

IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY GROUP

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN EUROPA BUILDING, GLASGOW
25 NOVEMBER 2004**

In attendance:

Gill Troup (Chair)
Riona Bell (SHEFC/SFEFC)
David Caldwell (US)
Steve Cockburn (Edinburgh University Students' Association)
Gordon Craig (SHEFC/SFEFC)
Neil Cuthbert (ASC)
Gavin Gray (SE)
Anne-Marie Hoey (SE)
Alistair Hunter (AUTS)
Peter Lloyd (SE)
Lorraine McSheaffrey (SAAS)
Ann McVie (SE)
Peter Syme (OU)
Melanie Ward (NUS)
Susan Whittaker (SE)

Apologies:

David Coyle (Strathclyde)
Chris Graham (SE)
John Martin (AMOSSHE)
Forbes McCallum (EIS)
Paul Smith (SLC)

Agenda Item 1 : Welcome and Introductions

1. Gill Troup welcomed newcomers to the meeting – Gordon Craig, Peter Syme, Gavin Gray and Anne-Marie Hoey. Group members introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 2 : Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

2. Group members were asked if there were factual errors in paper IAG/04/019.

(a) Clarification was sought in relation to 15(a)(ii) about HND students being required to enter 1st year of a degree, and whether this would just be considered in relation to this group's work on information, advice and guidance. It was agreed that whilst discussing the principle of this issue was not appropriate for this group, it would be considered in other contexts outwith the group.

3. Group members were asked if there were matters arising from the minutes.

(a) It was stated that a group to discuss FE issues would meet immediately after this meeting.

(b) Clarification was sought on the question that had been raised about potential liability in relation to indirect discrimination. It was explained that there had been no specific issues in relation to this, but that it should be explored. It was agreed that an

impact assessment would be undertaken by SE at the appropriate time to ensure that the policy does not contradict diversity and equal opportunities legislation.

Agenda Item 3: Transitional Arrangements

4. Gordon Craig introduced paper IAG/04/020, which set out the basis on which transitional arrangements could be made, and two options for administering the change in fee level for continuing students.

5. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) Concern was expressed about the burden that option 2 would have on HEIs.

(b) Concern was expressed that a third option that had been suggested in the last meeting had not been included in the paper. This option was to change SAAS systems, to allow SAAS to provide partial support to those who meet the domicile criteria but not the criteria for tuition fee support. It was suggested this would be a more consistent approach than relying on individual institutions making a judgement on the domicile of each student.

(c) It was suggested that the options should be viewed from the perspective of students.

(d) Clarification was sought on whether it had been agreed in the last meeting that there will no increase in the real terms burden on Scottish domiciled students paying their own fees. In response, reference was made to the original remit of the group, which was to offer advice to Ministers on the groups of students who should be protected from a fee increase. The group was informed that Ministers have not made a decision on this matter, and that the group's advice would be taken into account in making this decision.

6. Comments were sought on Annex A to paper IAG/04/020.

(a) It was explained that the definition of an access course is of the programme rather than the student, and it was agreed that this should be clarified in the way it is written.

(b) It was stated that there has been no answer yet from Ministers on arrangements for gap year students.

It was agreed that:

- **SHEFC, SAAS and SE should revise paper IAG/04/020 to include arrangements for new and continuing students taking into account the option to change SAAS systems.**
- **The definition of access courses should be written to clarify that it refers to the programme rather than the student.**

Agenda Item 4: Part-time Students

7. Gordon Craig introduced paper IAG/04/021, which described the technicalities of transferring funds between SHEFC and SAAS in such a way as to ensure that part-time students are not affected by the changes. He explained that the part-time split is not consistent year to year, so it might be necessary to average this; and that the work on ensuring a consistent definition of a part-time student between SHEFC and SAAS had not progressed as well as he would have liked. However, initial discussions with SAAS suggested that there will not be any problems caused by the current definitions they use.

8. In discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) It was stated that the part-time fee assumption will be based on the current full-time fee rate.
- (b) Clarification was sought on whether students on sandwich years or years abroad are treated as full-time or part-time students. SHEFC agreed to check on this.
- (c) There was discussion about the logic of the current way of classifying part-time and full-time students; about the possible effect on SHEFC's future planning assumptions; and about the implications for funding by credit.
- (d) It was requested that when presenting figures on part-time students, it should be made clear whether or not OU students are included.
- (e) The group agreed that the approach to dealing with part-time students presented in the paper was satisfactory.

