



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

Confirmed

Minutes of 35th SCQF Partnership Board held on Friday 16 September 2016 at hours in the SCQF Conference room, 201 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2LW

Present:

Rob Wallen (RW)
Ray Harris (RH)
Janet Brown (JB)
Alastair Sim (AS)

Chair SCQF Partnership
Chair of Quality Committee
SQA
Universities Scotland

In Attendance:

Candy Munro
Aileen Ponton (AP)
Sheila Dunn (Secretariat)

College Development Network
SCQF Partnership
SCQF Partnership

Apologies:

Rowena Pelik

QAA

Welcome and Introductions

Register of Interests

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1. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June were approved. The redacted version for the website was also approved.

2. Matters Arising

Members noted the matters arising paper.

Item 2 – AP and RW met with John Swinney. This had been a very cordial meeting. Mr Sweeney made it clear that the focus is on schools at the present time. There will however be a project about the learner journey and a group established that will look at the inefficiencies in the system particularly around SCQF level 7 and what can be done structurally to remedy the system. It was agreed that it would be useful for SCQFP to have a seat on this group. AS and JB indicated no firm date had been set for the group to start but they would pass on any information to AP.

AP has requested meetings with Ministers: Jamie Hepburn and Shirley-Anne Somerville. Acknowledgements have been received but no dates set as yet.

AP reported that she met with Alison Rice, the civil servant looking after SCQFP. A Rice is very supportive of the SCQFP but has been in contact regarding potential funding cuts. The Partnership had been asked to make a submission outlining the impacts on the organisation of a 5% and a 10% cut. AP highlighted that this would be the fourth year of cuts to SCQFP's funding. AP had been having ongoing dialogue with A Rice regarding the potential impacts of further funding cuts and RW asked her to summarise her latest response.

The Directors had a discussion around the potential funding cuts and the likely impacts not just for SCQFP. There was also some discussion around the likely date that more information would be available and how this would impact on preparing budgets for next year.

RW asked that AP follow up with A Rice and bring any further information to the next Board meeting. AP also noted that the Partnership is also expecting a similar conversation with SFC whose funding supports two key posts within the Partnership but that information on budgets would probably not be available before the start of 2017. The Board agreed that AP should prepare a paper for the next meeting outlining the impacts of the cuts and the actions that could be taken in order that Directors could look at prioritising work.

Directors suggested that it would be useful to indicate where SCQF will have an impact on government initiatives when meeting with the other Ministers such as DYW, Insight, employer links, the learner journey etc. They also suggested it might be useful to look at the place of SCQF and SCQFP in the overall infrastructure. It is also key that SCQFP are involved in key initiatives such as the learner journey project.

Item 5 – RW had met with Liz Cameron. However she had a number of other commitments and wanted to check that she could really commit to SCQFP in terms of time. She did indicate that if she could not she would be willing to suggest a colleague. RW will follow this up.

3. CEO Report

Members noted the report. AP highlighted two issues: AP has been asked by Scottish Government to chair the Insight Tariff Review Group and secondly the HE funded project proposal had been sent out to the sector. It was noted that in the response from US to the Widening Access Commission report that US would be looking at consistency of access to HE. AP highlighted that the Partnership would welcome a submission from a group of universities for the funded projects. AS indicated that it was probably early days for this but he did think that the outputs from last year's project, as well as this, would prove very useful to support a discussion with other institutions.

4. CEO Objectives for 2016-17

RW highlighted the objectives for the CEO within the paper. RW noted that he had agreed these with AP but asked for comment and approval from Board members. The Board members were happy to approve. A review of progress towards these objectives will take place in February 2017.

5. Board appraisal - updated

RW introduced the paper which contained the questionnaire which is proposed to be used for April and outlined the timescales. Board members approved both the content and the timeline.

6. Proposal for a Parliamentary reception

RW indicated that it was the intention to hold a Parliamentary reception. Jenny Gilruth MSP had agreed to sponsor the event. It is likely to be in the period January-March 2017.

There was a discussion around the focus of the event. AS noted that in US' experience it was useful to have a format which showcased real people doing real things. It was agreed that it might also be useful to look at areas of potential interest such as DYW, progression, computing and IT and have a mix of young people and employers.

RW asked that AP/JC create a proposal to be sent out to the Board before the next meeting.

