

**SOC(18-19)3 Minutes**

**SAAS Strategic Overview Committee**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 30 January 2019
<b>Time</b>	10:30 – 11:15
<b>Location</b>	Training Room, G Spur, Saughton House

**Attendees**

**Present**

- Kathy Patterson, Non-Executive Board Member (Chair) (KP)
- Jane Handley, Non-Executive Board Member (JH)
- Roddy MacDonald, Scottish Government Head of Higher Education and Science Division (RM)
- Susan Malcolm, Scottish Government CNOD Team Leader (SM)
- Laura McCluskey, SAAS Interim Director of Operations (LMcC)
- Ed McGrachan, Non-Executive Board Member (EM)
- Lauren McNamara, SAAS Director of Strategy and Innovation (LM)
- David Robb, SAAS Chief Executive (DR)

**In Attendance**

- Fiona Lodge, SAAS Business Support Manager (Minutes) (FL)
- Ashleigh Muldoon, SAAS Business Support Manager (AM)

**Apologies**

- Aileen McKechnie
- Janet Unsworth

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed the group to the first meeting of the Strategic Overview Committee (SOC). Particular welcome was extended to the new members JH and DR and round table introductions were undertaken.
- 1.2. Apologies were noted.
- 1.3. No conflicts of interest were raised.
- 1.4. It was noted that starred items on the agenda would only require updates or questions to be raised. A thematic strategic discussion workshop would take place after the standing agenda items at each meeting. It was highlighted that the SOC was a collaborative committee between partners and a trusted group space in which to raise any issues.
- 1.5. The format and progress of the Committee would be reviewed after one year.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

**SOC(18-19)3-1**

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting (the final Advisory Committee meeting of 24 October 2018) were approved.
- 2.2. No matters arising were raised.

## **3. Update on action points**

**SOC(18-19)3-2**

- 3.1. The actions were reviewed and updated – see Annex.
- 3.2. It was agreed that the deep dive on the Student Support Review would be brought to the May SOC.

## **4. Scottish Government Corporate Update**

- 4.1. RM gave a verbal update to the Committee highlighting that the budget and Brexit were the most pressing areas of work.
- 4.2. The budget was discussed with key points highlighted and it was noted that SAAS' pressures were being considered.
- 4.3. With regards to Brexit, while funding was committed for European students studying in Scotland in 2019-20, a decision was required soon for 2020-21 funding as this would impact on student numbers and institutions' ability to continue to attract EU students.

## **5. Scottish Government Higher Education Update**

**SOC(18-19)3-3**

- 5.1. The recommendation for a "Special Support" system for students eligible for social security benefits whilst studying was raised and it was highlighted that this would be specifically for Scottish students and was not offered to students in England and Wales. The process would be organised through the Department for Work and Pensions, not the Scottish Social Security Agency. This was a complex workstream which would take some time to develop.
- 5.2. The purpose of loans for Further Education students was raised and it was noted that the intention was to create parity for Higher Education and Further Education students. It was highlighted that no decisions that would impact on SAAS were imminent.
- 5.3. It was noted that "contextualised admissions" referred to consideration of students within SIMD20 and low achievement schools, with institutions making offers designed to support widening access. It was noted that progress towards the target of 20% of students coming from deprived backgrounds was well on track.
- 5.4. The proposed change in the student support regulations extending fees and loans to Research Masters courses was raised and it was highlighted that any

potential impact on SAAS had been investigated and was considered to be minimal.

## **6. Scottish Government Health and Social Care Update**

**SOC(18-19)3-4**

- 6.1. SM informed the Committee that the Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary budget had been increased for the first time in 6 years. It was noted that this would not automatically be updated in the future in line with other student bursaries and would therefore need to be kept under review.
- 6.2. SAAS administration of the NMSB discretionary funding from 2019-20 onwards was raised and it was noted that the distribution model currently used by SAAS would provide a suitable framework. It was hoped that the increase in student bursary might reduce applications for discretionary funds.

## **7. SAAS Update**

**SOC(18-19)3-5**

- 7.1. With regards to general discretionary funding, SAAS were going to issue a questionnaire to colleges and universities in the next couple of weeks asking for further information on current processes and potential for improvements.
- 7.2. It was highlighted that the new session soft launch was to take place on 15 March, prior to the go live date of 1 April. The new session being live would not impact on the end of session closedown. A submission to the Minister highlighting the process for the previous year and go live date was to be drafted.
- 7.3. It was noted that 2019-20 was the end of the three-year Kainos contract and Procurement were investigating options going forward. The appointment of a Digital Director for SAAS was hoped to increase the capacity and quality of IT direction within the Agency.

## **8. SAAS Balanced Scorecard**

**SOC(18-19)3-6**

- 8.1. The Balanced Scorecard was noted and members commented on the usefulness of the summary information it provided. It was hoped that a paper reviewing the way the Funding Awareness/Widening Access KPI was measured would be brought to the March SAAS Board meeting.

## **9. Any other business**

- 9.1. No other formal business was raised. The Committee would now move to the Workshop forum item organised by SAAS: The Big Discussion.

**Date of next meeting:** Thursday 2 May 2019

## Annex – Action points reviewed at meeting

1819-3	06/06/18		To facilitate the Student Support Review deep dive session at the next meeting.	Lauren McCluskey/ Roddy MacDonald	Ongoing To be brought to the May 2019 meeting of SOC.
1819-4	24/10/18		To add the Balanced Scorecard to the January 2019 Strategic overview Committee meeting agenda.	Secretariat	Completed Brought to the January 2019 meeting and will continue to be brought forward to all SOC meetings in the future.