It was agreed that:

- **SHEFC and SAAS would have further discussions to establish whether their different definitions of part-time students would create difficulties in implementing this approach.**
- **SHEFC would check on the status of students on a sandwich year or year abroad.**
- **The approach to dealing with part-time students in paper IAG/04/021 was satisfactory.**

Agenda Item 5: Student Matrix

9. Ann McVie introduced paper IAG/04/022, which included a revised student matrix, indicating which Scottish-domiciled students are currently not eligible for SAAS support and therefore could be affected by the change in policy. The group will be advising Ministers on which of these groups of students should be protected from the change. Annex C of the paper presented figures put together by Analytical Services Division, identifying the number of full-time Scottish-domiciled students who fall outside SAAS support. She commented that as the fields of HESA data which were used for this analysis are not traditionally looked at in depth, it is not possible to know how accurate the figures are. The group was asked whether they felt the figures looked correct.

10. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) It was stated that there are currently 1163 self-financing students at Glasgow University, but it was not known how many of these are full-time and how many of these are Scottish-domiciled. It was agreed that a further breakdown of this figure could be sought.

(b) It was suggested that other HEIs should be contacted for similar information.

(c) It was suggested that it may not be necessary to know the exact number of students who fall outwith current SAAS eligibility criteria, as if the real-terms costs are held, then the financial effect would be neutral. It is only if the fee raises that there will be financial consequences.

(d) It was stated that knowing the exact numbers could be important if the fee anomalies system is adopted for transitional arrangements.

(e) The group proposed that all full-time Scottish-domiciled students who are currently ineligible for SAAS support should be protected from the changes.

It was agreed that:

- **SE would contact sample HEIs to gather figures on the number of self-funding full-time Scottish-domiciled students.**
- **Refined figures for Glasgow University would be sought.**

Agenda Item 6: Graduate Endowment

11. Anne-Marie Hoey introduced paper IAG/04/023, which set out information on the legislation, eligibility and exemptions in relation to the Graduate Endowment. She explained that any changes on who is eligible to pay the Graduate Endowment would require a change of legislation. She also explained that the basic principle on which the SE provides student support is to give everybody an opportunity to undertake a first degree, and it is not for those who have previously had such support.

12. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) Clarification was sought on the meaning of the term 'assessed as independent'. It was explained that this meant independent not just of parental support, but of SAAS support as well.

It was agreed that:

- **Charging all students the Graduate Endowment as an alternative way of resolving this issue was not appropriate.**

Agenda Item 7: Transition of funding – SHEFC/SAAS

13. Gordon Craig introduced paper IAG/04/024, which set out the principles to be taken into consideration when calculating the transfer of resources from SHEFC to SAAS. He raised questions in relation to the inclusion of sub-degree provision.

14. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) It was asked whether the fees of HN students would be affected. It was stated in response that this question could not be answered yet.

(b) It was suggested that as the number of non-Scottish domiciled students studying for a HN in Scotland is low, then it may not be necessary to charge those students increased fees for HN study.

(c) It was asked whether there had been an agreement in the last meeting to try and help all self-funded students. It was stated in response that the agreement had been to use income generated from the new tuition fee arrangements to meet the additional cost to SAAS of funding fees-only students.

(d) It was asked what plans there were for the pooled resource for the sector. It was stated in response that it would depend on how much money is left after the principal calls on the income. A suggested call on any new income left over was to fund the Childcare Grant.

It was agreed that:

- **SE should clarify whether it is only HNDs and not HNCs which are covered by the new arrangements in England.**
- **SHEFC should provide proposals for the transfer of funding from SHEFC to SAAS at an appropriate time.**

Agenda Item 8: Fees for Medical Students

15. Peter Lloyd introduced paper IAG/04/025, which set out the process of, and responses to, the consultation on the proposal to increase fees for medical students. He thanked those present that had responded, and explained that this has not been a full formal consultation, and it had not been seeking views on the issues raised in the Review of Basic Medical Education in Scotland (Calman Review). Responses had raised a wide range of issues, but for the purposes of the discussion within this group an attempt was being made to disaggregate the fee issue from the issues on widening access and retention in the Scottish NHS.

16. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) It was stated that the fees issue should not be disaggregated from the other issues of widening access and retention; and that an increased tuition fee should be considered as the last option for solving the concerns about the number of Scottish students accepted into Scottish medical schools.

(b) Concerns were expressed about a possible deviation from the Executive's approach to variable tuition fees.

