

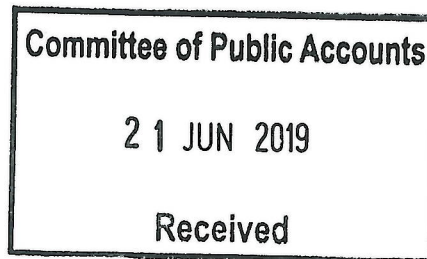


Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Cor na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí.
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Deputy Sean Fleming, T.D.,
Committee Chairman,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

18th June 2019



REF: PAC32-I-1449

Dear Deputy Fleming,

I am writing in response to your letter of 28th May, 2019, regarding the late submission by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) of its 2018 draft Financial Statements to the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C & AG) for audit.

At the outset, I would like to confirm that these draft unaudited Financial Statements were submitted by the SEC to the C & AG on 31st May 2019.

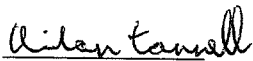
Unfortunately, these statements were not finalised this year for earlier submission for audit for a number of reasons. Firstly, the contract for the SEC accountancy service had been due to expire in mid-February 2019, and a procurement process had to be completed before the work could commence on the 2018 Financial Statements. SEC took early steps to address this procurement requirement. The previous procurement process for both the SEC accountancy and its internal audit services had been undertaken in 2015 on an education shared service basis in conjunction with another national education service provider. SEC engaged with this other body in October 2018 regarding the procurement process for these services, and upon receiving confirmation from them that they were engaging in their own procurement process, SEC moved to procure both the accountancy and internal auditing services on a standalone basis through the OGP Framework. The Request For Tenders was placed on 10th December, 2018, with the closing date for receipt of responses on January 22nd 2019. The evaluation process was completed with the SEC and the OGP at the end of January, and the contract was placed with the successful bidder, the existing SEC Accountants, on 14th February 2019. The accountants commenced work on the 2018 Financial Statements shortly after this.

Secondly, there was significant turnover of key personnel with responsibility for the preparation of the Financial Statements in the SEC Financial Section between summer 2018 and late spring 2019, which added to the delay in completing the work in conjunction with the accountants.

In conclusion, I would like to assure your Committee that the SEC recognises its obligations to prepare its financial statements in a timely manner and is fully committed to achieving this into the future. Steps have been taken by SEC to obviate the confluence of circumstances which combined to see the 2018 draft Financial Statements completed beyond the dates set down.

I would be happy to provide any further clarification that may be required.

Yours sincerely,



Aidan Farrell,
Chief Executive Officer
Direct Line (090) 6442771

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