

Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning Committee: Remit and membership

- This paper proposes revised committee arrangements for SFC's work on skills, learning and access. The proposals are based on a recent meeting of the Council board members of the current Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee.
- Previous Council board decisions have resulted in the creation of a single committee from three previous separate committees dealing with learning, skills and access.
- The proposed remit for this revised Committee can be found in Annex A. The proposed remit combines the key elements of the remits of the predecessor committees. It is expected that the remit will evolve in line with the outcomes of the review of coherent provision and sustainability.
- It is recommended that the membership of the new Committee be reduced at this present time to Council Board members only. This will allow the Committee to have focused discussions, particularly around matters related to the review of coherent provision and sustainability.

Recommendations

- Stand down the current Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee.
- Form a new Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee.
- Approve the remit of the new Committee.
- Approve the membership of the new Committee to be the existing four Council board members.
- Approve the membership structure to be reviewed before 31 March 2021.

Financial implications

- There are no immediate programme fund implications associated with this paper, although the Committee's advice to the Council board could include recommendations relating to programme funds. The running costs associated with the Committee are allowed for in the current budget.

Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning Committee: Remit and membership

Purpose

1. This paper proposes revised committee arrangements for SFC's work on skills, learning and access. The proposals are based on a recent meeting of the Council board members of the current Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee.

Background

2. On 9 November 2017, SFC Council board agreed to establish a Learning & Quality Enhancement Committee. Subsequently, the Council board decided to further changes to its committee structure by standing down the Joint Skills Committee and adding the skills element to the remit of the Learning Enhancement Committee, leading to the creation of the Learning Enhancement & Skills Committee (LESC). (There is a legislative requirement for SFC to have a committee to consider skills issues.) Early in 2020, Council took the decision to stand down the Access and Inclusion Committee with the view to including its work within the LESL.
3. On 12 August 2020 Council Board members of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee met to discuss the future of this Committee. The recommendations in this paper reflect those discussions.

Proposal for a Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning Committee

4. On 12 August 2020 the Council board members of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee discussed the formation of a new Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee to replace the current Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee. The name was suggested as it is memorable (like RKEC) and the word 'enhancement' was considered important to retain as it is integral to the Scottish approach to learning, teaching and quality. The new Committee will encompass the work of the former Access and Inclusion Committee and enable SFC to continue to fulfil its statutory obligation to have a committee with a skills focus.

Remit

5. The proposed remit for this Committee can be found in Annex A. The combines the key elements of the remits of the predecessor committees. It is expected

that the remit will likely evolve in line with the outcomes of the review of coherent provision and sustainability.

Membership

6. Since the establishment of SFC, membership of its policy committees (primarily the research and skills committees) have included external stakeholders (the current remit for the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee allows for up to 11 external members). At the meeting on 12 August 2020, the Council Board members of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee recommended that the membership of the new Committee be reduced at this present time to the four Council Board members only. This will allow the Committee to have focused discussions, particularly around matters related to the review of coherent provision and sustainability. As part of the review, SFC is engaging with a wide range of stakeholders which provides significant opportunities for external input to the review, alongside the work of the Committee. This temporary membership arrangement will be reviewed after six months (i.e. before 31 March 2021).

Risk assessment

7. A failure to respond to developments in, or demonstrate high standards of, corporate governance is likely to undermine the Council's effectiveness, its credibility and reputation. The recommendations in this paper help to mitigate that risk in relation to the Council's committee arrangements.

Equality and diversity assessment

8. There are no specific equality and diversity issues arising from this report. The proposed remit for the Committee includes providing advice and guidance to the Council board on the Council's access, inclusion, equality and diversity ambitions, as they relate to learning and skills.

Financial implications

9. There are no immediate programme fund implications associated with this paper, although the Committee's advice to the Council board could include recommendations relating to programme funds. The running costs associated with the Committee are allowed for in the current budget. There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper.

Recommendations

10. The Council board is invited to **approve**:
 - standing down the current Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee;
 - forming a new Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee;
 - the remit of the new Committee;

- the membership of the new Committee to be the existing four Council board members; and
- the membership structure to be reviewed before 31 March 2021.

Publication

11. This paper will be published on the Council website following the meeting.

Further information

12. Contact: Dr Donna MacKinnon, Director of Access, Learning and Outcomes (email: dmackinnon@sfc.ac.uk).

Remit of the Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning Committee

1. The Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee is committed to enhancing the student learning experience in Scotland's colleges and universities. The purpose of the SEAL Committee is to provide advice and guidance to the Council board on strategies for ensuring that students receive an inspiring, high quality education, which equips them with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively to Scotland's economic, social and cultural success, and on the Council's related access, inclusion, equality and diversity ambitions.
2. The SEAL Committee will play a key role in advising, guiding and enabling SFC to respond to Scottish Government policies and delivery of strategic objectives. In particular, the Committee will support the Council to:
 - Invest in a system of learning that is adaptive, innovative, inclusive and responsive to future economic, social and technological changes.
 - Create a connected and coherent system of learning, which enables students to develop new skills and progress easily through their learning journey into employment and study.
 - Achieve equality of outcomes for all students.
 - Advise and oversee SFC's response to the implementation of the Scottish Government's Blueprint for Fairness recommendations including the specific recommendations for the intake from the 20% most deprived communities and care experience.
 - Help ensure that learners are supported by impartial and professional advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices throughout their learning journey.
 - Link SFC's strategies to other learning initiatives.
 - Ensure that all learners have access to a wide and appropriate range of learning opportunities which enable them to grow and develop continuously as reflective and adaptive individuals.
 - Enable people to return to learning throughout their lives to develop new skills, up-skill or re-skill.
 - Ensure all colleges and universities offer high quality learning and teaching underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement and enhancement.
 - Support the ongoing development of a highly motivated, proficient teaching profession.

- Ensure approaches to learning, teaching, assessment and student support continue to impact positively on the quality and reputation of Scottish education.
- The SEAL Committee will also inform and advise the Council on relevant developments more generally within learning and quality at UK-level and internationally.