

The 5th meeting of the Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee was held on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 10.00 by videoconferencing and in-person at 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

Present: Dr Paul Little (Chair)
Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam
Professor Ewart Keep
Sheila Duncan

Officers: James Dunphy
Kathryn O’Loan
Sharon Drysdale
Seamus Spencer
Fiona Burns
David Beards
Dr André Reibig (Secretary)
Nick Stansfeld (Clerk)

Apologies: Andy Kerr

22/08 Welcome and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed all Committee members and the executive to the meeting especially as it was the Committee’s first hybrid meeting.

The following members noted a potential conflict of interest:

- Dr Paul Little in relation to City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Colleges’ Regional Board, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and as co-author of the Cumberford-Little report, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Vice-Chair of the college sector Employers’ Association, Vice Convenor of the College Principals Group, and as Chair of UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce.
- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art and an Advisory Board member of a Research Centre at the University of Edinburgh.
- Professor Ewart Keep in relation to his role as an Associate Fellow of the Scottish Centre for Employment Research,

University of Strathclyde, and as member of the Board of Management at City of Glasgow College.

22/09

Minutes of previous meeting: 17 March 2022 (SEAL/22/Min2)

The minute of the 17 March 2022 meeting was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

2.1 Action Tracker

The SEAL Committee received an update on the actions from previous meetings and noted progress to date.

Three actions were removed from the Tracker as they were complete:

- SFC executive has been engaging with European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) in the development of Tertiary Quality Framework through a series of meetings.
- Advice has been sought from SFC's RKEC Committee on external membership.
- Careers Service Review update is included in SEAL Policy update paper 22/08.

22/10

SEAL Committee: Securing external input and impact (SEAL 22/06)

The SEAL Committee received a paper on development of the Committee's membership with updated remit to take account of the SFC Review and the SFC's review of governance arrangements, which is in progress.

In discussion the Committee:

- Noted the significant role the Committee plays in recommending and advising the SFC Board on key elements of our mission like the protection of student interests, the role of employers in our learning system and the development of tertiary education system.
- Acknowledged the updated high-level purpose of the Committee as a positive development. It was recommended key terms, such as skills, access, learning, and coherent provision could usefully be added. The Committee also recommended the terms of reference should be broad enough so that they would not need to be reviewed too frequently.
- Noted the Chair's discussion with the Chair of the SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Professor Lesley

Yellowlees, which currently has 10 external members, and with the right balance of membership there was more buy-in of the issues and as a result a stronger authentic voice representative of key stakeholders.

- Agreed with the approach being taken for the sourcing and supporting new members, that:
 - There should be up to 10 external members. Five would be recruited this year, five the following year. This will help to evolve and stagger the membership.
 - Members will be offered two years on the Committee with an opportunity for a one-year extension.
 - Applications should be encouraged from individuals identified in the paper (para 17).
 - Given the diversity of the student voice, the executive should consider two students from different characteristics.
 - A representative from the SDS Board or from the SDS executive should also be considered.
 - The executive should consider equality and diversity of applicants, including geographical reach, to cover strategic leadership and specialist knowledge.
 - Noted the updated SEAL Committee's remit will go to SFC Board in September.

22/11

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

(SEAL/22/07)

The SEAL Committee received a paper on the development of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.

In discussion the Committee:

- Commended the executive on progress to date, including the engagement and consultation with the sectors and quality agencies towards implementation of a single framework.
- Noted Phase 1 - which is scoping and mapping - is due to complete at the end of September 2022, with Phase 2 commencing from October 2022 to September 2023, the transition period.
- Agreed with the approach taken and the parameters outlined in the paper. This includes an enhancement-led approach and continue working in close partnership with institutions and

stakeholders and recognising the diversity that exists across both sectors.

- Discussed the potential name of the future Framework and noted the importance for signalling intent to continue with an enhancement led model.
- Encouraged the appropriate balance in SFC staffing resource to achieve the single quality enhancement framework. The Committee noted SFC has been reviewing the balance between expanding internal teams and outsourcing specialists to help develop policy.

