

SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS

UNCONFIRMED

Minutes of the thirty-ninth meeting of the Committee held at 1.00 pm on Tuesday 4 October 2005 at the QAA Scottish Office, 183 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5QD.

Present:

Professor John Harper (Chair) (Robert Gordon University)
Ms Sarah Breslin (Scottish Qualification Authority)
Dr Alan Davidson (University of Dundee)
Ms Margaret Dundas (National Access Co-ordinator)
Mr Robin Harding (Open University)
Ms Rachel Heaney (Stirling Universities Student Association)
Ms Ruth Howard (SWAP-East)
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)
Mr Norman Sharp (QAA Scotland)
Ms Helen Gibson (for Dr Bill Harvey, Scottish Funding Councils)
Professor Mike Swanston (University of Abertay)
Professor Simon van Heyningen (University of Edinburgh)

Officers:

Dr David Bottomley (QAA Scotland)
Ms Heather Gibson (QAA Scotland)
Dr Alan Runcie (QAA Scotland/Universities Scotland)

Apologies for absence:

Professor Sam Allwinkle (Napier University)
Ms Irene Bruce (Edinburgh College of Art)
Professor David Kirk (Queen Margaret University College)
Professor Roy Leitch (Interactive University)
Dr Bill Harvey (Scottish Funding Councils)

1. Membership and apologies

- 1.1 New members were welcomed to their first meeting; these included Ms Rachel Heaney (Stirling Universities Student Association), Professor Michael Swanston (University of Abertay) and Ms Rowena Kochanowska (University of Strathclyde). It was also reported that Ms Cathy Macaslan (University of Aberdeen) would be unable to take up her appointment and that Professor Pamela Abbott (Glasgow Caledonian University) was resigning her membership of the Committee.
- 1.2 Professor Abbott was thanked for her contribution to the Committee's business over the period of her appointment and the process of seeking a replacement would be undertaken by SACCA officers. As the University of Aberdeen was unable to take up its membership, officers would also seek to fill the vacancy from another higher education institution.

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 7 June 2005 (paper 39-01).

Minute 1.2 Regional Access Fora

- 2.2 It was reported that David Bottomley would attend the next meeting of the Regional Access Fora (RAF) on 12 October 2005.

3. Remit

- 3.1 The Committee received paper 39-03, which set out the revised remit of the Committee resulting from the discussions held at the last meeting.
- 3.2 The Committee welcomed the revised remit but considered that the work carried out on European developments should be made more explicit. In addition, it was also thought that SACCA should also look to developments regarding credit and qualifications in other parts of the world. Finally, it was noted that the discussions with the RAF about ways in which SACCA and the Fora might best work together could have a significant impact on the role and work of SACCA. It was agreed that a revised remit would be brought back to the next meeting.

4. Schedule of work for SACCA in session 2005/06

- 4.1 The Committee received paper 39-04, which indicated proposed work for the Committee to complete in session 2005/06. It was explained that the work programme might require further development to take into account likely developments in the European, SCQF and RAF spheres of work. A revised programme would be submitted to the next meeting.

5. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Report on progress with implementation of the SCQF

- 5.1 The Committee received paper 39-05 and an oral report, which gave an update on the latest position regarding the overall implementation of the SCQF, and detailed the various key components of the Implementation Plan currently being progressed.
- 5.2 In particular, it was noted under item 3, which dealt with the proposals to extend the number and character of bodies authorised to credit-rate within the SCQF, that it had been agreed that Scotland's colleges would be extended the facility to credit rate their own provision within the SCQF. The College Credit Rating Implementation Group had been constituted to take forward this development, initially through a period of exploration of the issues involved until December 2005, and it was hoped that credit rating with interested colleges could be piloted in Spring 2006.
- 5.3 With regard to item 6 it was reported that the Recognition of Prior Learning guidelines had been finalized and were now available on the SCQF website. The guidelines were a core part of the SCQF handbook.
- 5.4 It was reported that Marie Cerinus had been appointed by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) (with funding from the SCQF and from NES) to work on SCQF development in the Health sector. In addition, it was noted, that it was thought important that work in the Health sector should articulate with the work the Sector Skills Council for Health was undertaking in the area of qualifications. It was also reported that Social Care was an area where a substantial amount of work had been achieved, and it was agreed that a background paper about this would be brought to the next meeting.
- 5.5 It was also confirmed that the new SCQF Project Director, Margaret Mullen and a Project Officer, Elizabeth Raeside had been appointed and had taken up their posts.

Planning for the SCQF after March 2006

- 5.6 The Committee received paper 39-06 which aimed to update the Committee about the discussions regarding future arrangements for taking forward the SCQF. Key proposals included the amendment of the terms of reference of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). The work of JAC will in future focus on building a collective programme of work (involving the various organizations represented on the Committee) and with the general aims of overcoming barriers to wider participation in lifelong learning, building better articulation between qualifications, clearer routes for progression etc. It was envisaged that the new committee would be in place by March 2006. In addition, a new national committee would be established to maintain the SCQF itself.
- 5.7 It was recognized by the Committee that there was a need to consider how SACCA would articulate with the new national committee on the

SCQF. It was emphasised that SACCA's responsibility to QAA Scotland Committee for the maintenance of the HEI qualifications framework remained.

