AAG

## Minutes of Meeting

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| **Date** | **03/04/2024** |
| **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, Diane Mitchell – Colleges Scotland , Sheila Dunn - SCQF, Paul White – SCQF, Alison Eales – QAA, Stuart McKenna – STF, James McDonald – RBS, Tommy Breslin - STUC, Alison Bucknell – FISSS, Matthew Barr - Universities Scotland, Andrew McFarlane - ACS Clothing, Terry Dillon – SDS, Maxine McLintock – SDS, Callum Boag – SDS,  |

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|  | Action |
| **1.** | **Apologies & Guests** |  |
|  | Apologies* Colin Young – Leonardo
* Klaus Meyer – Education Scotland
* Catherine Ferry – Scottish Government

Guests* Abigail Kinsella – SDS
* Shellie Montgomery – SDS
* Heather Gibson – Scottish Government
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| **2.** | **Welcome & Previous Minutes** |  |
|  | JD was chair for today’s meeting.**Welcomes*** Laura Carter (Johnston Carmichael) was due to be attending today but will attend AAG in May as an observer.
* The group welcomed Paul White (SCQF) who will be attending for the next few months as an observer. Paul will be taking over from Shellia Dunn (SCQF) at AAG in the interim once Shellia moves on. Shellia’s final AAG will be in May.
* AAG members recorded there thanks to Shellia for her contribution and support at AAG over the last few years.

**Previous Minutes and Actions – comments** * Continuous Improvement Activity Update: The update required will primarily be in relation to the joint collaborative planning between SDS, SQA Awarding Body and Accreditation.
* Due to the change in approach - NOS forming the basis used to develop Scottish apprenticeships, structural changes are now required to the governance gates. The main changes will be updating the naming conventions of some of the milestones, to reflect this change.
* AAG members to attend a TEG: At the moment, the priorities for next year are being agreed. TD to take AAG members through the developments areas we will be moving into and the development process at a high level.
* Custodial Care and Practice MA: TB to pick up with TD regarding the changes to the minute for this section in February.
* Amendment required to the AAG minute in March. On Page 2, in relation to AAG members not being identified within the minute. This should be changed to ‘AAG members would prefer if individual group members were not identified’. **CB to update this.**
* AAG members highlighted the importance of the lapsing times required to ensure providers are ready for the launch of new frameworks. Further discussions were held and AAG members recognise collectively where there are substantial changes, meaning transition within the normal timeframes are not realistic or practical. In these instances, there will be conversations to understand the logic behind this and a transition plan that supports and enables. For example, within Accounting and Plumbing and Heating.

**Core skills paper** * AAG members collectively agreed a pragmatic approach for Dental Nursing, which was well received by the sector.
* The core skill note from AAG in March has been shared with AAG members, this has been agreed with RJ, GB and CF. This note outlines the discussion, key decisions and actions, including the approach to the medium-term solution for core skills, pending the outcome of the long-term review and progression of universal skills.
* A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) has been set up to look at the development of AAG’s approach to support core skills, specifically in terms of providing solid guidance and information for developers. The group has met twice so far.
* The SLWG has agreed work needs to be done on core skills and conversations are ongoing to understand the shape and size of this. This will be a regular agenda piece at AAG for the foreseeable to update AAG members on progress.
* The SLWG for core skills may not be required as the group for the universal skills framework may be working out an interim solution. The group is currently trying to understand if an interim solution is being considered and the scope of this work. If so, there is no point duplicating effort. If there is no interim solution being considered, this will be picked up by the AAG SLWG and AAG members will be required to support this work.

 * The interim approach to core skills agreed at AAG in March will be open to any developments currently in revision or coming down the track. Developments which are live will not be looked at, unless core skills are posing a clear blocker to completion. For example, police and hairdressing. There is a mechanism for these instances, and this discussion would be picked up at AAG in the usual way. We are not proposing we relook at everything; it is about balancing resource with requirements.
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| **3.** | **GA in Social Work – Stage Gate 2**  |  |
|  | AB and HG attended to provide an update on progress to date. * The development is progressing well and will includes a degree qualification that underpins the apprenticeship programme.
* University of West of Scotland are being supported by Open University and SSSC for this development. SSSC are the technical writer for this piece of work.
* The Apprenticeship Development Group drafted the Occupation Profile in November 24 which was based on the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).
* Consultation took place in December, just under 500 responses with 95% agreement of what was suggested. There were slight amendments recommended which have been made.
* Employer Consultation on the Standard and Framework and Occupation Profile to be held in May 25, along with the underpinning degree and Assessment Strategy.
* Other Higher Education Institutions (HIEs) will hopefully come forward after this to ensure national consistency is met. There is also diverse workplace learning for HIE’s, known as placements, but are trying to move away from this terminology.