(c) Concern was expressed that by including a section in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Bill that would make it possible to introduce different fees by subject, a decision had already been made on this matter.

(d) The purpose of this discussion without further information on other options Ministers have considered and the reasoning behind the proposal to raise medical tuition fees, was questioned.

(e) It was suggested that this could be a reasonable response to what could potentially become a serious problem.

(f) In response to points (a) to (d), the following points were made:

(i) The Executive is in the process of framing its response to Calman – Health Department are leading on this, with input from the HE team. Health Department are aware of all the options and existing widening access programmes. Access issues may be taken on by the Board of Basic Medical Education in Scotland. It was agreed to keep the group informed about the discussions that are taking place, and provide a briefing on Calman at the next meeting.

(ii) Underneath these wider issues is the concern that the current situation with regard to the demand and availability of medical places for Scottish-domiciled students will be exacerbated by the introduction of variable tuition fees in RUK. The work of the IAG is predicated on trying to maintain the status quo for Scottish-domiciled students. Whilst the level at which fees will be set in RUK for most courses is not known, it is expected that all medical courses will be charged at the top rate. Combined with the known issues of access and retention, this is the reason why medical fees are being considered as a separate issue.

(iii) The provision in the Bill, which is not yet legislation, has been included to allow for adjustments if they are needed in the future, to protect Scottish-domiciled students. It is intended as a future proofing measure.

(iv) Ministers have not yet taken a definitive view on this issue. The advice of this group on fees will feed into that decision.

(g) It was asked whether full responses to the consultation on fees would be distributed. In reply it was stated that subject to permission being given by respondents, responses would be made available.

It was agreed that:

- **Paper IAG/04/025 should be noted for information.**
- **The group would be kept informed of discussions on the wider issues raised by the Calman Review, and a briefing on Calman would be provided by SE at the next meeting.**
- **Permission would be sought from respondents to make available their consultation responses to the group.**

Agenda Item 9: Quigley

17. Peter Lloyd introduced paper IAG/04/026, providing a summary of the Quigley arrangements. He drew particular attention to paragraphs 6-8 which propose that changes in the RUK remove the disincentive for RUK students to study in Scotland, and that Quigley should therefore be discontinued for students starting their course after AY 2006-07.

18. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) It was stated that the proposal seemed logical and reasonable, and would free up some extra resource.

(b) It was commented that in terms of calculating the costs of study in RUK, bursaries had not been taken into consideration. In response to this, it was suggested that most bursaries are not likely to be for large amounts of money, but some HEIs may offer larger scholarships. The effect of these will be hard to predict before the system is in operation.

It was agreed that:

- **The set of principles set out in paper IAG/04/026 were satisfactory.**

Agenda Item 10: Fee Levels

19. Ann McVie introduced paper IAG/04/027. She explained the principle of setting the fee level would be to multiply by 3 and divide by 4 to maintain parity with RUK; and to identify the fee levels of RUK HEIs that are comparable to the Scottish universities which the majority of RUK students attend. Analytical Services Division had proposed a range of variables that might help identify comparable RUK HEIs. Comments were sought on the variables, and on which of any of the lists of HEIs we should be benchmarking against.

20. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) In relation to the table of the 4 most popular Scottish universities with English students, clarification was sought on the definition of 'outside the region', and on whether the proportion from outside the UK was included in the proportion from outside the region. SE agreed to check on these points.

(b) It was asked whether it was fair to come up with a list of institutions comparable to the Scottish universities which only represent 70% of English students; whether or not we would want to maintain the current numbers of English students; why Welsh and Northern Irish students had not been taken into consideration; and how the impact of bursaries would be taken into account. SE agreed to give further consideration to these points.

(c) It was questioned whether the variable of more than 50% of students from outside the region was relevant, given that it did not apply to two of the Scottish universities.

(d) It was questioned whether size of the institution is a relevant variable.

(e) One suggestion was to not place too much emphasis on the HEI having a medical school, and instead focus on columns one or two which offered a more interesting mix of institutions which could be good for benchmarking purposes.

(f) It was suggested that the Scottish list is slightly arbitrary, as for example Dundee and Stirling have a reasonably high proportion of students from outside Scotland.