- 5.8 It was also agreed that in order to help SACCA maintain and enhance the HEI framework the Practitioners Group would in future directly report to SACCA.
- 5.9 Finally, it was recognized by the Committee that the Sector Skills Councils were developing their own qualification framework, and it was thought important that SACCA took cognizance of this and determine how this development would impact on the SCQF. It was agreed that a paper on this subject would be submitted to the next meeting.

6. **Work on the Scottish Bachelor Degree**

- 6.1 The Committee received an oral report, which gave an update on the programme of work around the Scottish Bachelors Degree. It was reported that the consultant had undertaken a survey to identify existing practice in higher education institutions that offered workplace bachelors degrees. It was clear that, at present, there was not substantial activity in the sector in this area. However, in order to promote the value of offering work-based bachelors degrees and to ensure quality in this area, a small working group would be established which would identify and promote good practice in developing and running work-based bachelors degrees. This working group would report to SACCA and its membership would draw from those institutions already offering bachelors degrees of this type.

7. **Update on Mapping, Tracking and Bridging Projects**

Launch event for Mapping Project Website

- 7.1 The Committee received paper 39-07 which gave an update, on plans for the official launch of the mapping website which shows HNQ to Degree links. It was explained that the website was in the process of being transferred to the QAA information systems. It was envisaged that the launch of the website should coincide with the formal opening of the new SCQF offices at Glasgow Caledonian University and be held on 9 December 2005.

Update on work being conducted on Tracking

- 7.2 The Committee received paper 39-08 which updated members on plans to progress the work, stemming from the "Mapping, Tracking and Bridging" project on tracking student progression between Scotland's colleges and higher education institutions.
- 7.3 The paper was a report of a meeting held on 5 September 2005 at the Scottish Funding Council offices. It had been agreed at this meeting there would be informal discussion with a number of parties, (HESA,

UCAS, SQA etc.) would be carried out until December around the issue of tracking. In addition, a specification for changes required to national and institutional data collection and processing procedures would be drawn up by the end of 2005 and this would be consulted on with all interested parties by the end of January 2006. Thereafter it was hoped that a phased implementation timetable would be put into effect, with intermediate targets for the start of session 2006/07 and final targets met at the start of 2007/98.

- 7.4 The Committee welcomed the developments articulated in the paper and supported the dissemination of these outcomes to the sector in general.

8. European Developments: The Bergen Summit and continued programme of work on the Bologna Process

The Bologna process, the Bologna Follow Up Group's (BFUG) proposed plan of work

- 8.1 The Committee noted that the BFUG plan of work had not been issued at the date of the meeting. The paper would be disseminated to Committee members when it was available.

European Commission Developments: Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning

- 8.2 The Committee received paper 39-10 which was a copy of the European Commission's consultation regarding a European Qualification Framework. The Framework covered "vocational" and "academic" qualifications and school, post-secondary and higher education. The consultation would run to the end of December 2005 and a UK wide response was to be co-coordinated through the Department of Education and Skills (DfES); Scottish input co-coordinated through the Scottish Executive. However, there was also the opportunity to make an individual response direct to the Commission and the DfES. The Committee was asked to consider whether it was appropriate for SACCA to formulate a response or feed its views into the Scottish Executive.
- 8.3 The Committee discussed the Commission's Framework and how it related to the Bologna Framework for higher education. There was a lack of clarity as to how the two related to each other. The Committee was of the view that the Bologna Framework should be the immediate reference point for the higher education section of the SCQF and felt that the Commission's Framework should articulate with the Bologna Framework with a "light touch" and in a flexible and "overarching manner". It was recognized, however, that the Commission's Framework included vocational qualifications and as such would act to help vocational mobility.
- 8.4 The Committee decided that a separate response from the Scottish higher education sector should be drafted. This would then be submitted to the DfES, as well as directly to the Commission.

7 “Burgess Group” Proposal for a Credit Framework for England and Wales

- 7.1 The Committee received paper 39-11 which was a copy of two consultations papers – “Proposals for National Credit Arrangements for the use of Academic Credit in Higher Education in England” and “The UK Honours Degree: Provision of Information”. The latter was provided to the Committee to note for its work on transcripts.
- 7.2 The Committee welcomed the papers and agreed that it would be useful to respond to the proposals for the National Credit Arrangements for England. It was noted that in the past there had been very close links to those working on credit in England and Wales and the SCQF.

8. Higher Education Application Process

- 8.1 The Committee received paper 39-12 which was a consultation paper issued by the DfES on “Improving the Higher Education Application Process”. The paper suggested that admission to higher education should become a more efficient, effective and fairer process by introducing a system of post-qualification applications (PQA) where students would know their final school examination results and use these to make decisions about when and where to attend higher education.
- 8.2 It was noted by the Committee that many Scottish higher education institutions took applicants from the rest of the UK and it would be important that these developments would not disadvantage Scottish applicants to both Scottish and other UK higher education institutions.
- 8.3 The Committee was informed that Universities Scotland would be drafting a response on behalf of the sector after consultation with senior admission staff and would bear the concerns expressed above in mind.

9. SACCA Webpace

- 9.1 The Committee received paper 39-13 which gave an update about the progress being made with respect to the construction of a SACCA website. The Committee was asked to note the update and consider whether the draft webspace content would meet the Committee’s needs.
- 9.2 The Committee welcomed the paper and the developments. It was suggested that the webspace contained a section for students and student officers.

10. Date of Next meeting

- 10.1 The dates of the remaining meetings for 2005/06 were confirmed as:

14th February 2006
13th June 2006.