**Range of Stakeholders and Partners** * Participation in this development has been great. There has been a workshop for extended UHI interest in supporting and being part of the development and are hopeful some UHI’s will choose to offer the degree. There has been a separate workshop for providers and another for employers, with third party representation to.
* In terms of union representation, Unison and COSLA have been involved. Also reaching out to Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) to seek involvement.
* An industry advisory group has been formed and are working on the first cohort intake for University of the West of Scotland (UWS). This group has been meeting regularly to plan for this and ensure this is as smooth as possible.
* There has been nation wide engagement throughout this development, and involvement has been substantial. There have also been a lot of enquiries regarding when this development will go live.
* The range and extent of partnership activity was a result of previous AAG member feedback. This steer from AAG has provided more of a focus to ensure the development is meeting the needs of employer groups. AB and HG thanked AAG for their steer on this.

**Scope Change*** GA in Social Work will now come to AAG for approval in principle in June, instead of May to accommodate feedback from consultations and to align with necessary University of West of Scottland and SSSC internal validation. This will enable a full range of feedback when coming to AAG for approval in principle in June. AAG members were happy with this explanation.

**Communication Plan** * There has been a range of regular communications that have taken place. Some examples include, SDS Marketing and Communications Team co-ordinating updates through social media and SDS channels, monthly updates shared across network of stakeholders through newsletters and Social Work week (17/03/25 – 21/03/25).

**Stage Gate 2 Checklist** * AB took AAG members through the checklist, everything has been met or is on track to be met. No issues were raised by AAG members on this.

**Discussion** * Queries on when Stage Gate 0 for GA in Social Work was brought to AAG? This was taken forward in January 25.

 * AAG members highlighted the tight timeline for recruitment of apprentices for the first cohort in September 25. This is being pushed by the sector and is down to SSSC working out the allocation of places. This first cohort is expected to be around 30 apprentices.
* In terms of the slight amendments made to the draft Occupation Profile following the consultation on this. AAG members asked if this could be shared for record purposes. **AB to share this.**
* AB to share more details on Communication Plans for this development at next Stage Gate presentation for GA in Social Work.
* UWS will deliver but AAG members queried the mechanism for another UHI to offer this? As this is a regulated profession, it is critical that it meets the need of the provider and SSSC, who will do a thorough evaluation. After this date, other UHI’s will be able to come forward. An update on this would come to AAG, likely in 2026/27. Universities are also required to do their own internal valuation and will not be able to offer until this has been carried out.
* HEI are driving this which is reassuring for AAG members, also the fact that UWS have been involved at a ground level. The structure of this development is ideal.
* As part of the employee consultation, the Scottish Association of Social Workers shared a lot around practice learning and experiences in terms of research done for the degree. The shared positive and negative experiences, who they communicated etc. The whole ethos of this is a collaborative space, and being really clear about changes required.
* AAG members mentioned that today’s presentation was helpful and are happy with the progress of this development. AAG members also noted the good work on taking on previous AAG feedback, as above.
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| **4.**  | **Dental Nursing – Stage Gate 3**  |  |
|  | SM attended to present, seeking Approval in Principle for Dental Nursing at AAG today. **Overview*** The Dental Nursing development commenced in October 24 and this consisted of a full NOS review. The NOS consultation took place in December 24 and NOS were agreed and signed off by January 25.
* The General Dental Council (GDC) safe practitioner framework goes live on 1st August 25, so have been working to a really tight timeline as all qualifications must be up and running by then.
* Qualification Products were submitted to ACG and approved on the 26th March 25. SQA Awarding Body are hoping to have the qualification developed by 23rd May 25, so are planning to come back to AAG for full Apprenticeship Approval in June 25.

**AAG Sub-Group Feedback** * **Gender Imbalance:** AAG sub-group noted the gender imbalance within the sector generally and asked if there were plans to improve this? This is widely recognised by the sector and was discussed at TEG 3 with Equality and Diversity colleagues from SDS.
* **NOS Consultation:** 86% of responses were from Scotland and there were queries why other nations have much lower representation? There was representation from other devolved nations in the four-nation steering group and these members were tasked with ensuring their own stakeholders were continuously informed throughout the process. This was also submitted to the NOS Governance Group who were satisfied with the work Skills for Health carried out and level of engagement received.
* **Pathways and Progression:** AAG sub-group asked why Dental Reception Skills at SCQF Level 6 would be included as a pathway for progression, given it is a lower level to Dental Nursing? Dental Nurses sometimes come into the role and then consider practice management, this is why Dental Reception Skills at SCQF Level 6 has been included as a progression opportunity for qualified Dental Nurses.
* **Where Meta-Skills fits within the apprenticeship:** There has been a new unit ‘OH34: Maintain personal and professional practice for dental care professionals’. This is a reflective practice unit which was created to satisfy the legislative requirements of the GDC, and meta-skills have been mapped to this unit.

**Stage Gate 3 Checklist** * SM took AAG members through the checklist, everything has been met. No issues were raised by AAG members.

