AAG

## Minutes of Meeting

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| **Date** | **06/02/2025** |
| **Time** | **10:00am-12:00pm** |
| **Location** | **MS Teams Call** |
| **Present** | Ruth Jennings – Chair, George Brown (Vice-Chair) – SQA Accreditation, , Catherine Ferry– Scottish Government, Diane Mitchell – Colleges Scotland , Sheila Dunn - SCQF, Matthew Barr – Universities Scotland, Tommy Breslin - STUC, Alison Bucknell – FISSS, James McDonald – RBS, Terry Dillon - SDS, Nicola Conner - SDS |

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|  | | Action |
| **1.** | **Apologies & Guests** |  |
|  | Apologies  Colin Young – Leonardo  Jennifer Davies – SP Energy  Stuart McKenna – STF  Rohaise Rose-Bristow – The Torridon  Andrew McFarlane – ACS Clothing  Klaus Meyer – Education Scotland  Alison Eales - QAA  Guest  Shellie Montgomery – SDS |  |
| **2.** | **Welcome & Previous Minutes** |  |
|  | RJ updated that this would be NC’s last AAG meeting – group thanked Nicola for her work as AAG secretariat.  Previous actions  TD has pulled together the statement clarifying position on NOS/Work Situations, following discussion re the hybrid format of Horticulture and Greenkeeping, this is currently being reviewed internally and will be shared when available.  Custodial Care and Practice: TD followed up with NTP Operations and TB to understand the delivery of the apprenticeship, following agreement that Scottish Prison Service would no do not prevent any employers from up taking an apprenticeship, this will need to be an agreement between the union and employer. TB confirmed. |  |
| **3.** | **Dental Nursing Core Skills** |  |
|  | RJ introduced the paper pulled together by SDS colleagues, following discussions on Core Skills last month.  Members praised the paper and felt it was a very cohesive read and clearly set out many of the discussions the group have been having on Core Skills over the past several months.  DMi presented Dental Nursing Core Skills proposition to the WBL Programme Board. The consensus from colleges who deliver this apprenticeship is that L3 Numeracy is extremely low, and as this should still be a developmental framework, they felt that it needs to at least be set at L4.  Members clarified – signposting is an indication of where there may be naturally occurring evidence and this should be carried out when the SVQ structure has been completed – SQA Accreditation cannot mandate that they should all be at a specific level.  Guidance currently states that the minimum level expected would be SCQF L4 – where it comes out lower, there must be extensive evidence to support this.  **TD to work with Liz Walker (Hyslop) and update paper with additional evidence**  SMo updated that all learning providers who currently deliver the framework are involved in the TEG. SM agrees that current guidance is ambiguous and confirmed that extensive consultation has taken place with the sector, and the consensus within this group is that having Core Skills which are too high for apprentices working in these roles will introduce significant barriers. SMo also highlighted that technological advances have reduced the need for certain skills e.g. Numeracy, which is predicted to become a common theme throughout most sectors, and has raised the need for others e.g. Communication, Problem Solving.  Overall concerns from the group that a low level of Numeracy may hinder future progression for apprentices. Members highlighted that a L3 Core Skill may sit lower than eligibility requirements.  Members also felt that this will be common to several other frameworks, this sets a risk of setting a precedent, particularly within the Care Sector.  Members would like to see evidence of what candidates cannot achieve within the L4, both in Numeracy and Problem Solving. SMo confirmed that the SLWG for Dental Nursing has already mapped to all Core Skills and demonstrated where units can evidence these.  JM felt that from an apprentice/employer perspective, it can be very disappointing for apprentices if they are functioning well in their role and doing a really good job but are being held back because they are struggling to tick the box of a Core Skill which isn’t naturally occurring in their role – this will impact ability to progress.  **\*Amends to paper based on discussion today with additional guidance added in**  **\*Bring back to meeting in March for decision on Core Skills with Dental Nursing** |  |
| **4.** | **Collaboration work with SQA** |  |
|  | TD provided overview on some of the work that has been ongoing with SDS/SQA AB and SQA Acc.  Members agreed that the Stage Gates approach has been working very well and are happy to hear that this is an iterative process and is being updated to reflect a refreshed development approach.  Members requested for the Skills Federation to be involved in collecting Industry Insight – SSOs/SSCs, as Skills Federation now has a full-time colleague dedicated to policy and research. Members also felt that early input from unions re industry insight would be invaluable. TD agreed.  **TD to share slides** |  |
| **8.** | **Development Manager Update** |  |
|  | SMo attended to answer questions on the development update.  Land-based   * SCQF Level 5 QP for Horti and GK have been approved, further review is required for L6. Complications with L6 due to ongoing discussions on rules of combination and total credits. Lessons being learned on both sides as a result of these discussions. * Land & Nature – notification from SQA AB that they have approved business case for L5, still to confirm approval for L6.   Members questioned low uptake and whether this has the potential to impact other apprenticeships. TD can request details of the low uptake policy from SQA AB. Members clarified the low uptake policy will vary depending on the Awarding Body. TD highlighted that ongoing collaboration with SQA AB will look at rationalising both apprenticeship frameworks and qualifications to prevent areas with lower uptake being lost.  Members felt it’s important to keep an eye on this, as low uptake policies on qualifications will have an impact on apprenticeship provision.  Accounting   * TD flagged that there is likely to be longer lead time for this due to significant changes to provision – this will be discussed in depth with providers before agreeing transition dates with them   Plumbing & Heating   * Members questioned why this is Amber – TD confirmed that this is due to changes to assessment strategy and how this will impact stakeholders.   Equine   * Clarification that it will be reviewed at the next S&F panel * Members queried if it will be appropriate to hold a 2nd TEG if the NOS Business Case hasn’t yet been approved, NCo confirmed that BHS are still looking to refresh the framework due to current issues with the structure and delivery – therefore will still looking to use this time to refresh the frameworks, either with existing NOS or the refreshed NOS should the business case be approved   Archaeology   * GB confirmed that CIfA haven’t yet been added into the pipeline with SQA Regulation Managers regarding the process of becoming an approved Awarding Body. NCo confirmed that CIfA have reached out and have received guidance on next steps.     TD updated that following the departure of Construction Development Manager, Laura Brady, recruitment activity has concluded, and Elaine Ellis will be joining the team later this month to take up this role.  The group noted a big thanks to Laura Brady, Construction is a massive job and very politically sensitive and Laura did a fantastic job managing this.  The group noted thanks to Nicola and Laura and wished them both success in their next ventures. |  |
| **9..** | **AOB** |  |
|  | * Tertiary Education bill – notification of apprenticeship funding moving to SFC. Members asked if this has any implications for AAG. RJ confirmed that in the short term, there would be no impact, but in the long term AAG will be required to adapt to a changing landscape |  |

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| **Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings** | |
| **Action** | **Owner** |
| AAG Members to attend TEGs in an observatory role. | MG |
| Continuous Improvement Activity Update **September 2024** | TD |
| Custodial Care and Practice MA – update from Sharon at Skills for Justice **January 2025** | NC |

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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 |