(g) The issue of the timing of a decision on the fee level was raised. The aim had been to give advice to Ministers early in the New Year. There were considered to be two issues that may have an impact on meeting this deadline: the implications and complexity of changes to systems this process will require; and the original

assumption that we would have a reasonable sense of fee levels and bursaries in England by the end of 2004. It was recognised that there was a need for balance between providing early information to students and for decisions on fee levels to be informed by the actual position in England. Views were requested on the suggestion that the setting of the fee level could be deferred, but that the mechanisms for making the decision could be agreed early in 2005.

(h) It was commented that prospectuses for 2006 would be printed in January 2005, which would be a downside to delaying the decision, but that there would be ways around that.

(i) SHEFC and the Student Loans Company both have January 2006 as a deadline for having this information.

(j) It was stated that it would be important to give some kind of indication to students early on, including on which groups of students will be affected by an increased fee level.

(k) It was acknowledged that it might not be possible to gather more useful information before a decision has to be made.

(l) The group was asked to discuss with the groups they represent whether there are any strong reasons against the suggestion to delay setting the fee level.

It was agreed that:

- **Group members would let SE know if there any strong objections among the groups they represent to the suggestion to delay setting the fee level.**
- **A conclusion should be agreed by June 2005.**
- **Columns 1 and 3 in the table in paper IAG/04/027 should be amended to give a reasonable range of HEIs.**

Agenda Item 11: Information for Students

21. Ann McVie introduced paper IAG/04/028, providing the outcome of discussions with SAAS on the mechanisms that could be used to inform students, their advisers and HEI staff on the changes and the implications for them.

22. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) It was suggested that the Information, Advice and Guidance group could look at this issue. It was stated in reply that the HE team had representation on that group and would be raising it.

It was agreed that:

- **The proposals in paper IAG/04/028 were satisfactory.**

Agenda Item 12: Review of Action Plan

23. Gill Troup introduced paper IAG/04/029. Views were sought on whether any actions had been completed and whether any other changes should be made.

24. In discussion, the following points were made:

(a) In relation to the work strand 'Transitional arrangements', it was agreed that this should be renamed 'Arrangements and transitional arrangements'. The deadline should be after December 2004.

(b) In relation to the work strand 'Definition of student starting before 2006', there was agreement that this action is complete.

(c) In relation to the work strand 'Gap year students', it was agreed that there is further work to be done on this by SE.

(d) In relation to the work strand 'Mapping types of students', it was agreed that the mapping exercise was complete, but further work would be done by SE in relation to the numbers of Scottish-domiciled students not eligible for SAAS support.

(e) In relation to the work strand 'Exemptions', the view of the group is that all Scottish-domiciled students should be protected from the changes.

(f) In relation to the work strand 'Fee levels', it was agreed that the advice of the group would be to defer a decision, subject to no strong argument against this being given by group members. It was agreed that the deadline for a decision on the fee level should be June 2005.

(g) In relation to the work strand 'Part-time students', it was agreed that this action is complete.

(h) In relation to the work strand 'Further education', a meeting was to be held on this immediately after the IAG meeting, and the outcome would be reported back in the next meeting.

(i) In relation to the work strand 'Medical students', it was agreed that this would be discussed further at the next meeting.

(j) In relation to the work strand 'Information to students', communication systems had been agreed. SE agreed to put together information that can be confirmed early in 2005 and made available to students and their advisers.

(k) In relation to the work strand 'Transparency of transfer of funding', it was stated that further work is required from SHEFC and SE, but that this was in hand.

(l) In relation to the work strand 'Quigley', it was agreed that this action was complete.

(m) In relation to the work strand 'System description', it was agreed to come back to this at the next meeting, and to change the deadline to end of January 2005.

(n) In relation to the work strand 'Graduate endowment', it was agreed that this action was complete.

(o) It was stated that clarification should be sought on whether the Department of Health would provide a bursary for English-domiciled students studying medicine in Scotland in years 4 and 5.

It was agreed that:

- **SE would undertake further work in relation to gap year students.**
- **Information on the number of Scottish-domiciled students on the student matrix would be checked.**
- **Outcomes of the meeting to discuss further education would be reported back in the next meeting.**
- **SE would put forward suggestions for the next meeting on the information for students and advisers that can be confirmed before the fee level is set.**
- **SHEFC and SE would do further work on the transparency of transfer of funding.**
- **SE would seek clarification from the Health Department on whether bursaries for years 4 and 5 will be available to English-domiciled students studying medicine in Scotland.**

Agenda Item 13: AOB and Date of Next Meeting

24. The next meeting will take place on 12 January 2005 at 10am.

**IAG Secretariat
December 2004**