AAG

## Minutes of Meeting

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| **Date** | **01/05/2025** |
| **Time** | **10:00am-12:00pm** |
| **Location** | **MS Teams Call** |
| **Present** | Ruth Jennings (Handover Chair), Rohaise Rose-Bristow (Co Chair) – The Torridon, Jennifer Davies – SP Energy Networks (Co Chair), George Brown – SQA Accreditation, Sheila Dunn - SCQF, Paul White – SCQF, Stuart McKenna – STF, James McDonald – RBS, Tommy Breslin - STUC, Matthew Barr - Universities Scotland, Andrew McFarlane - ACS Clothing, Terry Dillon – SDS, Maxine McLintock – SDS, Callum Boag – SDS, Heather McArthur - SDS |

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|  | Action |
| **1.** | **Apologies & Guests** |  |
|  | Apologies* Alison Eales - QAA
* Catherine Ferry – Scottish Government
* Diane Mitchell – Colleges Scotland

Absentees * Colin Young - Leonardo
* Alison Bucknell - FISSS

Guests* Keith Spalding – SDS
* Laura McEwan – SDS
* Liz Walker – SDS
* Audrey Pollock - SSSC
* Laura Carter – Johnston Carmichael
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| **2.** | **Welcome & Previous Minutes** |  |
|  | RR-B was chair for today’s meeting.* RR-B asked AAG members to reach out to co-chairs individually if they want to understand more regarding co-chairs backgrounds, suggesting it may be useful for co-chairs to have individual meetings with AAG members to get to know each other. AAG members that require email addresses for RR-B and JD to reach out to CB.
* This will be RJ’s last AAG. RJ has now taken on the role of vice chair of SAAB Standards and Frameworks Group. AAG members thanked RJ for her massive contribution and support as chair of AAG over the years.
* AAG Members welcomed HM to the group who will be permanently taking over Nicola’s role as secretariate of AAG, likely from July. HM will be shadowing CB in the meantime. AAG members also thanked CB for his role in supporting AAG as secretariat on an interim basis following Nicola’s departure.

**Core Skills Approach*** The scope of the universal skills framework project is **to include developing an interim solution to support core skills**. SQA are leading this activity and are currently awaiting authorisation from Scottish Government (SG) for this work. Further discussions are to take place over the next few weeks and AAG members will be kept informed of these discussions.
* The proposed work from the AAG Core Skills Short Life Working Group (SLWG) is on hold until the outcome of the scope from the Universal Skills Framework project is known.
* If the Universal Skills Framework activity **does** include an interim solution to core skills, we will look to retire the AAG Core Skills SLWG, with a view to some AAG members contributing to the Universal Skills framework project.
* If it **does not** include an interim position, the AAG Core Skills SLWG will progress as previously planned, to implement an interim solution.
* **Core Skills Briefing Note for Developers:** We need to generate a piece of guidance/ explanatory information for developers. This will be based on the core skills note previously agreed and signed off by AAG members.

**Previous Minutes and Outstanding Actions** * **Actions 1 & 2:** These actions could be brought forward by TD at AAG in June as a substantive item and will talk through development areas for FY 25/26 and development activity.
* No additional feedback on April AAG minutes were highlighted. These were signed off by AAG members.
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| **3.** | **Accounting – Stage Gate 3**  |  |
|  | LM attended to present, seeking Approval in Principle for Accounting at AAG today. **Overview/ Background** * There have been several challenges within the Accounting development, which has been ongoing for around two and half years. The previous apprenticeship only included the professional qualification, not a competency-based qualification (CBQ).
* The apprenticeships at both SCQF Level 6 & 8 now include both a CBQ and professional qualification. AAT and ACCA have been involved, and completion of the CBQ includes exemptions from their professional qualifications at both SCQF levels, the degree of exemption varies between AAT and ACCA.
* This will be a fundamental change for industry, which will be a challenge for providers and support will be provided. Accounting will require a much longer lapsing time to ensure providers will be ready for the launch of the new frameworks.

**Apprenticeship Principles*** **Principle 2:** AAG members queried what will happen to the Accounting SCQF Level 5 entry level qualification? This will be removed, following advice from employers there is no value in having both a SCQF Level 5 & 6 qualification and going forward it will be SCQF Level 6 (entry level) and 8. There were no issues raised from both employers and training providers on this.
* No additional feedback or queries were raised from AAG members on any of the other apprenticeship principles.

