

# Minute

## QAS Committee meeting

06 February 2025

<b>Attending:</b>	Nick Ong-Seng (Chair), Georgie Barnard, Helen Brown, Alison Carr, Nikhil Dodhia, Maura Feddersen, John Herbert, Kathryn Wilson, Kevin Cunningham (observer)
<b>Executive Staff:</b>	Darren Kerr, Emma Dalziel
<b>Apologies:</b>	
<b>Online or in person</b>	Online

Item	Title	Action
1.	<b>Welcome, apologies and conflicts.</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed Committee members, introduced himself and shared his outlook and priorities for the QAS.	
1.2	<p><u>To declare any conflicts of interest</u></p> <p>[REDACTED] declared a conflict for item 7.2 [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] declared a potential conflict relating to the Best Practice Report. The Committee agreed that it was not a concern, and the Committee could be involved in the discussion.</p>	
2.	<b>Review of previous minute</b>	
2.1	The Committee reviewed the minute from the previous meeting held on 3 December 2024. After some minor amendments, the Committee approved the minute. <b>Action</b>	Executive
3.	<b>Action List &amp; Committee Priorities</b>	
3.1	<p><u>Action List</u></p> <p>447- [REDACTED] <b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Action to remain open.</b></p> <p>446- Committee dates for 2025 have been set.</p> <p><b>This action was closed- Action.</b></p>	<p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p>

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	<p><b>442-</b> The Executive team will prepare a QAS strategy and present the paper at the next Committee meeting for further discussion. The strategy will be a combination of the Committee Action List, Committee Priorities and SQAR Action Plan. <b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Action to remains open.</b></p> <p><b>429 -</b> The Committee discussed and approved the proposed amendments to the QAS Handbook relating to powers of discretion in section 13.6.</p> <p>The Executive will now put the proposed amendments to the Regulatory Board for approval. <b>Action</b></p> <p><b>This action was closed.</b></p>	<p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p>
3.2	<p><b><u>Committee Priorities</u></b></p> <p>The Committee discussed the ongoing Committee priorities.</p> <p><b>Promotion of QAS:</b> The Chair emphasised the importance of promoting the QAS and plans to collaborate with the Executive and marketing team to enhance its online presence. Following this, outreach will be made to QAS members to encourage further promotion by organisations.</p> <p>The Executive advised that he met with [REDACTED], who expressed interest in creating a video and blog to highlight the benefits of QAS.</p> <p>The Executive will review previous promotional efforts. <b>Action</b></p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><b>QAS PC Scheme -</b> The Committee discussed the QAS PC Scheme and its potential value to QAS organisations. This is an ongoing priority with the Executive providing an update on the progress.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>Executive</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Executive Update</b>	
	<p>4.1 [REDACTED]</p> <p><b>Specialist Reviews:</b> The Executive reported that the QAS team sent a survey to SQARs seeking suggestions on future specialist review topics. The response rate was minimal, with only 9 out of 124 SQARs completing the survey, and just one providing input in the free text box.</p>	

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	<p>The Chair proposed holding an open discussion at the April SQAR forum to gather valuable feedback and better understand what topics would provide true value add to QAS firms. <b>Action.</b></p> <p>Committee members suggested potential topics, including Ethical Leadership for Financial Services and exploring more specific areas of Organisational Culture that could better benefit organisations.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><b>SQAR Forums:</b> The Executive provided an update on potential forum topics under consideration and requested input from the Committee.</p> <p>The April Forum will focus on the 2025 Best Practice Report and include an open discussion with SQARs on expectations for the future direction of QAS forums and Specialist Reviews.</p> <p><b>Annual Return Form:</b> The Executive provided an update on potential changes to the Annual Return form, noting that options for modification are limited under the current monitoring requirements. The Committee reviewed the sample form and noted that the form was clearer and more concise, reducing the administrative burden while making comparison easier.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that a section on how SQARs collaborate effectively should remain. They also highlighted the value of pre-populating the form with BPRs to assist SQARs.</p> <p>Suggestions included making headings more prominent, providing examples and suggestions to clarify expectations, and refining the CPD section to remind organisations to submit a separate spreadsheet of members falling under QAS CPD requirements.</p> <p>The Committee also emphasised the importance of highlighting the benefits of reflecting on the previous year's good practices, which can be included in the best practice report.</p> <p>Overall, the Committee agreed that the QAS should focus on continuous improvement while ensuring the form retains sections that highlight value, evidence of progress, and effective processes.</p> <p>The Executive was tasked with making amendments to the Annual Return from the feedback provided. The Committee will review the improved form at its next meeting. <b>Action</b></p>	<p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p>
5	Best Practice Report	

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Item	Title	Action
5.1	The Committee reviewed and approved the proposed 2025 Best Practice Report. The Executive is to seek permission from organisations to use the examples then share the report with SQARs. <b>Action</b>	Executive
<b>6</b>	<b>Re-accreditation Application</b>	
6.1	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Executive confirmed that he had spoken to the Lead SQAR and discussed the firms outstanding re-accreditation application which had since been received.</p> <p>The Executive noted that the form provided tangible examples [REDACTED]</p> <p>The Committee acknowledged the application contained valuable information on the organisation's progress over the last six years. However, they agreed that the significant delay must be addressed, and the organisation should be reminded of their requirements to submit correspondence on time. The organisation should be made aware that late returns moving forward may result in escalation by the Committee. The Executive is to provide this feedback to the organisation. <b>Action.</b></p> <p>The Committee was advised that the organisation would be due their next annual return in May. The Committee agreed that it was important for the organisation to submit the necessary paperwork and realign with their lifecycle dates. Therefore, the Executive is to request an Annual Return covering the interim period between the submission date of the re-accreditation form and the next Annual Return due date in May.</p> <p>Subject to a satisfactory report from the ICAEW, the Committee agreed to approve the organisations re-accreditation application.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Executive
<b>7</b>	<b>Annual Returns</b>	
7.1	<p>[REDACTED] Annual Return</p> <p>The Executive provided an overview of his analysis of the Annual Return and advised the Committee that the Annual Return was satisfactory and demonstrated that the firm met the QAS Outcomes, but the level of detail was lighter than previous years.</p> <p>The Committee approved the Annual Return and agreed to close the recommended BPRs. <b>Action</b></p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Executive

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Item	Title	Action
	[REDACTED]	
7.2	<p>[REDACTED] Annual Return</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Annual Return and noted the significant improvement from the previous year. The Committee agreed that the Annual Return contained detailed information on how the organisation have put procedures into place.</p> <p>The Committee approved the Annual Return.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
	[REDACTED]	
<b>8</b>	<b>Change of Lead SQARs</b>	
8.1	<p>[REDACTED] Change of Lead SQAR</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Committee approved the change of SQAR application.</p>	
8.2	<p>[REDACTED] Change of Lead SQAR</p> <p>The Committee approved the change of Lead SQAR.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
9.1	No AOB	
	<b>Thank you and Farewell to Alison and Helen</b>	
	<p>On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Helen and Alison for their invaluable contribution, insight and support over the past six years and wished them both the best of luck in the future.</p>	