AAG

## Minutes of Meeting

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| **Date** | **03/07/2025** |
| **Time** | **10:00am-12:00pm** |
| **Location** | **MS Teams Call** |
| **Present** | Rohaise Rose-Bristow (Co Chair) – The Torridon, Jennifer Davies – SP Energy Networks (Co Chair), George Brown – SQA Accreditation, Alison Bucknell – FISSS, Paul White – SCQF, Stuart McKenna – STF, James McDonald – RBS, Tommy Breslin - STUC, Matthew Barr - Universities Scotland, Andrew McFarlane - ACS Clothing, Klaus Mayer – Education Scotland, Kevin Duguid – Unison, Heather Gibson – Scottish Government, Terry Dillon – SDS, Maxine McLintock – SDS, Abigail Kinsella – SDS, Heather McArthur - SDS |

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|  | Action |
| **1.** | **Apologies & Guests** |  |
|  | ApologiesCatherine Ferry (Scottish Government)Diane Mitchell (Colleges Scotland)Alison Eales (QAA)AbsenteesN/A**Guests**Abigail Kinsella (SDS)Heather Gibson (Scottish Government)Kevin Duguid (Unison) |  |
| **2.** | **Welcome & Previous Minutes** |  |
|  |  Rohaise Rose-Bristow was the chair today’s meeting and RR-B introduced the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda.**Previous Minutes & Actions*** No queries or feedback received on the previous minutes
* Development areas have been uploaded to the intranet. Procurement process is ongoing for awarding contracts however will conclude shortly. AAG members provided with the opportunity to express interest for potential areas of involvement

**June AAG minutes approved by members** |  |
| **3.**  | **GA Social Work – Stage Gate 3** |  |
|  | **AAG members approved GA social work in principle** Abigail Kinsella and Heather Gibson attended AAG to present GA Social Work Stage Gate 3 seeking approval in principle**Overview*** The timeline for the first cohort is tight but University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is optimistic about meeting deadlines.
* Feedback from the AAG sub-group mainly concerned formatting and clarity, with positive consultation responses.
* The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) expressed concerns about logistical delivery, leading to an unsuccessful validation event. UWS and SSSC committed to resolving issues by a meeting scheduled on 18th August, with a follow-up approval request expected thereafter.
* Discussions highlighted misunderstandings about the graduate apprenticeship program in the sector, the inclusion of apprentices alongside students, and the importance of aligning the program with the newly qualified social worker route.
* Funding arrangements were clarified: employers cover salaries and related expenses, while fees are paid by SAAS.
* The cohort size is approximately 30-35 candidates with a waiting list; strategies are in place to address geographic challenges through hybrid and recorded lectures

**Discussion*** Members expressed frustration at the SSSC validation outcome but acknowledged the detailed scrutiny.
* Union representatives highlighted concerns around the timescale pressures, acknowledging the additional challenges with GA programme timelines and the importance of the regulator (SSSC) approval. Members recognised that approval at this stage is for the apprenticeship framework and the apprenticeship would not be approved fully until all aspects of delivery were in place and the regulator has approved
* Concerns were raised about the potential devaluation of Technical Apprenticeships if explicitly listed alongside degree pathways
* The retention of “apprenticeship” in the program title was supported to emphasise its distinct pathway.
* Union representatives noted the importance of consistent terms and conditions for apprentices.
* The next AAG meeting in September might be too late for final approval, suggesting a possible earlier meeting
* Discussion around clarity of what is expected from AAG members for approval at Stage Gate 3. **Clarity to be provided around what is expected from AAG members with regards to approval at Stage Gate 3 & Stage Gate 4 for FA, MA & GA developments**
 | **TD, HM** |
| **4.**  | **Electrical Installation & Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVACR) – Stage Gate 2** |  |
|  | TD presented Stage Gate 2 for Electrical Installation & HVAC together as these developments are at similar stages and are experiencing the same issues * The Electrical and HVAC apprenticeship developments are progressing with consultations involving numerous organisations.
* Electrical installation includes a Final Integrated Competence Assessment (FICA) that must be completed to achieve competence certification.
* Discussions are ongoing about integrating work-based assessments aligned with apprenticeship policy and SVQ design principles.
* The sector currently manages the end test for electrical apprenticeships, raising quality assurance challenges since SQA does not oversee this directly.
* Efforts are underway to engage small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and support strategies to reduce gender imbalance through collaboration with equalities teams.
* Existing apprenticeship provisions will continue during development, with no gap anticipated/no impact to learners
* HVAC apprenticeships have a less rigid competence assessment structure compared to electrical.
* Stage Gate 3 for HVAC & Electrical Installation may be delayed due to ongoing discussions about competence assessment roles and quality assurance.
* The sector desires to maintain the end test as part of the qualification and is exploring options for awarding body approval
* SQA Accreditation are exploring options regarding skills testing & quality assurance/management
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| **5.**  | **Development Manager Update Slides**  |  |
|  | TD presented development manager update and highlighted key areas **Developments*** Progress is being made with fewer amber and red status items.
* Agriculture and land/nature apprenticeship developments are moving forward, with accounting set for launch upon agreement.
* Qualifications for Trees & Timber and fashion sectors are advancing, while archaeology development is temporarily paused.
* Construction apprenticeship developments face challenges due to CITB deprioritisation and lack of clarity on forward plans, which have been escalated to government and SAAB S&F.
* Members proposed amendments to reporting against progress to current position rather than reporting against the original plan - reporting improvements and automated dashboards are planned to better track progress
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| **6.**  | **Core & Career Skills Update**  |  |
|  | TD presented an update on the position of the core & career skills work**Discussion*** A position has been agreed upon and feedback sought from Sector Skills Organisations (SSOs) regarding communication strategies.
* There is uncertainty about ownership and documentation of career skills within apprenticeships. GB shared documents – **SDS will consolidate evidence and summarise options**
* Core skills are considered inappropriate at certain levels by the Scottish Government; career skills are embedded in SVQ units.
* A project is underway to develop a single skills framework integrating core, career, and meta-skills, with AAG members invited to participate.
* Core skills updates are paused pending further work, while career skills require clarification and refinement
* Work underway on how to communicate core skills message out to wider SSOs,
 | **TD/HM** |
| **7.**  | **AOB** |  |
|  | **AAG End of Year Report** * The draft AAG End of Year Report will be shared with members for feedback by 25th July 2025
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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.**June 25:** TD will confirm what the developments are once they have been contracted for. Following this, members will have the opportunity to attend **July 25:** Contracts to be awarded in July, TD has compiled a list of developments and shared with AAG members for the July meeting**Close action**  | August 25  | MG, TD |
| 5.  | TD to pick up with GB & CF on the Career Skills framework and lapsed units within this  | **July 25:** Work has been underway and update will be provided at AAG on 3rd July as part of the agenda. GB shared additional documents to provide further clarity on career skills  | June 25  | TD, GB, CF  |

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| **Apprenticeships Approved for Delivery (Stage Gate 4)** |
| **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 |