22/12

Digital teaching skills

The SEAL Committee received an oral update from David Beards on digital teaching skills, which the committee welcomed.

In discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the advancement of digital teaching skills was a recommendation from the SFC Review that *“We will work with institutions and key sector agencies to understand the changing roles of educators in the context of online learning, and support sector development by ensuring that educators have the resources they need to confidently develop and deliver high quality online and blended learning.”*
- Noted SFC had held a workshop on 19 May 2022 with partner organisations on the certification and recognition of digital teaching skills. The Committee also noted the clear link with developing tertiary quality arrangements and SFC’s Accountability Framework.
- With the question “What has changed since 2020” we noted the changes in assessment practice seem to be the most enduring, and there is more of an acceptance of lecture recording and an appetite for innovation overall.
- Noted SFC had previously set a target of college lecturers to have TQFE. The Committee noted that there were still some 2,000 lecturers in Scotland who do not have TQFE. A member suggested increasing capacity of provider networks so more college and HEIs can provide teacher training, and recognition of micro-credentials.

- Acknowledged the ability to adapt, and to combine work and other commitments effectively are arguably more important life skills than acquiring particular digital skills for their own sake.
- Whilst there was a minimum generic skill set, the particular role of digital technologies will vary by subject. The Committee suggested segmenting user groups to understand their priorities and needs: teachers, learners, work-based learners and people studying or working from home.
- Acknowledged employers expect students to have the appropriate level of digital teaching and the right skills so they are prepared for the workplace.
- Recognised we should distinguish between quick wins (e.g. upskilling to address widening skills gaps) and longer term developments (e.g. around establishing the right digital culture).
- Requested a further update on digital teaching skills at a future SEAL Committee meeting when policy was more advanced in development.

22/13

SEAL Committee Policy update

(SEAL 22/08)

The SEAL Committee received an update paper on the key areas of policy within SFC's Access, Learning and Outcomes Directorate not covered on the agenda otherwise.

In discussion the SEAL Committee noted the contents of the paper. In particular:

- Progress with the SFC Regional Tertiary Provision Pathfinders, including establishment of the Regional Delivery Boards in the South of Scotland and North East.
- Work underway to finalise Outcome Agreements for AY 2021-22 and prepare a further year of transitional arrangements for AY 2022-23, building on the update provided to the committee in March 2022.
- The Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS) was published at the end of May 2022. The executive said they will summarise the key points and will forward to Committee members. We noted a discussion on the key findings of EPS could be held at the next SEAL Committee.

- The publication of the SFC Report on Widening Access 2020-21. The Chair requested that next year's report should include a quote from the SEAL Committee to raise visibility of the Committee.
- Progress with the implementation of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP).

The Committee agreed the policy update paper was valued in its present format. It provided useful background to a breadth and complexity of policy issues and development.

22/14

AOB

The Chair thanked all the members for their contributions and the executive for their work and the quality of the papers.

22/15

Date of the next meeting

The next SEAL Committee is on Tuesday 1 November, 10.00-12.30.

Action Tracker

Date	Agenda ref	Action agreed	Update	Timeline	Responsible
27 January 2022	21/SEAL Min1 24 March 2021	The SEAL Committee recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The executive invites the Commissioner for Fair Access to a future Committee meeting. 	The appointment is currently with Scottish Ministers for decision.	January 2023	Nick Stansfeld
14 June 2022	22/06 SEAL Committee external input and impact	SFC can now commence the recruitment process.	An update will be provided at Committee on 01/11/22 under Matters arising.	November 2022	Andre Reibig
14 June 2022	22/Oral Digital teaching skills	The Committee should receive a further update at a future meeting.	The policy team has indicated that April 2023 is best for another update.	April 2023	Nick Stansfeld
14 June 2022	22/08 Policy update	Employer Perspective Survey – summary of key points.	This is included in the Policy Update paper: SEAL/22/12.	November 2022	Andre Reibig
14 June 2022	22/08 Policy update	Report on Widening Access – comment included either in report or in press release	The publication of the Report on Widening Access 2021-22 is due in May 2023.	May 2023	Nick Stansfeld