



ASSOCIATION FOR
SCIENCE EDUCATION

THE ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

Quality and Audit Committee

Report to Annual General Meeting 16 March 2024

Item 7

Context:

The composition, role, and responsibilities of the Quality and Assurance Committee (Q&A) is contained within the Royal Charter and amplified in the Association's By-Laws.

Q&A consists of a maximum of five members. Four are appointed by ASE members, and one is a representative of the Association's Trustee Body. Q&A may co-opt up to two members where expertise is required.

Q&A's role, according to the ASE Bylaws, is "*to Monitor the Council's management of the Association's resources and to report accordingly to the members in a General Meeting.*"¹

The By-laws emphasise Q&A's independence and provides detail on its responsibilities; the Association rules provide further detail on Q&A's advisory nature.

As such Q&A holds an important remit. Q&A has the power to "*Require the production of such information, by the Council, its Officers and the employees, as the Committee shall consider necessary*".

In practice it consists of experienced and long-serving members of ASE – considers a range of matters on which an opinion is required, either by its own choice or on request by the Chief Executive or Council. The Committee is responsible to the membership, has no executive powers and its role is advisory, acting as a 'critical friend'. A brief note on Q&A's role was published in Education in Science, 293, p6.

Current Q&A Membership

Nicholas (Nicky) Souter	Chair for 2023 (Member 2022 – 2025)
Stuart Naylor	Chair elect for 2024 (Member 2022 – 2025)
John Lawrence	Member 2023 - 2026
Martin Hollins	Member 2020/23 - 2026
Maggie Hannon	Trustees Representative 2010/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24

Ex officio

Lynn Ladbrook	Chief Executive HQ
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¹**Please note:** Following a decision by the Council, on September 19th, 2015, the Council was re-named the "Trustee Body" to better describe its role. The former name is retained in the Royal Charter and By-laws.

Q&A 2023-24

Q&A met remotely on 4 occasions following the 2023 AGM: in March 2023, June 2023, October 2023 and February 2024. Between meetings business has been transacted by telephone and email.

Members of Q&A receive copies of all Trustee Body meetings' papers. This assists them in their monitoring role, providing opportunities to explore Trustees' discussions. Each Trustee Body meeting was attended by a committee member who reported Q&A activities, participated in discussion and asked questions.

At the March 2023 meeting the Chief Executive provided wide ranging and thoughtful reflections on her first 4 months. She commented these were like those shared with the Trustees in November 2022 and her convictions had deepened. We were impressed by this insightful analysis and the steps proposed for the future.

Q&A noted there were shortcomings in the 2023 AGM arrangements due to it being a hybrid physical and virtual meeting. The outcome is that this AGM (2024) will be entirely online.

As part of Q&A's role, we review the minutes of committees and this year it was the Education Group and Region Officers meetings. We believe there is a need to obtain further insight of Regional activities.

Q&A commented on the nature of educational research, and how in the past much of the significant research has been led by science educators. Given that this is no longer the case we emphasised that ASE must ensure it is informed by generic educational research as well as science education research, to continue to have a positive impact on classroom practice.

We reviewed the election process for 2023 and suggested there needed to be more publicity for elections. It was gratifying to see far more nominations than last year. The CEO has provided standard clauses for all committees.

Following their retirement from Q&A on July 31, 2023, thanks were recorded to Alan Rhodes, and member Jonathan Ling. The committee is also grateful to Alan Rhodes, the previous chair for his contributions to this report.

The CEO confirmed that "Conflict of Interest Guidance" applies to all committees and is now a standing item on each committee agenda.

Q&A acknowledged Trustees' justification of moving the AGM to March.

We received and approved the very comprehensive archive report from John Lawrence and Peter Borrows which was sent to the Trustees with our recommendations for approval. We thank the authors for their work. As a result of this report, Trustees have since approved an Archiving Retention and Disposal Policy. Turning the policy into practice will include complications such as outdated electronic formats, budgetary limitations and the establishment of priorities. Collaboration is being sought from partners and other stakeholders.

Draft versions of the Strategic Plan have been reviewed and commented upon by Q&A.

Q&A noted the reported success of the 2024 Annual Meeting in terms of positive impacts on professional development, subject knowledge, science departments & colleagues, and ideas to incorporate into personal practice.

Previews of the annual report and accounts were most favourably received in terms of its substance and appearance. It was noted that the report was indicative of a huge amount of effort and insight, especially by the CEO.

Current Q&A priorities include exploring mechanisms by which it will undertake its periodic review as well as reviewing guidance for Honorary Membership.

Q&A wishes to place on record its thanks to all the headquarters staff for their commitment, the way they have continued to offer a relevant and valuable service to members (and many non-members) over the past year. They deserve our congratulations for their awareness of member needs, their imagination and hard work.

Nicholas (Nicky) Souter (Chair of Quality and Audit Committee)

Wednesday, 14 February 2024