

Disclosable

SEAL Committee minutes

The 6th meeting of the Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning (SEAL) Committee was held on Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 10.00 by videoconference.

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

Officers: James Dunphy
Sharon Drysdale
Dr Jacqui Brasted
Kathryn O'Loan
Seamus Spencer
Fiona Burns
Nicola McGhee
Dr André Reibig (Secretary)
Nick Stansfeld (Clerk)

Apologies: Andy Kerr

22/16 Welcome and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed all Committee members and the executive to the 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 Cumberland-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.

22/17 Minutes of the previous meeting: 14 June 2022 SEAL/22/Min4

The minute of the 14 June 2022 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.

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

- Recruitment of external members on SEAL Committee.
- The Employer Perspective Survey summary is included in SEAL Policy update paper 22/12.

2.2 Matters arising

James Dunphy updated the Committee on recruitment of additional SEAL Committee members, and recruitment within SFC.

The Committee noted:

- SFC had received an excellent response to the advert looking to appoint new members to the SEAL Committee with over 20 applications. We heard the selection process has just concluded, and we are now in the process of formalising the appointments.
- The organisation restructure and recruitment within SFC, which includes four policy teams reporting to the Director of Access, Learning and Outcomes (ALO). This is part of SFC's transformation programme which seeks to expand the skills and capacity to delivery our ambitious strategic framework over the next five years. We heard the new teams within ALO offer a good blend of internal promotions, new talent and secondees from Scottish Government and sector agencies.

In discussion, the Committee:

- Congratulated SFC on the recruitment of the new SEAL Committee members, and the restructure and recruitment within SFC which shows a good balance between the internal promotions and external recruitment, and which overall strengthens the team and organisation.



22/18 A Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework for Scotland: Update SEAL/22/09

The SEAL Committee received an update on the work to support the development of SFC's Review recommendation for a single tertiary quality framework.

In discussion, the Committee:

- Commended the executive on progress to date and the collaborative approach being taken to develop the framework.
- Noted Phase 1: Scoping mapping evidence gathering and Phase 2: Policy review and reflection are now complete. They noted the outcomes of Phase 2 which included the reasons for a single tertiary framework and the benefits for SFC, the colleges and universities, and students.
- Noted Phase 3: Co-creation has just commenced and is due to run until June 2023. During this phase SFC is working with the sectors, students, and stakeholders in six development projects to develop our shared understanding and the co-creation of the final framework.
- Recommended the outputs from each phase are captured to act as a reference point and help show the development of the framework. This could be important to ensure buy-in from staff at institutions who work in quality enhancement and assurance.
- Discussed the role of SFC which is, at various times, will be as a regulator, facilitator and enabler. SFC should be clear about their role which will evolve as the framework matures.
- Noted the changing quality landscape in England with the UK Government's [Self-improving FE system](#) project led by David Russell, and the evolving role of Office for Students in the regulation of quality and standards.
- Recognised the enhancement-led approach must be able to accommodate institutions with different missions and specialisms.

22/19 Coherent Learning Provision SEAL/22/10

The SEAL Committee received an update on work on Coherent Learning Provision with a focus on the Tertiary Provision Pathfinders.

In discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the creation of SFC's Coherent Learning Provision team within ALO directorate whose primary responsibility is the delivery of the Pathfinder and successor projects in collaboration and provision planning of further and higher education.



- Noted that the initial programme of work on the Tertiary Provision Pathfinders, including the four complementary work areas and seven regional collaborative pilots in the South of Scotland and North-East Scotland, will complete in February/March 2023 with a report to Scottish Government.
- Welcomed progress in the two pathfinder regions and encouraged regional pathfinders in other regions for example in the central belt.
- Welcomed continued engagement with learners through such mechanism like the Learner Forums, however cautioned there is risk that during the current SDS review there could be a disruption to Careers Information Advice and Guidance services which point learners to new courses, pathways, and job opportunities. This is vital as the changes will not work unless students think differently about their career and learning choices.
- Acknowledged SFC leadership in this area and was a good example of a project meeting expectations of the Government but also delivering something meaningful for people in the system.
- Agreed there was an opportunity for learning on place-based approach and how it can be shared or transferred in other areas with similar geographies and challenges.

22/20

Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape

SEAL/22/11

The SEAL Committee received a paper on the overview of the Scottish Government's Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape which is being led by James Withers.

In discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the purpose of the review and how it ties into the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the timelines and activities which includes broad and targeted engagement and publication of recommendations in Spring 2023.
- Acknowledged the review of the skills delivery landscape is aligned to the recommendations of SFC's Review of Tertiary Education and Research, and to the aims and objectives in SFC's strategic plan. They emphasised the importance of SFC working closely with the review Chair and secretariat, particularly given the tight timescales, to ensure they understand SFC's role and broad remit.
- Recommended that internally SFC needs to ensure the right level of staffing resource is dedicated to it so it can help advise and influence the review's direction of travel.



- Welcomed the review and encourage the Chair of the review to engage with the Committee.
- There is a concern that the skills system will not function unless we are better at gathering labour market information, employer intelligence, market demand from students, and providing adequate careers information, advice and guidance for students so they can understand the different routes and pathways.

22/21

SEAL Committee policy update

SEAL/22/12

The SEAL Committee received an update paper on the key areas of policy within SFC's Access, Learning and Outcomes Directorate.

In discussion the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the paper.
- Welcomed the College Performance Indicator project to deepen SFC's understanding of college Full-Time FE successful completion rates. They suggested one reason for the reduction in success rates are students leaving their course to gain employment, a positive destination.

22/22

AOB

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

22/23

Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next SEAL Committee would take on 31 January 2023. The Chair requested that this should be an in-person meeting to be held at SFC offices at 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

