

Apprenticeship Approvals Group
**CHAIR'S END OF
YEAR REPORT
2025**



Ruth Jennings

From Ruth Jennings,
Chair of the Apprenticeship
Approvals Group (AAG)

Purpose of the report

This report outlines the Apprenticeship Approvals Group's achievements, the impact of its work, and the opportunities ahead. It also recognises the outstanding expertise, support, and commitment of AAG members, who represent key stakeholders.

The role of the Apprenticeship Approvals Group is to:

- Approve apprenticeship frameworks, ensuring they meet both government policy and industry needs.
- Maintain strong quality assurance throughout development and delivery.

Work closely with the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board's (SAAB) Standards and Frameworks group to coordinate on standards development and implementation.

Reflections on the year

It is with both celebration and a touch of sadness that I share my final Chair's report. I have now stepped away from my role with the AAG, but I'm excited to continue supporting the development of new and revised apprenticeships as Vice Chair of the SAAB Standards and Frameworks group.

Since the AAG began in November 2019, it has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside passionate and dedicated members, contributing to the quality assurance and development of apprenticeship frameworks. I'm incredibly proud of what we have achieved together.

The AAG is now in excellent hands with its new Co-chairs, Strategic Workforce Renewals Manager at SP Energy Networks, Jennifer Davies and owner of the Torridon Resort, Rohaise Rose-Bristow. They will continue to shape and drive AAG's work to support productivity and skills development.

Speaking of her new role as Co-chair, Rohaise said: "I am delighted to be joint chair of AAG. I hope my commitment, passion and dedication will support the continued value and relevance of apprenticeships for Scotland as part of the post-school education system.

Jen said: "I am a member of the SQA Qualifications Committee and a recent member of the Standards and Frameworks Group.

"As an employer, I am excited to take up the role of joint chair of AAG and champion the development of apprenticeships across sectors to support the future skills challenge."

Under Rohaise and Jen's leadership, the vision of the AAG remains clear: to ensure that apprenticeships in Scotland are employer-led, high-quality, aligned with policy, and designed to meet the real needs of the workforce.



Rohaise Rose-Bristow



Jennifer Davies

The external skills landscape

The operating environment remains challenging, with ongoing discussions about the skills needed today and in the future. We are also aware of proposed changes to the structure of the post-school education system reforms that could affect our work.

While we support positive changes where possible, we have been careful to ensure that the core functions of this group continue without disruption. We are actively engaging with opportunities related to sustainability, AI, and workforce shifts.

Apprenticeships are becoming even more vital in helping people transition into new roles, and ensuring they are developed to meet real needs has never been more important.

Industry and stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder relationships have strengthened significantly this year, as our thinking has become more aligned and collaborative efforts have led to high-quality outcomes.

This has been particularly evident in the work on National Occupational Standards, Core Skills, and the activities supported by the SQA. The AAG group has also broadened engagement, ensuring that colleges, independent training providers, and universities all have a voice. Our Trade Union colleagues have provided valuable input, helping to shape development activities.

Expert guidance and support from the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland have been invaluable to the AAG.

Together, we have tackled challenges, navigated complex decisions, and delivered apprenticeship programmes that meet industry needs.

This year, we've said goodbye to some highly valued and supportive colleagues as they move on to new opportunities. At the same time, we warmly welcome new members who have brought fresh perspectives and new ideas to the group.

I would like to give special thanks to Head of Accreditation and Interim Chief Regulator at the Scottish Qualifications Authority George Brown. George has been my Vice Chair for the past six years. He has played a key role in guiding AAG from its early days to the strong position it holds today. His dedication, deep expertise, commitment to well-considered outcomes, and ability to connect the education landscape have been truly outstanding.

I want to sincerely thank George for all that he has done and continues to do. We are grateful for his contributions, and I'm pleased to say that you will remain a valued member of the AAG team.



Addressing Skills gaps and national priorities - activity overview

The AAG experienced a busy 2025, with the following apprenticeships approved and ready to deliver:

- Aquaculture SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 7
- Driving Goods Vehicles SCQF Level 6
- Services (Customer Service, Retail & Travel) SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 6
- Hospitality & Professional Cookery SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 6
- Custodial Care and Practice SCQF Level 7
- Accounting SCQF Level 6 & SCQF Level 8
- Dental Nursing SCQF Level 7

7 apprenticeships under review:

- Science Industries Quality Technician SCQF Level 6
- Operating Department Practice Graduate Apprenticeship SCQF Level 9
- Accountancy Foundation Apprenticeship SCQF level 6
- Social Work Graduate Apprenticeship SCQF Level 10
- Construction Developments SCQF Levels 6 & SCQF Level 7
- Trees and Timber SCQF Level 5, SCQF Level 6 & SCQF Level 7
- Fashion and Textiles SCQF Level 5

4 apprenticeships developed and awaiting approval:

- Construction: Design & Contracting SCQF Level 6
- Agriculture SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 6
- Horticulture and Greenkeeping SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 6
- Land and Nature SCQF Level 5 & SCQF Level 6

5 new developments commenced:

- Electrical Installation SCQF Level 7
- Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVACR) SCQF Level 6 & SCQF Level 7
- Social Care and Children and Young People SCQF Level 6, SCQF Level 7 & SCQF Level 9

Two of the 5 new developments have come through the self-development process:

- Equine (SCQF Levels TBC) – self funded development
- Archaeology (SCQF Levels TBC) – self funded development



Continuous improvement whilst maintaining quality assurance

Our approach remains focused on maintaining consistency and quality across all frameworks, ensuring they align with real-world needs. This has helped us to:

- Establish a clear approach to National Occupational Standards (NOS), which serve as the foundation for all developments.
- Define and agree on a core skills approach that balances the value these skills bring with the realities of today's operating environment.
- Strengthen the work of the AAG Subgroup, enabling us to uphold quality while accelerating delivery timelines.
- Implement a structured process for making minor framework amendments that maintains quality, fits within governance requirements, and allows for efficient decision-making.

Closing remarks

As we look ahead to the upcoming year, with the opportunities, challenges, and the changes that reform will bring, it's clear that the Apprenticeship Approvals Group (AAG), operating under the governance of SAAB, provides a strong foundation for continued industry leadership and oversight in the design, development, and approval of apprenticeships in Scotland.

While I step back from the Chair role, I'm pleased to continue contributing through my position as Vice Chair of the Standards and Frameworks Group, supporting ongoing improvement in our work.

Finally, I'd like to wish Jen and Rohaise the very best as they take forward the important work of AAG, all the very best.