

SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS

UNCONFIRMED

Minutes of the fortieth meeting of the Committee held at 2.30 pm on Tuesday 14 February 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)
Ms Irene Bruce (Edinburgh College of Art)
Professor Robert Craik (Heriot Watt University)
Dr Alan Davidson (University of Dundee)
Ms Margaret Dundas (National Access Co-ordinator)
Dr Andrew Eadie (Glasgow Caledonian University)
Mr Robin Harding (Open University)
Dr Bill Harvey (Scottish Funding Councils)
Ms Rachel Heaney (Stirling Universities Student Association)
Ms Ruth Howard (SWAP-East)
Professor David Kirk (Queen Margaret University College)
Ms Rowena Kochanowska, (University of Strathclyde)
Ms Alison Lumsden (Perth College)
Mr Gerard Madill (Universities Scotland)
Professor Alex McLennan (Bell College)
Professor Andrew Nash (University of Glasgow)
Dr Jane Polglase, (Association of Scottish Colleges)
Professor Mike Swanston (University of Abertay)

Officers:

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

Apologies for absence:

Professor Roy Leitch (Interactive University)
Mr Norman Sharp (QAA Scotland)
Professor Simon van Heyningen (University of Edinburgh)

1. Membership and apologies

- 1.1 New members were welcomed to their first meeting. These were: Professor Robert Craik, Heriot Watt University and Dr Andrew Eadie, Glasgow Caledonian University replacing Professor Pamela Abbott.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed as being a correct record of the meeting held on 4 October 2005 (paper 40-01).

Minute 1.2 Regional Access Fora

- 2.2 It was reported that David Bottomley had attended the meeting of the Regional Access Fora (RAF) on 12 October 2005 and found it very useful. He will also attend their next meeting at the end of March/beginning of April. SACCA agreed that it was useful to formalize links with the RAF in this way.

Paragraph 7.3 Tracking Project

- 2.3 It was reported by Bill Harvey that since the last meeting of SACCA, members of SACCA, the SFC and the SFC Wider Access co-ordinator had met with the Senior Registrars' Group. One of the issues that had been considered was the revisions to the HESA record and whether it would have sufficient data to track Higher National students. There would likely be a consultation held with the sector in the next few months to consider this. A paper would be produced for the next meeting of SACCA and would hopefully include the results of the consultation. In addition, the Scottish Executives' 'basket of measures' as reported in the 'Learning for All' report would also be taken into account.
- 2.4 The Chair thanked Bill Harvey for leading this piece of work.

Paragraph 8 Higher Education Application Process

- 2.5 This item would be reported at the next meeting.

Paragraph 9 SACCA Webspaces

- 2.6 It was reported that training for QAA Scotland staff for web development was about to start and then work would commence on

the construction of the SACCA webspace. It was hoped that a prototype would be available for the next meeting.

3. Remit

- 3.1 The Committee received paper 40-02, which set out the revised remit of the Committee resulting from the discussions held at the last meeting. It was explained that the new remit now incorporated more explicit links with the RAF and work being carried out on European developments. In addition, the remit included more detail about the future work of the SCQF, focusing on the use of the SCQF by institutions and what it enabled them to do, e.g., promoting the sharing of good practice of use of the framework between institutions rather than the development of the framework itself.
- 3.2 The revised remit was welcomed by the Committee, although it was also suggested that it have a more practical focus.

4. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The SCQF: the way ahead post-March 2006

- 4.1 The Committee received paper 40-03 and 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.
- 4.2 It was reported that under legal advice a joint Company Limited by Guarantee would be established as the most appropriate means of formalizing the Development Partnership. Each partner organization would appoint a director to the Board of the company, i.e., one from each of QAA Scotland, Universities Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Scottish Executive and the Association of Scottish Colleges. The Company would also establish a Quality Committee whose role would be to maintain and quality assure the SCQF in relation to the structure itself, the use and application of the SCQF Handbook, credit rating within the SCQF and how other frameworks should articulate with the SCQF. Approval from the various executive bodies of the partner organizations was in the process of being obtained and arrangements would be finalized soon.

