AAG

## Minutes of Meeting

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| **Date** | **04/07/2023** |
| **Time** | **10:00am-12:00pm** |
| **Location** | **MS Teams Call** |
| **Present** | Ruth Jennings (Chair), George Brown (Vice-Chair) – SQA Accreditation, Paul Gibson – Scottish Government, Diane Mitchell – Fife College, Sheila Dunn - SCQF, Alison Bucknell – FISSS, Stuart McKenna – STF, Tommy Breslin – STUC, Nicola Crawford – Education Scotland, Terry Dillon – SDS |

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| **1.** | **Apologies & Guests** |  |
|  | Apologies  Alison Eales – QAA  Bethany Welsh – Balfour Beatty  Matthew Barr – University of Glasgow  Guests  Sharita Guy, Shellie Montgomery, Gordon Wishart – SDS  Alison Morris – FISSS  Klaus Mayer – Education Scotland |  |
| **2.** | **Welcome & Previous Minutes** |  |
|  | RJ welcomed all to the meeting.  Noted that this would be NCr's last meeting due to a change in job role, and Klaus Mayer will now attend on behalf of ES. RJ thanked NCr for her contribution to AAG over the years.  Previous minutes  The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Noted that TD will support RJ with AAG ToR update. |  |
| **3.** | **Core Skills Update** |  |
|  | RJ expressed no guidance or policy has changed in respect to Core Skills as of yet, and as such they’re expected to be included in all Modern Apprenticeships.    SM expressed confusion over policy position, as today’s Services submission does not include Core Skills. RJ expressed that the Services TEG made the decision not to have Core Skills and this will be discussed further under the next agenda item.    TD highlighted there have been a mix of apprenticeships developed via the TEG Methodology approved by AAG over the years, which have/have not included core Skills. Expressed SDS will work with SG to agree a policy position on Core Skills for developments in advanced states, with recognition that moving forward all apprenticeships will have Core Skills as a mandatory enhancement.    DM expressed confusion and concern over Core Skills position. Highlighted apprenticeships should promote transferable skills, and would be uncomfortable approving any apprenticeship without Core Skills.    RJ highlighted the need for a clear BAU statement for Core Skills. PG expressed there has never been a policy change on Core Skills being a mandatory enhancement within apprenticeships. However, SG appreciate some aren't fit for purpose and require updating.  **\*ACTION – NC/PG to organise a meeting between SDS/SG to develop BAU statement for Core Skills and gain clarity on frameworks in advanced stages of development.**    GB provided an update on the future of Core Skills. Expressed he attended a meeting, along with other senior SQA colleagues, with The Minister to discuss Withers’ recommendations. SQA’s Head on HNV Policy suggested that SQA could submit a paper suggesting possible options for consideration.  After the paper was submitted, SG officials asked for a further paper. At a subsequent meeting with the officials, SQA policy colleagues suggested that there needed to be an in-depth review of the various skills frameworks (Core Skills, Skills for Life, Learning and Work, Essential Skills and Meta-Skills). SG officials agreed that SQA should lead on this work but noted that there would need to be extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. Expressed this will be a complex piece of work, with approximately an 18-month timeline before any changes are implemented. As such, need to ensure BAU statement is clear. A proposal was made to SG that two Core Skills (communication and problem solving) be dropped given that they are both covered via meta-skills and that MA frameworks should contain the remaining 3 core skills and meta-skills. However, further work will need to be carried out on this proposal before presenting to SG for approval. | **NC/PG** |
| **4.** | **Services Apprenticeship (Stage Gate 3)** |  |
|  | Services (Customer Service, Retail and Travel) at SCQF Level 5 and SCQF Level 6 submissions for approval in principle.    Core Skills  SG expressed the TEG were unanimous that Core Skills were not to be included within the framework. However, this was not taken as a final decision and was put to wider consultation, where between 70-80% of respondents agreed they should not be included. Comments were received from Providers that learners can be put off by core skills terminology, also expressed concerns that levels weren’t appropriate and content is outdated.  TD expressed AAG need to be led by SG with regards to policy for Core Skills, and suggested waiting for a firm policy position before approval.    PG noted this framework could be used as an example to base discussion on, as to whether or not it's too far down the line to retrofit Core Skills inclusion.  