



QAS Sub-Committee meeting

24 March 2022 10:00 – 13:00

Attending:	Victor Olowe (Chair), Tze Leong Chan, Alison Carr (actuary), Helen Brown, Scott Cameron, Alison Carr (lay), Sophie Dignan, Iain McGrory.
Executive Staff:	Katie Wood, Karen Cross, Emma Burns.
Apologies:	
Dial in details:	[REDACTED]

Item	Title	Action
1.	Welcome, conflicts and minutes	
1.1	No conflicts were declared.	
1.2	<p>The Committee had no comments, corrections or concerns on the redactions and approved the December minute.</p> <p>It was expressed that section 5 of the January minutes was written in a way that was confusing to the reader and the Committee requested this be redrafted for publication to reframe and condense this section and add to the papers of the next meeting. The Committee approved the suggested redactions for this minute. Action.</p>	Executive
2.	Standing items	
2.1	No comments were made on the action list.	
2.3	No comments were made on the action plan.	
3.	Update from the IFoA Executive	
3.1	<p>The update was noted, and the recommendations discussed.</p> <p><i>[AC(L) joined 10.12]</i></p> <p>The Committee discussed the proposed approach to accredited organisations submitting duplicated information in Annual Returns It was recognised at the last meeting that while the Committee/Executive should give SQARs a steer to avoid repetition. The Committee's preference is to send a plain-speaking communication then reject Annual Returns which are a clear 'copy and paste' from the previous form.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the return should reflect the activities over the past year, which may have similar information, but consideration needs to</p>	Executive



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	<p>be given to the provision of up-to-date information when completing the return. The Committee agreed they would like the Executive to send communication to SQARs and are happy for the Executive to take action on 'copied' forms before the Committee has sight of them. Action.</p> <p>Delegating Annual Returns/Change of SQAR requests to Executive as outlined in report</p> <p>The Committee supports the approach, which has been piloted over the past 12 months, and feels it has been working well and agree it is a sensible way forward. It was agreed that all year 1 annual returns for new firms should come to the Committee for first review and subsequent returns can then be reviewed by the Executive.</p> <p>[REDACTED]. Using words like 'extremely high standards,' it was felt this wording is a little broad. It was agreed to discuss consistency later in the meeting when discussing the redrafted handbook.</p> <p>Though the Committee agreed with the changes, they believed there should be some clarifying wording to say that significant changes at an organisation could affect it meeting the outcomes [REDACTED]</p> <p>Page numbers were requested on the Executive update. Action</p> <p>[REDACTED].</p> <p>The issue of an accredited firm where the SQAR is not an IFoA member was discussed, and it was suggested that this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>[REDACTED].</p>	<p>Executive</p>
4.	Annual Returns	
4.1	<p>[REDACTED]Annual Return was discussed.</p> <p>It was felt there are policies in place in relation to the QAS Outcomes but not much evidence on how those polices are being used, though the additional information was helpful. The Committee's opinion was there was not a lot of detail given and that the firm should be encouraged to provide a fuller return the following year.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the BPR in relation to CPD should remain open because insufficient information had been provided to enable it to be closed. The Annual Return was approved [REDACTED].</p>	



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4.2	<p>[REDACTED]. Annual Return was discussed.</p> <p>The Committee were of the view this Annual Return is very light on detail. The Executive mentioned they also asked for additional information about QAS CPD and that the response had been added to the additional information section of the meeting pack.</p> <p><i>[TLC left the meeting 11.02]</i></p> <p>The Committee discussed section 5.5, 'Relationship with users' and agreed it seemed to talk about staff rather than clients/users. The Committee also felt the comments on speaking up relates more to the 'Conflicts of Interest' section. The annual return was, however, approved, [REDACTED].</p>	
4.3	<p>The Committee discussed [REDACTED] Annual Return which has already been approved by the Executive. Throughout the form the organisation gave very good examples and the Committee agreed with the recommendation.</p> <p>It was stated it is refreshing to read a return that is 'outstanding'. The Committee mentioned the comments made about error and omissions in relation to the Quality Assurance Outcome and thought this would be good material for a 'Best Practice' example. The Committee endorsed the Executives decision and rating.</p>	
5.	Interim Visit Report	
5.1	<p>[REDACTED]. Interim Visit Report was discussed.</p> <p>The report suggested that the organisation has not taken any action on the open BPR, and it was not clear if firm are definitely doing independent peer review, since there does not appear to be differentiation between work review and independent peer review. The Committee felt that the policy needs to be updated but this does not raise too much concern in terms of the organisation meeting the outcomes.</p> <p>The Committee were satisfied with the conclusion though would like to feedback to the organisation on the points raised regarding the BPR.</p> <p>Action.</p>	Executive
5.2	<p>[REDACTED] Interim Visit Report was discussed.</p> <p>The Committee were content with the conclusions and had no comments on [REDACTED] Interim Visit Report.</p>	



