

Access Delivery Group

Wednesday 20 June 2018, 10:00 – 12:00

The minute of the fourth meeting of the Access Delivery Group, held at Scottish Government, St Andrews House, Edinburgh.

Present

Shirley-Anne Somerville, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education & Science (Chair)
Professor Petra Wend, Queen Margaret University
Prof Sally Mapstone, University of St Andrews
Alastair Sim, Universities Scotland
Linda Somerville, NUS Scotland
Murdo Mathison, UCU Scotland
Greg Dempster, AHDS
Jim Thewliss, School Leaders Scotland
Professor Vikki Boliver, Durham University
Fiona Brown, Forth Valley College (*substituting for Ken Thomson*)
Dr Stephanie McKendry, University of Strathclyde (*substituting for Conor Ryan*)
Alan Armstrong, Education Scotland
Elaine Drennan, Scottish Government (*substituting for Mick Wilson*)
Lynn MacMillan, Scottish Government
Laura Duffy, Scottish Government
Lynn Brown, Scottish Government (secretariat)
Jack Ford, Scottish Government
Roddy MacDonald, Scottish Government
Murray McVicar, Scottish Government
Ryan Scott, Scottish Government
Fiona Burns, Scottish Funding Council

Apologies

Prof Sir Peter Scott, Commissioner for Fair Access
Susan Stewart, Open University in Scotland
Liz McIntyre, North East College Scotland
Katie Burke, Scottish Youth Parliament
Conor Ryan, Sutton Trust
Jodie Waite, NUS Scotland
Peter MacLeod, Renfrewshire Council
Dr Ken Thomson, Forth Valley College
Shona Struthers, Colleges Scotland
Dr Rebekah Widdowfield, RSE
Mick Wilson, Scottish Government
Michael Cross, Scottish Funding Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and conveyed apologies for those unable to attend. She also introduced Alan Armstrong, who joined the group on behalf of Education Scotland. The Chair explained that Conor Ryan has stepped down from the Group as he has also stepped down as the Chair of the Framework Development Group (FDG) following his appointment to the Office for Students. A replacement is being sought to represent the FDG going forward. As Jodie Waite is coming to the end of her term of office at NUS Scotland, she will also be replaced on the Group in due course.

Professor Scott and Peter MacLeod are both temporarily stepping down from the group for health reasons. Professor Scott's recommendations will be progressed by officials from the

Commissioner's office. Scottish Government officials will also discuss with Jim Thewliss and Greg Dempster how best to take forward Peter MacLeod's recommendations in his absence, as appropriate.

Action 1: Discuss how best to take forward Peter MacLeod's recommendations during his temporary absence [SG officials].

2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed.

The Chair provided an update on actions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 for the SG, and action 8 for Peter MacLeod. These are all complete with the exception of 3, which is ongoing. Alastair Sim was invited to provide an update on actions 1 and 6. In respect of Action 1, the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee has 'stepping out rather than dropping out' in their programme for 2018/19 and has invited the Commissioner for Fair Access to talk to Vice Principals. In respect of action 6, details of access thresholds will be available in 2019/20 prospectuses on a course by course basis for entry in 2020/21. A further update on this action will be captured by Professor Mapstone's action point as detailed below.

Action 1 from the 15 November meeting [for Professor Mapstone to explore whether it is possible to monitor numbers of entrant currently entering university on with a lower grade] was carried forward to this meeting. Professor Mapstone reported that good progress had been made by individual HEIs in monitoring the number of students entering on a reduced offer. It was noted that an aggregated figure was difficult to provide as HEIs use different contextualised markers. However it will be easier to monitor and report on this going forward.

Action 2: Letter from Professor Mapstone to Lynn MacMillan on progress on access thresholds to be shared with the Group. [SG officials].

It was also noted that the delay in issuing the papers for this meeting allowed members little time to give them sufficient attention or preparation. The Chair said she would ensure the papers for future meetings are circulated earlier.

3. Coordinating and Monitoring Delivery: Finalising Overview Reports for all recommendations

The Chair thanked members for the work that has gone into completing the Overview Reports and led a discussion on the Group 2 recommendation templates, with the aim of reaching agreement or otherwise on the plans for implementation as set out in each of the templates.

Admissions – Recommendations 8 and 8 a, 9, 10, 11 a, 11 b, 14, 32 a-d, and 32 e

Fiona Burns introduced templates 8 and 8 a, 9, 10, 11 a, 14, 32 a-d, for which the SFC is Lead Delivery Partner and Lynn MacMillan introduced to templates 11 b and 32 e for the Scottish Government. During the subsequent discussion points raised included the following:

- Recommendation 32 a-d: progress towards meeting the sectors CoWA 2021 target is a year ahead of planned. This isn't the case for the 2021 target for individual institutions due to factors around intake in rural areas. CoWA recognised the challenge in the use of SIMD as a marker for deprivation for institutions in the north east of Scotland and asked the SFC to consider measures additional to SIMD when monitoring the progress towards the targets, which better reflect the link between deprivation and access in the local population in this area.
- Recommendation 14: clarity for schools is required around the approaches taken to personal statements and at interviews. Engaging schools in this would be useful. It

was noted that this is being taken forward by Professor Mapstone's working group on language. Education Scotland is also looking at how its Year of Young People work with the Awards Network could tie in with the work of universities in this area.