Submission  RJ expressed this was a strong submission, and is keen for policy position to be implemented.    SG expressed the current Travel qualification expires at the end of August, and would appreciate if a decision could be made quickly to avoid a period where no apprenticeship is available. GB expressed the qualification only lapses at the end of August and during this period, learners may complete qualifications for which they have been registered, but no new learners may register for the award.    GB noted the title of the L6 enhancement is incorrect. Also expressed concern over sale of alcohol license being mandatory.    RJ expressed there are single man stores where this may be a requirement for apprentices to attain.    SG expressed there was SME representation within the TEG, which echoed RJ's previous point. Expressed this was added to encourage SME's to use the apprenticeship.    DM queried what makes this an apprenticeship, given there are no enhancements for the most part other than the license to sell alcohol, and no core skills. Questioned why did the sector didn’t want more from the development.    SG highlighted that this apprenticeship is similar to what exists currently. Expressed there may be a degree of familiarity with current provision coming though from employers.    DM expressed there are core skills included in the existing frameworks, and these feel stripped back. SD & RJ agreed with this, expressed there may be lack of ambition within industry.  SG expressed that progression from L5 to L6 was previously difficult, and this has been changed to make it easier and aid ambition within industry.    SMcK expressed this was a strong submission, well written, easy to understand, with good engagement. However queried if the change to 2 apprenticeships from 6 was more of a cosmetic than anything else. SG expressed that the standards have been developed utilising the new NOS strategy, enabling the use lots of similar NOS across the pathways, whilst still recognising their own unique nature. This change has helped to highlight the commonalities between the roles and promote opportunities for transferability.    SG & RJ noted the great work of People1st and AAG Sub Group contributing to this strong submission.  SD highlighted a minor wording error relating to the SCQF on the first page.  SMcK suggested making it clearer under qualification requirements that the individual qualifications are pathways.    AB queried if the L5 app was missing on the portal, as she couldn’t retrieve it. **\*ACTION – NC to ensure AB receives a copy of the L5 Apprenticeship.**  **\*ACTION – SG to make relevant amendments to documentation and discuss AAG concerns with TEG before resubmission.**  AAG **did not approve** this Stage Gate 3 submission due to clarity being required on Core Skills policy. | **NC**  **SG** |
| **5.** | **Driving Goods Vehicles Apprenticeship (Stage Gate 4)** |  |
|  | Driving Goods Vehicles at SCQF Level 6 with Qualification Codes for final approval for delivery    SMcK – expressed the only thing outstanding issue from previous feedback is the license being mandatory. GB expressed MAG previously did not allow licenses to be mandatory within frameworks.    SMcK & RJ clarified the license can be acquired in 5 days and costs around £4k.  TD expressed SDS couldn’t find clarity on policy, but updated he has discussed this issue with internal funding teams. Noted there is a strong requirement from industry to progress due to the national shortage of goods vehicle drivers. Confirmed that NTP funding team have agreed to factor in a funding contribution for the acquisition of the license, and drew parallels to construction, where acquisition of CSCS cards are essentially licenses to practice.    SM expressed there are significant skills shortages across the sector, paired with a lack of young people across the workforce. When TEG got together initally, lots of conversation took place over barriers to recruitment, and the conversation always came back to the license.    GB expressed licenses should be something AAG consider when revising the principles of an apprenticeship.  GB noted the qualification code was missing from the first page.    SMcK queried if the license acquisition is mandatory, would non completion of the license add a potential barrier to completion of the apprenticeship? SM expressed the apprentice would not sit license at the start of the apprenticeship, unless they had previous experience. Anticipated that the units developed within the qualification, preparing & driving the vehicle, would give the individual the grounding and preparation to then go on and take the test.    DM noted she found the core skills mapping hard to read, and queried if any AAG Member could confirm it was complete with no gaps. GB expressed the version submitted in June did have lots of gaps, however there are no gaps in new documentation. SM expressed she brought PAG back together to revisit the core skills mapping after the first submission.    AAG **unanimously approved** this Stage Gate 4 submission. |  |