**Discussion*** AAG members queried the clarity given upfront, in terms of exemptions offered against professional qualifications? AAT and ACCA exemptions are fundamentally different, and this is based on their own internal rules. There has been discussion regarding providing more detail for providers on this, including guidance to understand what these exemptions are.
* AAG members agreed the exemptions against professional qualifications are a bit of a grey area and it would be beneficial to provide more information/ guidance for providers on this.
* For the Accounting SCQF level 6 apprenticeship, AAG members queried why the two mandatory enhancements (NPA in PC Passport at SCQF Level 6 and Information Literacy at SCQF Level 6) where chosen as opposed to others? These are not huge units, but the TEG felt these were necessary. The sector felt core skills did not meet requirements for entry, and at the time the requirement of core skills was being reconfirmed within apprenticeships which is why these additional mandatory enhancements were included.
* AAG members queried what exemptions against the professional qualification mean in practice? For example, AAT offer 50% against their SCQF Level 8 professional qualification through completion of the Accounting SCQF Level 8 CBQ. There are four exams within this professional qualification, meaning the apprentice would only sit two exams and still gain the full professional qualification.
* AAG member queried the mandatory Providing Management Accounting Services work situation within the SCQF Level 8 framework. The feedback was this could potentially be challenge if an individual does not have the opportunity to do this in practice. It is important that individuals have the opportunity to learn on the job and LM confirmed she was happy to pick up to discuss how this could be displayed in practice.
* The framework documents include both English and SCQF Levels within the titles of the professional qualifications. For example, AAT Level 2 Certificate in Accounting at SCQF Level 6. The English Level cannot be included within a SQCF Level programme, but the English Level is the level that industry recognise for these qualifications.
* The AAT website has both the English and SCQF Levels but with each of the titles in full, which is fine. The framework documents should include the SCQF Levels only but a hyperlink could be added to AAT/ ACCA websites outlining both levels so there is no disconnect. **LM to look at this.**
* Further study opportunities outlined in both the SCQF level 6 & 8 framework documents are limited. LM to look at this and include further examples/ opportunities.
* AAG members complemented the layout of the Apprenticeship Approval Document and thought this was well written. SG confirmed the policy on NOS, in terms of NOS forming the basis to develop Scottish apprenticeships and AAG members checked why Accounting is following the previous, work situation approach? Accounting was one of the areas agreed with SG that would follow the old work situation approach, due to the development being at an advanced stage. AAG members were happy with this explanation.
* The professional qualification (ACCA Diploma in Financial and Management Accounting at SCQF Level 7) is a Certificate not a Diploma. The Accounting SCQF Level 8 qualification has also not been accredited yet, as the wrong units were included. This will be submitted soon.
* AAG members recognised the challenges within this development and thanked LM for the great work on this.
* **AAG members collectively approved Accounting in Principle.**
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| **4.**  | **Land & Nature – Stage Gate 3**  |  |
|  | LW attended to present, seeking Approval in Principle for Land & Nature at AAG today. **Overview/ Background** * The development work for Land & Nature was concluded around one year ago, the delay has been due resolving issues with the awarding body regarding developing the qualification. This has now been resolved.
* Qualification Products (QP) were resubmitted to the Accreditation Co-ordination Gorup (ACG) for approval on 7th April 25. There were changes required to codes and dates and were anticipating that this be resubmitted for approval on 30th April 25, but this will now be submitted to ACG next week.
* Therefore, looking to progress with seeking Approval in Principle for Land & Nature at AAG today, pending QP approval and written confirmation of this will be provided to AAG members next week. AAG members had no objections to seeking approval in principle today.

**Apprenticeship Principles*** **Principle 3:** In terms of availability and investment, AAG members highlighted that projected numbers look really low. There has been smart work done here in terms of combining pathways, but there were only 21 starts in 2022/23 and 71 projected over the next three years. This projection is based on those that responded to the consultation and is not a true reflection of the whole sector. The work done on broadening pathways, many of which had very low update should improve this. The new units should also make things relevant and encourage more uptake.
* **Principle 9:** These apprenticeships have been designed to be applicable across a broad range of land-based organisations. This makes the apprenticeships more attractive and less complex for the learner. The framework documents need to be really clear in terms of the pathways and routes apprentices can take based on their occupation.
* No additional comments, feedback or queries were raised from AAG members on any of the other apprenticeship principles.

**Discussion (Framework Documents)*** AAG members queried the qualifications listed within both the SCQF Level 5 & 6 framework documents. For both frameworks, it is one qualification that will be achieved, regardless of the pathway chosen. In the SCQF Level 5 framework, there are three avaliable pathways and two available pathways within the SCQF Level 6 framework. AAG members felt the way this was displayed indicates there is multiple qualifications which is not the case. **LW to make this clearer within the framework document.**
* In terms of the Emergency First Aid at Work or Emergency First Aid in the Workplace qualifications listed in both the SCQF Level 5 & 6 frameworks, AAG members mentioned they could not find this. **LW to look into this** but AAG members mentioned there is a SCQF version of Emergency First Aid that Lantra Awards offer.
* Within the Land & Nature SCQF Level 6 document, under further study, AAG members mentioned some of these need to be more specific as some did not have SCQF Levels against them. **LW to update this.**
* AAG members again recognised the challenges within this development and thanked LW for the great work on this.
* **AAG members collectively approved Land & Nature in Principle.**
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| **5.**  | **Health & Social Care – Stage Gate 0**  |  |
|  | KS and AP (SSSC – Learning and Development Manager within the Qualification and Standards Team) attended to present. **Scope** AP outlined the scope of the development and provided background on the sector. The detail can be found in the Health and Social Care Stage Gate 0 document, but some key highlights include: * Approximately one in 12 people are employed in Scotland work in social services.
* Figures on the whole social services workforce was provided; this has only been avaliable since 2008. Prior to then, no data was collected and published. The workforce has increased from 8% in 2008 to December 2023. Covid has also had an impact on those levelling the sector.
* Published figures were pulled from SQA website regarding Modern Apprenticeship registrations and SVQ Data registrations.
* Currently a review of NOS in Health & Social Care and Children and Young People. This is due for completion in December 2025.
* A review of the SVQ’s contained within the current MA frameworks is taking place. This is due for completion early 2027, when the current SVQs are due to expire.