**Discussion*** AAG members mentioned this has been a positive example of concurrent work (standards, qualification and apprenticeship development). The success and impact of which has been evidenced through Dental Nursing.
* In terms of the pressing timeline, the technical elements of the apprenticeship will be ready in time. Training Providers also do not envisage any significant challenges in terms of preparing for the 1st August 25. Training Providers that deliver were also involved in the TEG and have started work on training plans for role out. Further discussions will be held on this at the next SDS/ Training Provider meeting.
* AAG members queried if this would have any impact on the 3-month lapsing period that was agreed to allow Training Providers to prepare for delivery? The 3-month parallel running of the old and new framework will remain in situ.
* Gender Imbalance: AAG members felt the statement on this could be improved and asked if the sector is doing anything concrete to address this, are there any specific requirements from the GDC? The apprentice would need to have a decent standard of writing, this is a regulatory requirement. In terms of activity to address the gender imbalance, the sector has held activate recruitment campaigns for underrepresented groups, as well as males. Dental Nursing, like many other sectors are experiencing a shortage of staff and struggling to recruit.
* NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have also visited schools to promote Dental Nursing and reach young people earlier. **SM to add these examples to the Apprenticeship Approval Document.**
* AAG members provided feedback on the apprenticeship documentation. This was captured and shared with the Development Manager for actioning.
* **AAG members collectively approved Dental Nursing in principle.**
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| **5.**  | **Development Manager Update Slides**  |  |
|  | SM attended to give update on developments by exception. **Construction: Design & Contracting*** SQA Awarding Body conducted a change impact assessment for this qualification. Meeting held 26/03/25 to discuss assessment and agree appropriate mitigations to address risks which went well.
* CITB looking at similar alignment, they had broken this down and are looking for a more practical solution.

**Carpentry and Joinery & Fitting Building Interiors** * Both developments impacted by change of process within CITB on the implementation of competence frameworks which outlines baseline competency across the sector.
* There have been a few challenges regarding the implementation and sequencing of this. SDS and CITB met recently to understand the implementation of this model on live and future developments. CITB to provide the timelines for future developments soon.
* CITB have committed to working with SDS on this to make sure there is minimal impact on developments in train. It will likely be summer 2025, worst case scenario before there is a clear solution on this.

**Plumbing and Heating** * Assessment Strategy not yet agreed by SQA Awarding Body. This is complicated by significant changes to existing assessment approaches. This will also be shared across HVACR and Electrical Installation. In order to transition, a degree of work is required here.
* Discussions around the Final Integrated Competence Assessment (FICA) across all Business Services areas ongoing. Meeting to continue discussions 31st March 25 was cancelled but discussions will be picked up again soon.

**Accounting*** This was submitted to AAG sub-group 20th March 25 and feedback has been received and updated. Accounting will come to AAG in May for approval in principle.
* Awarding Body submitted the wrong units to SQA Accreditation for approval of the qualification. This has been sent back to the Awarding Body and will be in touch with someone at SDS regarding the correct units.

**Fashion and Textiles*** NOS development through to completion on track to complete end of April.

**Equine*** Awaiting decision on the NOS business case. The Business Case for this has been submitted twice to the Standards and Frameworks Panel and pushed back on both occasions.
* AAG members mentioned that the RAG needs to be marked red somewhere to reflect this challenge but not sure where. SDS to have a think about this and update the RAG to reflect this challenge within the next Development Manager update for AAG.

**Archaeology** * Waiting on business case to be submitted. AAG members queried if the timeline is still achievable due to the delay – if progress is made on this soon, the timeline is still achievable.

**HVACR*** As above for Plumbing and Heating, regarding the Assessment Strategy.
* TEG 3 to take place shortly after easter break to begin discussions on the apprenticeship framework.

**Electrical Installation** * As above for Plumbing and Heating, regarding the Assessment Strategy and FICA discussions.
* TEG 4 to take place 22nd April 25 to begin discussions on the apprenticeship framework.
* AAG members highlighted that the milestones and timeline need to be updated to reflect progress within the Development Manager update slide. The risk profile also needs updated.

**Discussion** * For some developments, AAG members mentioned they are conscious of the time taken due to a range of different challenges. Dental Nursing has been a good example of concurrent work (standards, qualification and apprenticeship development).

**Health and Social Care (Developments in Preparation)*** TB asked the Development Manager for this development (KS) could reach out to him directly on this.
* This is a model of self-developed NOS and are now moving into the development of this. Discussions with SSSC ongoing on how the development of this will be taken forward within industry. As a regulator, they have a set of requirements which will be factored into the development timeline.
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| **6.**  | **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.  | 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.  | Sep 25  | TD  |
| 3.  | Custodial Care and Practice MA – TB to email suggested alternation to Feb 25 AAG minute for this section.  | **April 25:** Closed  | Mar 25  | TB, TD, CB |
| 4. | Amend to March AAG minute in relation to the section regarding indivdual AAG members not being identified. | **April 25:** CB has updated the minute with suggested change. *‘AAG members would prefer if the group were not identified within the minute’* changed to *‘AAG members would prefer if individual group members were not identified’*. **This has been actioned.** | April 25 | CB |
| 5.  | AAG members to review and feedback on core skills note from March 25 meeting. | **April 25:** AAG members to provide any feedback by COP 18th April 25. This will then go into the final March 25 minute for the core skills discussion. **No additional feedback received; Core Skills note has been added to March minute.**  | April 25 | All |

**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 |