

Remit and membership of the Committee (February 2006)

Background and context

The Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA) is a joint Committee of Universities Scotland (US) and QAA Scotland.

SACCA was constituted in 1992 with a remit to advise the then Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) and the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principles (CoSHEP) on a wide range of matters relating to widening participation in lifelong learning and credit and qualifications. This included oversight of the Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (SCOTCATS).

SCOTCATS was created as a means of enabling the recognition of prior learning by higher education institutions thereby improving access and facilitating transfers into and out of higher education. It also, along with the development of frameworks of the Scottish Qualifications Authority, provided the foundations for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, potentially covering all learning with quality assured assessment of learner achievement in Scotland.

SCOTCATS also provided the foundations for the development of the Framework of Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (which sits within the SCQF). That Framework provides a key reference point for the higher education institutions in the development of their programmes and qualifications. SACCA has a key role of advising QAA Scotland on the maintenance of the Framework.

The SCQF is now at the stage where it is being embedded as the national overall framework for credit and qualifications. Attention is turning to the applications of the SCQF and the ways in which, across the education sectors, a unified framework can help support access to and participation in lifelong learning.

Other important contextual developments include:

- The development is the enhancement agenda in higher education in Scotland. Higher education operates in a culture of quality enhancement that is to work to continually improve the quality of the student experience in higher education.
- The creation of the Scottish Funding Council and the guidance from the Minister to continue to improve links between Scotland's College and higher education institutions.
- The 'European' agendas in particular the Bologna process: an initiative of Ministers of over 40 countries and which is aimed at supporting the creation of a European Area of Higher Education. This includes through the development of national qualification frameworks; the development of an overall qualification framework for higher education; promotion of the use of credit; and attention to the development of systems for the recognition of prior learning

- Alongside the Bologna process, the European Commissions also has a programme of work to create a lifelong learning credit and qualifications framework.
- Other international developments in the areas of credit and qualifications as may arise.

Remit

1 In the context of the above the remit of the Committee is to:

- i provide advice to QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland and take forward work on a wide range of matters relating to widening participation in lifelong learning and matters relating to credit and qualifications. This includes work relating the areas listed below.
 - the Framework of Qualifications of Higher education Institutions in Scotland
 - making recommendations to QAA Scotland on the maintenance and development of the Framework
 - promotion of its use within Scottish higher education
 - the maintenance and implementation of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
 - supporting the implementation of the SCQF throughout Scottish higher education;
 - contributing to the development of the SCQF including making recommendations to QAA Scotland and US on the development of the SCQF and its use in supporting lifelong learning
 - Work relating to the development of strategies and practice to widen access to higher education.

This will include in particular, the development of a co-ordinated and coherent strategy for using the SCQF in facilitating articulation, progression, credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning between higher education and other education and learning. This will involve working with

 - other sectors of education and training
 - other professional and awarding bodies
 - the Regional Access Fora
 - Work with the Scottish Funding Council,
 - Monitoring and evaluation of other access initiatives elsewhere in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.
 - European developments including work to support the sector in implementing the outcomes of the Bologna Process

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- Advising Universities Scotland and QAA Scotland on any matters concerning credit, qualifications and access;
 - Overseeing the self-certification of the Framework of Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland against the European Framework of Higher Education Qualifications
 - Disseminating and informing the outcomes from European discussions and developments to the Scottish higher education sector.
 - Programme information and the European Diploma Supplement
 - Support the Scottish higher education sector to develop ways in which to publish information about programmes including information required for the European Diploma Supplement.
- ii have responsibility for undertaking development work, with the agreement of QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland, in areas related to its remit.
- iii liaise with other bodies on matters relating to credit and qualifications, in particular:
- The Scottish Funding Council to provide advice, on behalf of Universities Scotland and QAA Scotland, on detailed matters concerning credit and access;
 - Organisations on the SCQF Joint Advisory Committee and other SCQF committees on the provision of information relating to programmes of study and on wider matters relating to credit and qualifications;
 - Liaison with the Association of Scottish Colleges;
 - Liaison with the Regional Access Fora;
 - Liaison with professional, statutory and related bodies on issues concerning credit and access.
- 2 The programme of work will be progressed through the establishment of fixed term task and working groups which will be convened on an *ad hoc* basis; these will have a subject or a task focus as appropriate. Links should be established with other groups at subject level including the subject benchmark groups and, as appropriate, the SQA subject advisory groups.
- 3 An important element of SACCA's work will continue to be the dissemination of information to the higher education sector. An important vehicle for this is the conferences and seminars which will continue to be organised as part of SACCA's programme of work. *Ad hoc* events will be offered in association with task focussed groups referred to above. This work is also supported by the SACCA website.
- 4 In order to ensure that all higher education institutions can be informed of SACCA's work, an email information and discussion list should be established.

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Initially one representative per institution will be invited to join the list. Members will receive the agenda papers and minutes and will be invited to suggest items for the future consideration of SACCA.

Membership

- 5 SACCA membership is designed to be broad in its constituency but with a strong focus on action. There are two main categories of members: elected and appointed members. Elected members will sit on the committee for three year terms (with the possibility of extension) and on a rolling basis in order to maintain a core membership in any one year. Appointed members will be identified and invited to join the committee on the basis of their current roles and will have no fixed term of membership.

Elected members:

Members from higher education institutions. Around ten individuals at any one time representing half of the total Scottish higher education institutions

Members from the further education sector. Two individuals will be selected in consultation with the Association of Scottish Colleges.

Appointed members:

SFC - officer representation, one individual
SQA - officer representation, one individual
ASC – officer representation, one individual
Regional Access Fora - officer representation, one individual

Co-options

Other members can be co-opted on the basis of current involvement in initiatives and work central to the SACCA remit.

QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland officers

Officer representation from QAA Scotland and from Universities Scotland.

Convener

A Convener and Vice-Convener will be appointed jointly by QAA and Universities Scotland. The term of office will normally be three years with the possibility of extension to a maximum of two consecutive terms in each case.

Observers

The Committee might invite observers to its meetings.