7. Research into impact and metrics for analysis

AP introduced this item in the absence of TERU colleagues who could not attend to give a presentation at this meeting due to unforeseen circumstances but had prepared the paper. She confirmed that a number of the initial interviews had taken place including most of the Directors and that others would be followed up.

TERU has started the process of evidence gathering and it had been asked prioritise the Board, Scottish Government and SFC in the first instance. The steering group would receive an update on progress to date at their meeting next week.

JB noted that it may be not be useful to try to separate the value of SCQF and value of SCQFP. The value of the SCQFP is intrinsically linked to the value of the SCQF and it may be difficult and/or dangerous to try and separate the two. It may be more useful to highlight that the value of the SCQF and then to demonstrate that the SCQFP is the necessary infrastructure to ensure the effective operation of the SCQF. Directors supported this and felt it was a very useful message to feed back. Directors also noted that it would be important to focus on the impact rather than the action e.g. what does having SCQF mentioned in college prospectus result in? They also noted that some of the key measures being proposed would take longer to measure successfully than others e.g. the impact of SCQF in schools would take some years to bed in.

It was agreed that TERU would be asked to make a presentation to the December Board meeting with interim results from the project.

8. Management Accounts 2016-17 Quarter 1

RW introduced the paper and asked AP to clarify the comment regarding how the deferred income is shown and noted that this would be resolved in the next set of accounts.

AP also noted that income from the Macedonian project is calculated using a very complex system based on forecasting. As a result funds have been set aside as a contingency as it is likely that the monies spent would not match the income already received as the number of days predicted were too high.

AP also noted that the Partnership is on track to have a balanced budget and outturn situation.

The Board noted the accounts.

9. Report from the Audit and Risk Committee

It was noted that in the Risk strategy and Risk Register the Scottish Government funding situation had been changed back to amber as a result of the issues outlined in the earlier discussions. The situation regarding Brexit had also been added but obviously the impacts are unclear at the present time.

JB highlighted the current UK agenda regarding apprenticeships and that UK level apprenticeships and the apprenticeship levy coming north of the Border could impact on the use of Scottish Apprenticeships and on SCQF. It was agreed that this should be added to Risk 10.

AP noted that under item 6, two staff members were currently in Macedonia where there had been an earthquake and a number of aftershocks. AP assured the Directors that she had been in daily contact. The staff members had considered returning to Scotland but had decided to stay. There was some discussion around the actions for keeping staff safe and informed of the risk of travel. The Directors discussed the mitigation that can be put in place and noted that in the risk register that the scores for this risk should be altered to indicate the difference in risk from pre mitigation to post mitigation positions.

RW noted that in Risk 1 the date of the meeting with John Swinney should be 17 August.

The Directors noted the other items arising from this report and adopted the risk strategy and register.

10. Report from the Quality Committee

RH gave an update of the issues discussed by the QC. The Directors approved the report of the annual monitoring visit to ICAS allowing them to continue as a CRB.

It was reported that the QC had a long discussion surrounding the credit rating activity in colleges and the associated quality assurance by Education Scotland. There had also been a presentation from Education Scotland regarding the new proposals for carrying out the quality assurance. The place of the SCQF in this had been identified but the Executive Team had still to be provided with the detail of this.

Members noted the minutes and the decisions made.

10a Submission from the Scottish and Fire and Rescue College - TED

RH outlined the key findings of the approval team. He also highlighted the issues that the approval team and the QC had recorded which led to the condition and recommendations in the report presented to the Board. It was noted that the condition to carry out another dry run of the credit rating processes had already been completed satisfactorily by the organisation.

Directors agreed that the condition could be lifted but that the recommendations should remain and progress on these should be checked by the Executive 6 months from the approval. The Directors also agreed that SFRS-TED should be approved to credit rate from SCQF levels 4 -9.

11. 15th anniversary edition of Update

Members noted the content of the document and welcomed the publication.

12. Annual Report 2015-16

Members noted the content and welcomed the positive stories.

13. Update from SCQF Forum meeting

AP noted that TERU spoke to the Forum as they would be a key group for interviews. AP highlighted the presentations and updates given to the Forum

The Directors noted the paper.

14. AOB

There was no other business.

15. Date of the next meeting – 16 December 2016