



Quality Assurance Scheme Sub-Committee (QAS-SC)

15 October 2020 – 11:00-12:00

Videoconference

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| Attending: | Alison Carr, Alison Carr (Lay Member), Douglas Green, Helen Brown (Lay Member), Iain McGrory (Lay Member), Ruth Thomas, Steve Wilson, Wendy Walford, Victor Olowe (Lay Chair) |
| Apologies: | Chan Tze Leong, Emma Burns |
| Executive: | Cargill Sanderson, Katie Wood |

| Item | Title | Action |
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| 1. | Welcome, conflicts and minutes | |
| | 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No conflicts were declared. | |
| 2. | Annual Returns The following general points were raised during the Sub-Committee's (SC's) discussion of Annual Returns: <ul style="list-style-type: none">It was noted that concise and succinct responses can be effective however detail can be lost in longer answers Positive feedback regarding the relevance of IFoA training videos to support the achievement of quality assurance outcomes. That feedback should be given to the relevant team within the IFoA, and the Executive should explore opportunities to obtain suggestions from QAS organisations to contribute to the development of content of future videos. | |
| | 2.1 The SC discussed [REDACTED] Annual Return. The SC noted the introduction of an eyesight testing policy, which they commended, given the recognition of increased screen time and possible impact on eyesight of employees when working from home. The SC noted that the organisation had been very open about how they had approached their Cold File Review (at Section 4.1), having included details of an area for improvement. The SC noted that the Best Practice Recommendation (BPR) on Data Security had previously been closed, however, they questioned the practicality of continuing to use hard copy files given the restrictions of COVID-19 in terms of access to offices and ability to ensure that files were securely stored. They requested that in feedback to the organisation, the Executive ask the organisation to provide an update in their next return in relation to the proportion of data which continues to be held in hard copy, whether this had been superseded by COVID-19 and clarification as to how hard copy files are protected. | Executive |



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| | <p>The SC noted that the organisation had been updating their policies in light of COVID-19, and praised [REDACTED] for doing so and were surprised that other returns were not likewise as explicit on this issue</p> <p>There were no open BPRs to discuss.</p> <p>The Annual Return was noted [REDACTED]. Action</p> | |
| 2.2 | <p>The SC discussed [REDACTED] Annual Return. The SC noted that the section regarding conflicts of interest was very strong. They noted that the return was succinct and to the point. The SC also noted with interest that exit interviews are being used by [REDACTED] as another source of feedback in relation to the Speaking Up outcome, which seems relatively unique.</p> <p>There were no open BPRs to discuss.</p> <p>The Annual Return was noted [REDACTED]. Action</p> | Executive |
| 2.3 | <p>The SC discussed [REDACTED] Annual Return. The SC was of the view that the submission was unnecessarily long. The SC noted that at times there was more emphasis on what will be done, rather than on what has been done during the period covered by the return. They agreed that despite the inclusion of a lot of extraneous information, the necessary information had been included. The SC asked that feedback should be provided to the organisation to encourage a more succinct, but quality assurance and outcomes focussed return.</p> <p>There were no open BPRs to discuss.</p> <p>The Annual Return was noted [REDACTED]. Action</p> | Executive |
| 2.4 | <p>The SC discussed the reports from [REDACTED] regarding the Annual Return discussed on 25 June 2020. The SC noted that the organisation responses to the BPRs included in their Interim Visit Report suggested that the organisation “will” take action, but that the response did not confirm either that action has been taken, or when it will be taken. The SC, therefore, asked that the Executive follow-up with the organisation to seek confirmation that either action has been taken, or when it will be taken with respect to the following BPRs:</p> <p>[REDACTED] Subject to the abovementioned satisfactory follow-up by the Executive, [REDACTED] Action</p> | Executive |
| 2.5 | <p>The SC discussed the response from [REDACTED] regarding the Annual Return previously considered by it at its meeting held on 10 September 2020. The SC noted that it appears that more examples relating to Whistleblowing, rather than Speaking Up more generally, had been included. Nonetheless, the SC were broadly satisfied with the follow-up response.</p> | Executive |



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| | <p>The SC noted that the organisation had made use of IFoA training videos and considered this to be a positive example of the value provided by the IFoA generally. The SC stressed that this feedback should be passed on to the relevant team within the IFoA, and the Executive should explore opportunities to obtain suggestions from QAS organisations to contribute to the development of content of future videos. [REDACTED]. Action</p> | |
| | <p>The SC discussed three Annual Returns for the first time. In all three cases it was agreed that no further information need be provided to the SC until the next annual return.</p> <p>The SC considered responses regarding two Annual Returns which had been discussed previously. In one case, the SC requested that the Executive further follow-up with the organisation regarding outstanding BPRs. In the other case the SC was content than no further follow-up was required.</p> | |
| 3. | Interim Visits | |
| | No general points were raised during the SC's discussion of the Interim Visit Report. | |
| 3.1 | The SC noted the Interim Visit Report for [REDACTED], with no further discussion on any of the points covered in the report or additional information requested. Action | Executive |
| | The SC discussed one Interim Visit Report. They did not ask that any further information be requested. | |
| 4. | AOB | |
| 4.1 | <p>The SC were asked to approve the use of the draft updated Annual Return Form on a trial basis for a number of Annual Returns which are about to become due. This was as a result of several requests from organisations during the previous week, to use the new draft form. The SC were content to approve this on the condition that should it require any additional information not requested in the draft version, this would be made available by the organisation, and that the person completing the form provide the QAS Manager with feedback on the use of the form. The SC noted that both a number of completed forms in the draft new style, and the specific feedback would be helpful in its final deliberations on the form, due to take place during its December meeting. Action</p> <p>A number of SC members queried the start time for the forthcoming SQAR Webinar, having received an email from the IFoA amending this. The SC asked that the Executive ensure that the correct details were issued to delegates. Action</p> | Executive |
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| | The SC reiterated the need to have a detailed discussion on the question of the likely impact, if any, of COVID-19 on Quality Assurance on QAS members at its 8 December 2020 meeting. Action | Executive |
| | Next Meetings: 08 December 2020 10.00-13.00 14 January 2021 Conference call 11.00-12.00 | |