- Recommendation 11 a: access thresholds are challenging, some institutions have hundreds of courses and also have to consider A-levels and International Baccalaureates too, to ensure fairness. The Scottish Government recognise this will be more challenging for some institutions than others.
- It was suggested that the templates are difficult to complete as some milestones don't take cognisance of those associated with other recommendations. However, the next stage of implementation will bring them together more holistically.
- The Chair invited members to submit any further comments around detailed aspect of the templates to officials by email – otherwise they will be considered signed off.

Outreach – Recommendations 3, 4 and 4 a, 6, 7, 17 and 17 a, and 18:

Fiona Burns introduced templates 3, 4 and 4 a, and 7 for the SFC. Murray McVicar and Lynn MacMillan introduced templates 6, 17 and 17 a and 18 for the Scottish Government. During the subsequent discussion points raised included the following:

- Recommendation 15: it was agreed that the SFC would take over as lead delivery partner from Universities Scotland, for this template and it would be combined with the template for 4 and 4 a.
- Recommendation 7: need to look at bridging programmes holistically and consider the level of core funding. CoWA's intention was the recommendation 7 would be about summer schools, rather than the broader definition of bridging programmes that has been used in Universities Scotland's work. The milestones relating to recommendation 7 were also questioned, for example practical considerations around transferring credit. The Chair suggested that this issue is followed up with a further discussion in due course.
- Recommendations 3, 4 and 4 a: clarity was sought on what they mean for schools and early years.
- Clarity was sought over the purpose of the Scottish Toolkit for Fair Access call for evidence. It was noted that the workshop sessions delivered by CFE Research at SFC's widening access on 12 June were well attended. The Chair explained that an evidence base is needed to show what works in widening access; the Toolkit will ensure good value for money and compare the impact of different interventions. It was also explained that the researchers are interested in unpublished evidence as well as published work, though anecdotal evidence will not be included in the Toolkit.
- Noted that many mapping exercises are taking place within the system; need to step back and consider how to increase accessibility meaningfully and at an earlier stage, seeking views from students on the learner journey.
- Recommendation 17 and 17 a: it was suggested that clarity is needed in terms of who 17 relates to; e.g. early years or secondary schools. It was explained that the Commission on Widening Access wasn't specific about this.

Data – Recommendations 29a and 30b

The chair invited members to raise any points in respect of 29a and 30b. No points were raised and the templates were agreed.

Supporting Students in HE – Recommendations 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27 28 and 31 a

Fiona Burns introduced templates 20, 24, 25 26, 27, and 31 a for the SFC. Lynn MacMillan introduced template 28 for the Scottish Government. During the subsequent discussion points raised included the following:

- Recommendation 24: it was confirmed that NUS would have an opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Widening Access and Retention Fund as it would be a full consultation.
- Recommendation 25 will be done as part of Student Support Review. Rec. 28 – will see if anything more can be done to align.

Group 1 Templates

Lynn MacMillan provided a brief update on the outstanding Group 1 templates. It was proposed that the templates be agreed subject to the changes outlined in paper 4/3. The Group agreed to approve transfer of recommendation 15 to SFC and recommendation 16 to Scottish Government. The Group agreed to approve all Group 1 templates subject to the noted changes.

Action 3: Group members to be invited to email SG officials with any further comments on the templates with the aim of signing them off [SG officials / all group members].

Action 4: Further discussion to take place around recommendation 7 [SFC officials].

4. Access Data Group

Ryan Scott provided an introduction to, and update on, the work of the Access Data Group. The subsequent discussion on the Access Data Group included the following points:

- Important to look at the right data for mature learners. While SIMD might not be right others may be too historic i.e. attainment data, for this group.
- Important to better understand the supply chain and the potential growth of adult learners coming from college.
- It is important to have individualised measures alongside area based measures such as SIMD.
- The Chair noted that it is not necessary to wait for the perfect measure and work should be moved forward now based on the evidence available.

5. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in September and dates will be circulated shortly. The Chair invited suggestions for the agenda. No items were offered. The chair suggested articulation and indicated that it would be helpful to hear from the National Articulation Forum.

The Chair thanked members for their participation then closed the meeting.

Action 5: Dates for the next meeting to be circulated. [SG officials]

Action 6: Invite a representative of the National Articulation Forum to speak at the next meeting. [SG officials]