

SB(18-19)3 Minutes

SAAS Board

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 25 July 2018
Time	10:30 – 13:00
Location	Boardroom, G Spur, Saughton House

Attendees

Present

- Anne Ward, Interim Director of Corporate Services (Chair) (AW)
- Laura McCluskey, Interim Director of Operations (LM)
- Ed McGrachan, Non-Executive Board Member (EM)
- Lauren McNamara, Director of Policy, Engagement and Change (LMcN)
- Kathy Patterson, Non-Executive Board Member (KP)
- Janet Unsworth, Non-Executive Board Member (JU)

In Attendance

- Ian Dawtry, Fraud Investigation Officer (Observing) (ID)
- Fiona Lodge, Business Support Manager (Minutes) (FL)
- Robert Monkhouse, Fraud Analyst (Observing) (RM)

Apologies

- Paul Lowe
- Audrey Shimmons

1. Welcome

- 1.1. AW welcomed the group, in particular the observers to the Board meeting.
- 1.2. JU declared a potential conflict of interest as she had taken on the role of Chair for the charity Four Square. JU stated that she has been a member of the Board of the charity throughout her time as a Non-Executive Board Member for SAAS and felt that this change in role should be noted however was unlikely to present any issues.
- 1.3. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

SB(18-19)3-1

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on action points

SB(18-19)3-2

- 3.1. The actions were reviewed and updated – see Annex.
- 3.2. AP 1819-6 – Corporate Plan: Due to a new Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science unlikely to be appointed before Parliament reconvened, the Corporate Plan update would be subsumed into the SAAS overview presented to the new Minister.

4. Chief Executive Update

- 4.1. The Chair presented the 23 July Current State of Play Report to the group and it was noted that the guarantee group (for full-time undergraduate and nursing and midwifery applications) was completed a week earlier than anticipated. Numbers of applications received were higher than at the same time in previous years but were being processed within target.
- 4.2. It was noted that call handling times had improved and it was considered that use of the online portal had assisted with this, in comparison with the previous year.

5. Portfolio Management Committee

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- 5.1. LMcN highlighted the paper to the group and the key points within it were noted. It was considered that the minutes of the Portfolio Management Committee (PMC) could be provided to Board members routinely as a form of update.

6. Advisory Committee Review

SB(18-19)3-4

- 6.1. KP reported that the Review paper had not yet gone to the Advisory Committee (AC) but had come to the Board for approval prior to being presented to the AC for consideration. It was noted that following approval of the Review Recommendations by the Board and AC, the future agenda of AC would differ from that of the SAAS Board by using a system of starred items for standard reports to allow additional time for deep dive discussion of strategic topics.
- 6.2. KP was thanked for undertaking such a comprehensive review.
- 6.3. There was discussion regarding possible future AC discussion topics and the additional work involved for SAAS was noted although it was agreed that the new format would result in value added for SAAS and its key partners and was therefore worth the added effort. It was recorded that the Board gave its wholehearted approval of all of the Recommendations. It was noted that AC would consider the recommendations at its next meeting in October; it was hoped that the new format would be introduced at the subsequent meeting.

- 6.4. KP provided an update from the last AC meeting which included proposals for future deep dives on the Student Support Review, 15-24 Learner Journey Review, Brexit and SAAS 2020.

7. SAAS Review

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- 7.1. Yasmin Ali had drafted the highlight paper from the review, the quality of which was praised. Yasmin was to take over as lead of the business support function. Timings of future corporate committees and Agency commitments were to be considered and planned for in short course.
- 7.2. An additional Non-Executive Board Member (NEBM) was to be recruited. Director responsibilities were also being discussed and brigaded.
- 7.3. It was noted that the Annual Report and Accounts was progressing well.
- 7.4. It was recorded that the Board gave its full support to the SAAS Review recommendations and noted that further work, including changes in titles of directorates and committees, would be considered in due course.

8. SAAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report to the SAAS Board and Accountable Officer

SB(18-19)3-4

- 8.1. EM outlined the paper as a summary of the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) over the year. There was an update regarding the audits that had taken place.
- 8.2. The work undertaken on strengthening risk awareness and management was commended. Fraud prevention and detection was similarly praised.
- 8.3. The external audit was nearing completion. The opportunity for NEBMs to input into the Annual Report and Accounts was considered helpful.

9. Student Support Review Update

- 9.1. LMcN highlighted that work continued apace. There was discussion regarding the management structure around the project and the budget, timescales and stakeholder involvement.
- 9.2. It was noted that user research in the discovery phase of the Information and Guidance portal (IAG) would feed into the SAAS website project.
- 9.3. It was considered that allocated budget codes for the IAG project would greatly assist financial tracking.

10. Complaints and Appeals Update

SB(18-19)3-5

10.1. LM highlighted to the group that complaints continued to reduce and customer handling had improved; this was similarly noted with appeals.

10.2. It was noted that it would be useful to see the themes of complaints and the number of referrals to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

AP	Lauren McNamara	To bring a paper on the nature and themes of complaints and appeals, referrals to the SPSO and outcomes.	26/09/19
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10.3. It was raised that work was on-going to review the appeal process, clarify the difference between complaints and appeals and create a vexatious correspondent policy, an update on which would be brought to the Board. It was noted that Higher Education Institutions had policies on how to deal with vexatious complainants and that this might be helpful to SAAS in developing its policy.

AP	Lauren McNamara	To bring an update to the Board on the work on-going on the appeal process and vexatious correspondent policy.	26/09/18
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10.4. It was highlighted that the Policy and Practice Group were noting the feedback contained within complaints and appeals to improve and change internal policies.

11. GDPR Update

11.1. LM intimated that on-going activities were progressing well. Privacy notifications and proactively informing customers of their privacy rights was achieved on time.

11.2. All SAAS staff had undertaken training on GDPR and the training was in the process of being embedded into staff inductions.

11.3. It was noted that SAAS had had to ensure that stakeholders attained the same level of understanding on compliance baselines in order for SAAS to achieve compliance.

12. Any other business

12.1. It was noted that NEBMs would appreciate an opportunity to meet staff colleagues outwith the Corporate committees.

AP	Laura McCluskey	To take Non-Executive Board Members on a tour of SAAS.	26/09/18
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Date of next meeting: Wednesday 26 September

Fiona Lodge

August 2018

Annex – Action points reviewed at meeting

1718-18	26/07/17	Self Assessment	To issue self-assessment forms for all of the SAAS Boards and Committees that haven't yet undertaken this process in 2017-18	Anne Ward	On-going Comments from NEBM to be incorporated and form issued to Board members.
1819-2	18/04/18	Conference Feedback	To share the table feedback from the SAAS Conference with NEBMs/Board attendees.	Lauren McNamara	Completed Issued to Non-Executive Board Members.
1819-6	30/05/18	Corporate Plan	To update the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science with the SAAS 2018-19 Corporate Plan.	Lauren McNamara	Completed Will be issued as part of the SAAS overview for the new Minister.
1718-27	14/02/18	Portfolio Management Committee	To discuss with Janet Unsworth how best to provide an update on the PMC priorities and work streams to future Board meetings.	Lauren McNamara	Completed Presented at this meeting.
1819-7	30/05/18	CPAG	To provide a CPAG update, the action tracker and to present the video at the September Board meeting.	Lauren McNamara	On-going
1819-4	30/05/18	Finance	To bring a paper on the Agency budget to the next Advisory Committee meeting	Audrey Shimmons	On-going
1819-5	30/05/18	Future Planning	To progress a deep dive and Ketso session on the 2020 and beyond output from the Senior Managers Workshop at a 2019 Advisory Committee Meeting.	Lauren McNamara	On-going