

## SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS

### UNCONFIRMED

Minutes of the forty-first meeting of the Committee held at 1.00 pm on Wednesday 14 June 2006 at the QAA Scottish Office, 183 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5QD.

#### Present:

Professor John Harper (Chair) (Robert Gordon University)  
Professor Sam Allwinkle (Napier University)  
Ms Sarah Breslin (Scottish Qualification Authority)  
Professor Robert Craik (Heriot Watt University)  
Dr Alan Davidson (University of Dundee)  
Dr Andrew Eadie (Glasgow Caledonian University)  
Ms Ruth Howard (SWAP-East)  
Ms Rowena Kochanowska, (University of Strathclyde)  
Ms Alison Lumsden (Perth College)  
Mr Gerard Madill (Universities Scotland)  
Ms Carol Mair (Open University) –for Robin Harding  
Professor Alex McLennan (Bell College)  
Professor Andrew Nash (University of Glasgow)  
Dr Jane Polglase, (Association of Scottish Colleges)  
Ms Lesley Sutherland (Scottish Funding Councils) – for Dr Bill Harvey  
Professor Simon van Heyningen (University of Edinburgh)

#### Officers:

Dr David Bottomley (QAA Scotland)  
Ms Margaret Cameron (SQCF Officer)  
Ms Heather Gibson (QAA Scotland)  
Dr Christine Macpherson (QAA Scotland)

#### Apologies for absence:

Ms Irene Bruce (Edinburgh College of Art)  
Ms Margaret Dundas (National Access Co-ordinator)  
Mr Robin Harding (Open University)  
Dr Bill Harvey (Scottish Funding Councils)  
Ms Rachel Heaney (Student member)  
Professor David Kirk (Queen Margaret University College)  
Professor Roy Leitch (Interactive University)  
Mr Norman Sharp (QAA Scotland)  
Professor Mike Swanston (University of Abertay)

**1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

- 1.1 The minutes were agreed as being a correct record of the meeting held on 14 February 2006 (paper 41-01).

*Minute 2.3 Tracking Project*

- 1.2 It was reported by Lesley Sutherland that the SFC had approached higher education institutions with the proposal that data obtained from HEIs' Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) returns be used to determine the amount of FE-HE articulation activity, which in part would be used to determine funding allocation. A significant minority of institutions had indicated issues with the use of this data. Therefore, the SFC had agreed to allocate funding on the same basis as in previous years and to revisit how to gather data on FE-HE articulation.

**2. Membership**

- 2.1 The Committee received paper 41-02, which set out the current membership of SACCA up to the end of September 2006.
- 2.2 It was noted that three members would be retiring this year. The Chair thanked them warmly for their contributions over the past few years. It was also noted that a circular would soon be sent to institutions requesting nominations for new members.

**3. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**

*Arrangements for constituting the SCQF Company and new Joint Advisory Committee*

- 3.1 The Committee received an oral report, which gave an update on the latest discussions about the future arrangements for formalizing the Development Partnership and for establishing the role of the Joint Advisory Committee in taking forward an action plan of work to make use of the SCQF in widening access to lifelong learning.
- 3.2 It was reported at the last meeting that under legal advice a joint Company Limited by Guarantee would be established as the most appropriate means of formalizing the SCQF Development Partnership. It now looked likely that this would be finalised in September. The company would have a new Joint Advisory Committee and a quality committee. The remit for the new JAC was being reformulated with the aim that it should provide a means for all sectors and organizations that support learning and teaching in Scotland to consider how best credit could be used to widen access, aid articulation and support transfer and progression.

*Programme of work for 2006-08 for the higher education sector for using the SCQF*

- 3.3 The Committee agreed to consider the programme of work for SACCA in respect of the SCQF for the next meeting. It was agreed that a more directed paper would be submitted to that meeting. In the meantime the Committee agreed that the following issues should be considered in that paper:
  - 3.3.1 How to promote the SCQF as a learning framework that allowed people to transfer between qualifications, not only in terms of progressing “upwards” but also in other directions such as sideways.
  - 3.3.2 Consider the role of institutions in setting the agenda for their use of the SCQF, in particular institutional mission statements and desired aims.
  - 3.3.3 Consider as an end result of these discussions a number of themes that reflect the needs of the HE sector.

**4. Supporting the development and recognition of Work Based Learning**

*Work on the Scottish Bachelors Degree*

- 4.1 The Committee received paper 41-05 and an oral report which aimed to provide a brief report on the development of work to support higher education institutions in the development and delivery of work-based or related Bachelors Degree.
- 4.2 It was explained that that impetus for the development of work-based learning qualifications was being generated by the emerging importance of employability to the national higher education agenda. In addition, demographic changes to Scotland’s population meant that the numbers of young people entering higher education would fall in the near future and HEIs would have to seek other markets to ensure that student numbers did not drop. This might include the provision of work-based qualifications, which could allow those in work to undergo study in higher education.
- 4.3 This work has built on the recommendations originally put forward in the ‘Garrick Report’ and to date has consisted of two projects undertaken by Professor David Swinfen with reports to SACCA on the current range of degrees on offer; on potential future demands and on the types of degrees that might be developed in order to meet those demands.
- 4.4 To take the next phase of the work forward, a small working group has been established with the broad role of role of taking forward a programme of work to identify and promote models and principles of developing and delivering work-based or related Bachelors Degrees. The Group will be supported by a consultant(s) with expertise and experience in the area of work-based learning.
- 4.5 SACCA considered the paper and report and welcomed the programme of work. Some discussion resulted in the following issues:
  - 4.5.1 It was important to explore issues relating to other qualifications such as higher national and postgraduate qualifications.
  - 4.5.2 Past experience with work based qualifications suggested that demands made on students were heavy and this should be taken into account.
  - 4.5.3 How much of the work based learning could be awarded credit

- 4.5.4 The need to consider flexible modes of provision, such as part-time models in addition to full-time.

