

State Examinations Commission

Meeting No. 153

Friday, April 27th, 2018

Approval of Minutes

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Burke', is written over a horizontal dashed line. The signature extends to the right, crossing the end of the line.

Pat Burke, Chairperson

1st June 2018

Date

Meeting Start: 10.00am

Meeting End: 2.00pm

State Examinations Commission

Meeting No. 153

27th April 2018 @ 10am in SEC, Athlone

Commissioners:	Pat Burke, (Chairperson) Mary Ryan, (Deputy Chairperson) Dr Richard Thorn Martin Sisk
Executive:	Aidan Farrell, (CEO) Andrea Feeney, (Director Operations & IT) Eamonn Murtagh, (PO) Hugh McManus, (AHEAD) Jackie Wade, (HEO)
Apologies	Prof. Teresa O'Doherty Tim Desmond (HEAD)

1. Commission pre meeting

The pre-meeting of the Commissioners commenced at 10am and concluded at 10.30 without members of the Executive present.

2. Conflict of Interest Declaration

There were no conflicts of interest to note.

3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of meeting no. 152 were approved, subject to an amendment to the examination date for Politics and Society of 20th June 2018. Minutes for meeting no 149 were approved for publication on the SEC website.

4. Executive Report

The Executive Report was circulated at the meeting, with relevant matters addressed under subsequent agenda items.

5. Preparation for 2018 Examinations

The Executive briefed the Commission on the progress for the preparation for the 2018 Examinations.

Nowak Update

The Executive briefed the Commission on the current SEC/DES engagement with the Attorney General's Office relating to the implementation of the Nowak judgement and the implications for the viewing of scripts process.

Contingency 2018

The Executive briefed the Board on the Certificate Examinations Contingency arrangements for 2018. As in previous years, the Board gave delegated sanction to the Executive to deploy measures if necessary.

6. Issues of Strategic Importance

a) Digital Transformation

(i) *On-line Marking:*

The Executive briefed the Commission on the legal correspondence received before the end of the standstill period from one party following the procurement process and the actions taken by the Executive on foot of the correspondence.

(ii) *On-line Fees:*

The Executive briefed the Commission on the successful launch and operation of the new On-line fees facility.

(iii) *SEC Website Redesign:*

Work on the development of an RfT for the website redesign is ongoing.

b) Contract Staff Supply

The Executive briefed the Commission on the current position on contract staff numbers. As part of the ongoing process of encouraging applicants to contract staff positions, further advertisements were launched on the Education Posts and SEC websites, and an email was sent to all schools, management bodies etc to actively encourage teachers to apply. The Executive continues to process the applications on hand and to monitor the situation. It was noted that that the Oral examinations concluded successfully last week and the JC Home Economics Practical examinations are currently in their third week. An analysis of measures undertaken to address contract staff supply is currently being undertaken at the request of the Commission.

c) Review of Operation of the RACE Scheme

The continued successful operation of the RACE Scheme was noted.

d) Senior Cycle Science Practicals Trialling Project

The Executive briefed the Board on the outcomes of the last steering group meeting for the trial. The Executive noted that the final report of the trial and external expert report are expected to be available for the Commission's approval at the next meeting.

7. HR

The Executive updated the Commission on a number of recruitment competitions including:

- 3 EAM positions competitions currently on-going;
- Advertisements for a further 4 EAM position's expected to be published on the public jobs website in June; and
- An internal HEO competition is on-going.

The Commission were notified of the appointment of the new AHEAD in the SEC.

8. Corporate Affairs (including Risk Management)

(i) Corporate Risk Register

The Corporate Risk Register to be updated by the Management Board to reflect the current status of the On-line Marking project and outcomes from the Nowak decision.

(ii) Annual Report 2016

Both the Annual Report and Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister are expected to be completed for the next meeting.

(iii) Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies

The Executive plan to circulate a draft Terms of Reference for the external review of the Board under the Code of Practice at the next Commission meeting.

9. Audit and Risk Committee

The ARC Chairperson briefed the Commission on the *Internal Audit Report – Review of System of Internal Control* and the process adopted in its review of the Report. On the basis of this review, the ARC recommended approval of the SIC by the Commission (together with the draft Financial Statements for 2017) and in turn the submission of the draft Financial Statement to the C&AG. The Executive briefed the Commission of the measures taken to date (and to be taken) to address the recommendations within the SIC. The Commission approved the SIC in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The internal auditors will be asked to review the status of recommendations made in previous reports in the context of an end-of-term report from ARC. The Commission and ARC Chairpersons will discuss the vacancy on the ARC with the CEO.

10. Finance

The Executive briefed the Commission on the draft 2017 Financial Statements which had been previously approved by the Audit and Risk Committee. The Executive noted the changes to the text and format of the Financial Statements on foot of the new Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Board approved the release of the draft financial statements to the C&AG.

The Commission confirmed the longstanding policy that expense claims of Commissioners are reviewed and approved by the Principal Officer with responsibility for HR, Finance and Corporate Affairs, and expense claims of the CEO are approved by the next most senior officer in the SEC.

11. IT

Matters already addressed under other agenda items

12. Procurement

Matters already addressed under other agenda items

13. AOB

Meeting Concluded