| **6.** | **Custodial Care and Practice at SCQF Level 7 (Stage Gate 4)** |  |
|  | Custodial Care and Practice at SCQF Level 7 submission for final approval for delivery.  Note: This is an older style framework which was approved for self-funded development in in 2022. This is a returning framework which was reviewed in February 2024 but was not approved by the group.    RJ noted concern around Union engagement and asked TB for his input. TB expressed he’s been aware of meetings scheduled with PCS, however his understanding is that they weren't moved in their support of the framework.  TD noted this framework was not developed by SDS.    DM expressed this is L7 qualification with L4 numeracy Core Skills proposed, and highlighted to embark on a L7 apprenticeship young people need more than primary school level numeracy. Expressed the need to understand the rationale and evidence base behind this, to make an informed decision.    GB noted that a precedent has been set with the Policing apprenticeship, where the same Core Skills gap has been approved. Expressed numeracy doesn't translate to the job role.    **\*ACTION – NC to relay these concerns to SfJ and suggest that they come to the August meeting to discuss.** | **NC** |
| **7.** | Development Manager Update |  |
|  | SM presented the Development Manager update.    Engineering  GB queried who’s developing additional guidance to support the apprenticeship. TD updated on work undertaken with Network Rail & Enginiutiy to work through the 5 engineering disciplines, to see how they would use the apprenticeship against each. SDS have asked them to produce a template for employers to support this, being clear where there are specific standards or aligned qualifications. This will be made available through the website once completed.    Service  SMcK queried whether any special considerations been made to engage the provider network with more capacity as this is a large change. SM expressed SG has been engaging internally with NTP to start capacity building with providers, and putting a cohesive plan in place.  TD expressed he’d pick this up at the next recurring meeting between TD, SMcK, DM & HA.  Plumbing & Heating  GB updated that SQA AB & Accreditation have been looking at delivery of current framework. It has come to light that the SVQ is not being assessed in the workplace, but assessed in college via TAPs. Expressed the new framework will need to be introduced slowly, indicated it would be at least 3 years before it is operational.    TD expressed since this has been discovered, SDS have been working with both sides of SQA to see that existing apprentices are not disadvantaged. Expressed this will also be picked up at meetings with DM, SM & HA to agree a reasonable date of implementation.    DM queried if we are communicating this issue with colleges yet. GB expressed comms plan has still to be developed, meeting with BSE Skills in August to discuss further.    Planned activity    TD noted intention to update on development/collaboration approach with SQA at August's meeting. SG 0&1 to be brought forward in September for approval. |  |
| **8.** | AOB |  |
|  | AAG Chair’s Report  RJ expressed the first draft of the report has circulated, looking for feedback from members. Noted that Building for the Future section is not too comprehensive, having been written suitably vague given the current landscape. RJ recorded thanks to the SDS Team for their efforts supporting AAG and the development of the report. **\*ACTION – Members to send feedback to RJ in by COP 11th July.**    TB referenced ODP Framework, noted trade unions withdrew from the process. Expressed the timeframe was poor, and he doesn’t think this is an example of good practice. Suggested readdressing the wording in this section.    Employer voice  RJ expressed she’s aware of high turnover of employers on the group. Updated she’s been working with Maxine McLintock to introduce new employers to the group, and expressed thanks for MM’s help co-ordinating this. | **All** |

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| **Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings** | |
| **Action** | **Owner** |
| AAG Members to attend TEGs in an observatory role. | MG |
| Report back to AAG on uptake in OPS Framework in **February 2024.** | GW |
| Continuous Improvement Activity Update **February/March 2024** | TD |
| MA Digital Marketing update **December 2023** | NCo |

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| **Apprenticeships Approved for Delivery (Stage Gate 4)** | |
| **Name of Apprenticeship** | **Date Approved** |
| Driving Goods Vehicles | 04/07/2022 |