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6.	Change of SQAR	
6.1	[REDACTED] Change of SQAR request was discussed. The Committee noted that should the change be approved, there would not be any IFoA Members at the organisation. The Committee requested the Executive investigate this matter and deferred approval to the next meeting. Action.	Executive
6.2	The Committee felt there was not enough information given in [REDACTED] Change of SQAR request, however the Committee were content that with the additional email combined with the form, enough information was provided, and the request was approved.	
7.	Updated QAS Handbook	
7.1	<p>It was questioned to what extent the Committee/Executive refer to the Handbook to aid decisions. The Chair asked is there way to incorporate the handbook in discussions/decisions more, the Executive offered more cross referencing going forward. Action.</p> <p>The Committee did not identify any substantive content missing.</p> <p>Clarification was requested regarding monitoring visits in the flow chart within the handbook and the Executive confirmed the interim monitoring visit is only available during the first period of accreditation, and that after re-accreditation the monitoring visit is not applicable having been replaced by the annual Specialist Review.</p> <p>The question was raised regarding whether information needs to be added to the chart on what happens after year 12 of the accreditation cycle. It was agreed it should be communicated in some way that organisations can be accredited for more than 12 years. Action.</p> <p>The Committee felt there was a contradiction in the wording of section 10.1 and section 16.8 regarding the Specialist Reviewer being a part of the Assessment Team.</p> <p>It was agreed that section 16 explained the Specialist Reviewer a lot clearer than some of the previous sections.</p> <p>The question was raised whether organisations are required to have a speaking up/whistleblowing policy and it was agreed the handbook is very clear about outputs and policies that need to be in place, however consideration should be given to whether or not wording needs to be</p>	Executive



Item	Title	Action
	<p>included around what organisations do with those polices, how they are embedded and what is learned/actions taken when errors occur. Action</p> <p>It was also requested to be more explicit in the distinction of polices to emphasise that the requirement for polices on Speaking Up and Whistleblowing are separate, clarifying that these two areas are not the same. Action.</p> <p>The Chair mentioned they would like clickable cross references to best practice within the document, if possible. Action.</p> <p>There was some confusion around appendices, given that APS QA1, which is the Appendix to the handbook, has its own Appendix. It was suggested that reference to the Appendix to APS QA1 be removed from the Index Action.</p> <p>The Chair suggested extracting some KPIs from the handbook around deadlines/timescales. The Executive offered to put a list of KPIs together for the Committee. Action.</p> <p>The Executive will send the final copy of the handbook to Committee by email. Action.</p>	<p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p>
8.	AOB	
8.1	<p>The Executive confirmed to the Committee all ICAEW reaccreditation visits have been scheduled with the exception of [REDACTED] and the contract with Specialist Reviewer has been signed, the next step is to hold a webinar on DEI.</p> <p>The Executive has put forward the proposal for committee training on DEI which is included as part of the wider IFoA DEI Strategy. An update will be given when more information is available</p> <p>It was requested that the Executive arranges an additional meeting for the Committee to allow for re-accreditations to be reviewed, basing this on the timetable provided by ICAEW for the re-accreditation visits. Action.</p>	
	<p>Next Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Call – 21 April 2022 • Quarterly Meeting – 16 June 2022 • Conference Call – 21 July 2022 • Quarterly Meeting – 29 September 2022 • Conference Call – 20 October 2022 • Quarterly Meeting - 13 December 2022 	