**Discussion*** KS and SSSC recently met with trade unions to discuss involvement in the development process.
* In terms of engagement within the voluntary sector which makes up 25% of the social services workforce, AAG members mentioned it is important to ensure widespread engagement. SSSC have a lot of reach, and an engagement plan will be developed to ensure all basis are covered and significant engagement has been carried out.
* The Health and Social Care development could be used as a springboard in terms of the initiatives that there is.
* AAG members were thanked KS and AP for their thorough update.
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| **6.**  | **Development Manager Update**  |  |
|  | TD presented the Development Manager update at AAG today, focusing on key blockers. **Land Baded Developments** * Land & Nature has been approved in principle today; we will be looking to move Land Use and Trees and Timber forward in the near future.

**Dental Nursing*** Dental Nursing has been approved in principle and will come back to AAG for full approval in June. There will be a launch event, specifically highlighting system collaboration. Despite the external deadline, this development is an exemplar.

**Construction and Building and Engineering Services Areas*** The reaffirmation that NOS form the basis of standards for Scottish apprenticeships, has been conflated by some of the work CITB have been looking at competence frameworks across the sector. There has been a change in process within CITB who are looking to clearly define baseline competence across all occupations in the construction and associated sector e.g. Building Engineering Services.
* This change in process has presented some challenges for CITB, regarding the implementation of this which is causing significant delays in these development areas and NOS expected.
* CITB are currently working through the programme of development and are reviewing this position, which has led to a lack of clarity regarding dates NOS will likely be developed. SDS are having ongoing dialogue with CITB strategy and service development teams. SDS & CITB are also in discussion with SG on this.
* The NOS Governance Group are also looking to invite CITB to the next meeting to discuss challenges.

**Building Services Sector*** AAG members mentioned that we need to flag when issues are out with the scope of AAG. In terms of the risk profile, Developer should be added here to clearly show where the challenge/ delay lies. SDS to look at this and come back to AAG for agreement.
* A risk log needs to be created. This will highlight external factors that require resolution: - the risk, impact of the risk. SDS to create a risk log and bring this to the next meeting for AAG agreement.

**Action:** SDS to create a risk log for developments and add Developer to the risk profile, clearly highlighting where challenges and issues lie.   |  |
| **7.**  | **AOB** |  |
|  | * No other business was raised.

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**Appendix 1: Outstanding Actions from Previous AAG Meetings**

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| **No** | **Action** | **Latest Update/ Response**  | **Date** | **Owner**  |
| 1 | AAG members to attend a TEG in an observatory role.  | **April 25:** Currently finalising 25/26 priorities. TD will take members through the development areas we will be moving into once confirmed, to provide opportunities for AAG member attendance and the development process at a high level. **May 25:** Proposed actions 1 and 2 be brought forward as a substantive piece in June, to be discussed with co-chairs. | Standing Action  | MG, TD |
| 2.  | Continuous Improvement Update  | **April 25:** This update is primarily in relation to the joint collaborative planning between SDS, SQA Awarding Body and Accreditation. As above, this will tie into the update TD will provide for Action 1. **May 25:** Proposed actions 1 and 2 be brought forward as a substantive piece in June, to be discussed with co-chairs. | Sep 25  | TD  |
| 3.  | Custodial Care and Practice MA – TB to email suggested alternation to Feb 25 AAG minute for this section.  | **April 25:** TB will pick up with TD and CB in April regarding changes.  | Mar 25  | TB, TD, CB |
| 4.  | SDS to create a risk log for developments and add Developer to the risk profile, clearly highlighting where challenges and issues lie.  |  | May 25 | TD, CB, HM |

**Appendix 2: Apprenticeships Approved for Delivery (Stage Gate 4)**

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| **Name of Apprenticeship**  | **Date Approved**  |
| Services (Customer Service, Retail and Travel) at SCQF Level 5  | 05/09/2024 |
| Services (Customer Service, Retail and Travel) at SCQF Level 6 | 05/09/2024 |
| Hospitality at SCQF Level 5 | 14/11/2024 |
| Professional Cookery at SCQF Level 5 | 14/11/2024 |
| Professional Cookery at SCQF Level 6 | 14/11/2024 |