

Probation Qualifications Assurance Board

1. Purpose

The principal purpose of the Probation Qualifications Assurance Board (the 'Assurance Board') is to provide a scrutiny function that enables standards and quality in all aspects of Probation Qualification Framework (PQF) arrangements to be assured, and a means by which positive improvements to provision can be identified.

In conducting its business the Assurance Board will actively consult with stakeholders, and will keep abreast of contemporary developments and initiatives in education, work-based learning, justice and probation practice.

2. Mandate

The Assurance Board is established under the authority of the National Offender Management Service Human Resource (NOMS HR) Directorate, and it is ultimately accountable to the NOMS Director of HR. However, it does not have a business management mandate, nor does it have the power to intervene directly on contractual matters.

3. Composition

Membership of the Assurance Board will be determined by the NOMS Director of HR. The Board has the capacity to establish, as it sees fit, subsidiary Panels to discharge specific duties or functions, and to co-opt individuals as appropriate to any Panel.

4. Terms of Reference

The Assurance Board's Terms of Reference are set by the NOMS Director of HR and form part of the Probation Qualifications Regulatory Framework.

4.1 .Duties and Functions

The principal duties and functions of the Assurance Board are to:

- 4.1.1** Scrutinise and report on the quality of provision of Higher Education and Vocational Qualifications, and the Gateway to Practice, making recommendations for improvement as and where appropriate. Further details are given in **Appendix ##**.

4.1.2 Monitor the extent to which the provisions of the Regulatory Framework are being met by all parties to whom the Regulatory Framework applies; to report on areas of non-compliance, and make recommendations as appropriate, to the NOMS Director of HR.

4.1.3 Scrutinise and report on the curricula and content of Higher Education and Vocational Qualifications, of the Gateway to Practice and of work-based learning materials for PSOs, making recommendations for improvement as and where appropriate. Further details are given in **Appendix ##**.

4.1.4 Scrutinise and report on arrangements for the management and supervision of practice development and associated work-based learning for those following qualifications pathways. Further details are given in **Appendix ##**.

4.1.5 Scrutinise and report on the effectiveness of arrangements for the recruitment, registration and progress tracking of individuals on qualifications pathways. Further details are given in **Appendix ##**.

4.1.6 Support the recruitment of Graduate Diploma pathway entrants by determining those relevant degrees that will qualify holders to apply for entry to the Graduate Diploma pathway. Further details are given in **Appendix ##**.

4.1.7 Establish, and determine the membership of, subsidiary Panels, as appropriate, to ensure specific functions of the Board are discharged effectively (e.g. a Prior Qualifications Panel to maintain the prescribed list of relevant degrees).

4.1.8 Conduct reviews on specific issues at the request of the NOMS Director of HR.

4.1.9 Raise issues, and provide advice or recommendations, to the NOMS Director of HR on any matter the Assurance Board believes to be materially affecting the continued proper operation, or future improvement, of the provision of any element of the PQF; this includes acting as a conduit for any such matters raised by service providers or employers.

4.1.10 Recommend amendments to these Terms of Reference to the NOMS Director of HR as and when appropriate.

4.2 Ways of Working

These Terms of Reference are designed primarily to set out what the Board is responsible for doing but, as far as is practically possible, not how the Board should carry out its duties and functions. The Assurance Board will monitor standards of outcomes rather than standards of processes thereby allowing individual employers to operate their business accordingly. It is primarily for

the Assurance Board itself to determine how it discharges its duties and functions, but it will be accountable for its work by providing an annual report to the NOMS Director of HR.

Nevertheless there are some fundamental standards that the Assurance Board, and any subsidiary Panels it establishes, should conform to:

4.2.1 Relevant legislation, including the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the Race Relations Act (2001), and the Data Protection Act (1998).

4.2.2 NOMS Vision and Values. Details can be found on the NOMS internet site: <http://www.noms.justice.gov.uk>

4.2.3 Extant NOMS and Probation Service policies, orders, instructions and circulars.

4.2.4 The principle of avoiding undertaking any actions that may compromise the effective working of contractual or other formal arrangements with service providers.