*Potential programme of work with the Sector Skills Development Agency*

- 4.6 The Committee received an oral update which reported on a meeting held between QAA Scotland and the Sector Skills Development Agency in Scotland which had dealt with a possible joint programme of work to help raise awareness amongst employers about the employability aspects of HE provision.
- 4.7 It was agreed that a representative from the Sector Skills Development Agency be invited to the next meeting of SACCA and that a paper would be also be prepared and presented at the next meeting.

**5. European Developments**

*Progress report on self-certification of the higher education framework against the framework for the European Higher Education Area*

- 5.1 The Committee received paper 41-06 which gave a progress report on the ongoing work to verify that the framework for qualifications for higher education in Scotland was compatible with the framework for the European Higher Education Area.
- 5.2 It was reported that as part of the work, a meeting for key stakeholders will be held on the 22 August 2006 to consider a draft report and a draft version of the final verification paper would be circulated at the end of September.

*Overview of developments within the European Commission including the ECVET and EQF*

- 5.3 The Committee received paper 41-07 which gave an update on major developments with regard to the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the proposal for a European credit transfer system for vocational and educational training (ECVET).
- 5.4 It was reported that the European Commission intended to expand their testing of the EQF structure and that it was intending to prepare an EQF "recommendation" for presentation as a formal proposal in the second half of 2006.
- 5.5 The Working Group dealing with ECVET had met recently and were currently considering level descriptors. These descriptors would not conflict with the Dublin descriptors. The EC would likely launch a public consultation process on the establishment of the ECVET in the second half of 2006, which may lead to the production of a draft recommendation on a credit transfer system by the end of 2007.

**6. Developments in the rest of the UK**

*Update on consultation on "Burgess Group" Proposal for a Credit Framework for England and Wales in higher education*

- 6.1 The Committee received paper 41-08 which provided a short summary of the implications to the higher education qualification framework in Scotland and the SCQF of the proposals by the Burgess Group currently out for consultation to establish a credit framework for higher education in England and Wales.
- 6.2 It was noted that most of the proposals contained in the consultation document were compatible with both the higher education qualification framework and the SCQF. However, the Committee felt that there were some debates still to be had regarding the differences between general and specific credit. It was also noted that there were some differences between the Scottish frameworks and the Burgess framework in regard to differences in value of the minimum credit required to attain an award at the award level. It was agreed that these points should be drawn to the attention of the "Burgess Group".

*Qualification and Curriculum Authority's "Framework for Achievement"*

- 6.3 The Committee received and noted paper 41-09 which aimed to inform SACCA about the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA)'s "Framework for Achievement".
- 6.4 The Framework was a unit-based qualification framework, where units of learning would be credit rated, assigned a level and built toward a qualification. Each credit equates to 10 hours of notional student effort and level descriptors would build upon descriptors formulated by NICATS and previous descriptors developed by the QCA.

**7. European Diploma Supplement and Information about Learner Achievement**

- 7.1 The Committee received paper 41-10 which gave a report about the main issues arising from work held on the Bologna process on 31 March 2006 at the University of St Andrews, in particular the discussions held around the European Diploma Supplement.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that a further event would be held in the near future to help support the sector in implementing the EDS.

**8. SACCA Website**

- 8.1 The Committee received and welcomed a presentation of the trial SACCA website.

**9. Building Links with the Regional Access Fora**

- 9.1 The Committee received a presentation from representatives from the Regional Access Fora (RAF) regarding the work of the RAF and how this could integrate with SACCA and the SCQF. The Committee felt strongly that links with the RAF should be maintained, and it was agreed that SACCA minutes would be shared

with the RAF and relevant RAF minutes shared with SACCA. The Committee thanked the representatives for their presentation.

**10. Any Other Business**

*Post Qualification Admission*

- 10.1 The Committee received a short paper from Universities Scotland which was an update regarding the consultation issued by the Department for Education and Skills regarding changes to the higher education application process. It was noted that change with regard to the admission process might be less relevant for Scotland and that Scottish Ministers were to take into account the requirements of the Scottish education system before deciding to act.

*National Course Databases*

- 10.2 The Committee received a short paper from the National Access Co-ordinator regarding the need to ensure that the content of databases of courses held by national bodies such as CourseUCan, College2Uni and LearnDirect Scotland should ensure that they held core course information that did not conflict with each other and that the updating of this data be co-ordinated to ensure that institutions were not duplicating effort.
- 10.3 It was agreed that a meeting should be convened between relevant bodies and should involve the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department in order to encourage synergy between all involved.

**11. Date of Next meeting**

- 1.1 The dates of the meetings to be held in session 2006/07 were 17 October 2006, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007.