happy to share challenges with the review panel.
- ii. The Rector commended the review panel for their good understanding of the university and its mission, as well as in recognising the progress made during the last years. They demonstrated good understanding of both strengths and weaknesses which allowed them to give helpful

feedback. The atmosphere in the review visit was very good with open discussions. The review panel asked good questions and they worked well together as a team.

Rector Ragnheiður left the meeting at 10:45.

4) De-briefing after discussion with AUI Rector

Meeting adjourned at 10:53.