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and making the most of the potential created by the implementation of the SCQF

- 4.3 In the context of the above it was reported that a seminar for the Joint Advisory Committee would be held on March 31 2006. This would aim to begin the processes of determining the new role of the JAC and identifying the ways in which the SCQF might be used to support lifelong learning needs over the next few years. The Committee received paper 40-04 which set out proposed plans for the development of a two-year programme of work that would support the higher education sector to make use of the opportunities created by the SCQF.
- 4.4 The Committee was invited to consider the proposals as outlined in the paper and identify potential areas and issues to be addressed during the programme of work. The resulting discussion identified::
 - 4.4.1 A need to use the SCQF creatively, to move beyond implementation and promotion of the framework and investigate ways in which it can help increase flexibility in articulation and credit transfer between sectors through its application.
 - 4.4.2 A need to think about the opportunities created by the SCQF for learners, institutions and the various educational sectors. In particular, SACCA should consider what it could do to help the higher education sector exploit the opportunities created by the SCQF.
 - 4.4.3 That institutional “self” interest would encourage participation in the SCQF.
 - 4.4.4 That more flexibility in considering study pathways, in particular recognizing that learners may need to or wish to move sideways and/or “backwards” in the framework was required.
 - 4.4.5 A need to identify good practice in relation to the transition between higher national qualifications to higher education.
 - 4.4.6 More work was required to be carried out on relating the SCQF to qualifications outside Scotland, including the rest of the UK and beyond.
 - 4.4.7 A need to encourage the Scottish Funding Councils to investigate funding regimes that help support the flexibility in study pathways that the SCQF enables.
 - 4.4.8 That there should be more involvement of employers, employer organizations and professional and statutory bodies in both the development of the SCQF and for the award of credit.

- 4.5 It was decided that this debate should be opened to a wider audience and the results of that consultation brought back to a later meeting.

5. European Developments

The Bergen Summit and continued programme of work on the Bologna Process

- 5.1 The Committee received paper 40-05 which was a copy of a paper previously submitted to the 13 January 2006 Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee. This gave an update on recent developments in the Bologna process including the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) work programme.
- 5.2 SACCA noted the contents of the paper and welcomed the work that QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland had undertaken to raise the profile of Scotland in the Bologna process. One consequence of this was that Scotland now had three Bologna promoters.
- 5.3 Attention was also drawn to the European Diploma Supplement (EDS) and the question was asked about who ensured that institutions were supplying each student with an EDS. The Committee felt that the sector should work toward self regulation and self moderation, although there was a Stocktaking Group that worked at the pan-European level to assess how individual countries were proceeding with implementing the Bologna process. The Committee was also reminded that the Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum were holding a workshop on 30 March 2006 at the University of St Andrews. A report from that workshop would be submitted to the next meeting.

Invitation to bid for a Qualification Framework in higher education in Romania

- 5.4 The Committee received paper 40-06 which was an invitation to QAA Scotland to tender for a qualification framework in higher education in Romania. It was suggested to the Committee that if a bid for this work was to be submitted then that might be best achieved on the basis of a consortium led by SACCA rather than by QAA Scotland alone.
- 5.5 The Committee considered the proposal and agreed not to tender for the qualification framework although it was thought that it would be very interesting to find other ways of working with the Romanian higher education sector at a future date.

Self-certification of the SCQF against the Bologna Framework

- 5.6 The Committee received paper 40-07, which set out plans for taking forward the self-certification of the framework for higher education institution qualifications in Scotland against the Bologna Framework.
 - 5.7 The Committee broadly supported the proposal, however, several issues/points were raised:
 - 5.7.1 The proposed approach, i.e. basing the ultimate authority with the national agency responsible for the national qualifications framework and the assurance of quality and standards, was considered a strength.
 - 5.7.2 The process should be seen as an opportunity to boost and promote the framework for qualifications of higher education in Scotland.
 - 5.7.3 Involvement of subjects/disciplines was not thought to necessary or appropriate, bearing in mind the quality system now operating in Scotland. How institutions articulated with the qualification framework in Scotland was examined during the Enhancement Led Institutional Review process and also through institutions' own internal subject review processes.
 - 5.8 The Committee was informed that the constitution of the self-certification working group and its schedule of activity would be communicated to it at the next meeting in June 2006. Professor John Harper had agreed to Chair the Group. In addition, the working group will comprise of representatives from the different types of higher education institutions operating in Scotland, a student member and two international specialist practitioners.
6. **“Burgess Group” Proposal for a Credit Framework for England**
- 6.1 The Committee received and noted paper 40-08 which gave an update about the work being conducted in England around the development of Credit and Qualifications Frameworks.
7. **Date of Next meeting**
- 7.1 The date of the last meeting for 2005/06 was changed to:

14th June 2006.