

SAAS MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING MONDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2009

Present: Graham Gunn, SAAS
Bruce Nelson, NEBM
Eileen Marshall, NEBM
Allan Forsyth, NEBM
Dugald Mackie, NEBM
Audrey Shimmons, SAAS
Michael Jackson, SAAS
Linda Pender, SAAS (Secretary)

Apologies: David Stephen
Audrey Heatlie
Maureen Shevas

Minutes of the previous meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 November 2008 were agreed.

Matters Arising

2. Graham updated the Board on the following issues:-
 - Quality Scotland – Ewhan Barschschyk and Linda Pender had attended QS training and were now EFQM assessors and the fee for the Agency's next application had been waived.
 - Balanced Scorecard – A revised balanced scorecard would be reviewed later in the meeting and Graham passed on David's thanks to the NEBM's for their input to the process.
 - Means-test questionnaire - 22 returns had been received and a reminder had been issued.
 - Edinburgh University visit – Michael had met Jimmy Thin to discuss IT system development issues.
 - Framework document – David would meet with Andrew Scott and Stephen Kerr to discuss finance issues and a new draft would be circulated for comment by mid March.

Quarterly Report

Customer Services Unit

3. It was noted that the current target for emails would be revised shortly as the target was unrealistic as only 26% of emails had been replied to within 5 days and 75% had been responded to within 10 days. In future, emails would be treated in the same way as other correspondence.
4. GE – Approx 1,000 students had not yet responded to GE liability letters and their cases were now with debt recovery – 3 letters were issued to students before their cases were sent to our solicitors to action.

Finance

5. The position at January was as expected - Running costs were underspent on depreciation costs due to the delay in moving to StEPS. Capital expenditure was on track and within budget. Student programme expenditure was on target and expected to be close to budget at year end. However, AME was under budget as more loans were being repaid to SLC than expected.

6. Tuition fee status reports – The Agency were working to simplify and automate the way this information was received and transferred. Data sent to institutions was encrypted and password protected for security which caused additional work. Allan Forsyth would speak to Audrey Shimmons about feedback from his accountant on these reports outwith the meeting.

Debt Recovery

7. The Team were busy with GE recovery cases and around 100 students who will become liable shortly have still to be contacted when they finish their courses.

Human Resources

8. 10 new caseworkers and 1 enquiry officer have recently taken up post. 68 applications were received for EDM vacancies and interviews would be held at the end of February.

9. Homeworking project – a note to staff would be issued shortly asking for expressions of interest and one member of staff would be asked to pilot the scheme initially. **Action:** An update would be provided at the next meeting.

Information Systems and Operational Policy

10. ILA 500 – An interim system was in place and the first payments were made in January.

11. StEPS – The project board had decided to focus on developing the system for the ILA 500 scheme. This work should be finished by April and the first payments from that system would be made in the summer. Work could then progress on StEPS.

12. Support for on-line systems – The Agency were aiming for 100% on-line applications this session. The BSU were exploring the possibility of using a second site as well as a second server to further enhance the robustness of the service.

13. The StEPS user interface work was taking longer than expected. Two project reviews would be carried out shortly to look at the chosen product, skills and resources made available for the StEPS project. **Action:** Graham would report back at the next meeting.

Operational Policy

14. Attendance data problems continue (mainly with SLC data) and Audrey Shimmons had now raised the issue with our internal auditors who would provide an independent report. We want to ensure our processes are correct before moving to a new portal (which

the Agency would have to pay for). This problem would be escalated to the SLC chairman. It was thought that institutions would not be happy to provide data twice but if it was the same data in the same format it might not cause as much of a problem. It was also noted that although the SLC were not interested in EU students, as they do not have loans, SAAS require this information. **Action:** It was agreed to keep the Board updated on progress.

Chief Executive's Office

15. It was noted that staff awaydays would be held on 25 and 26 March which would focus on communication issues and SAAS Customer Survey results.

Complaints Report

16. Board members had requested information on SPSO cases which would be included in the next report.

Risk Register

17. It had been agreed at an earlier meeting that high level risks should be tabled for the Board to consider every 6 months. The following issues were discussed:-

- The Board asked about the status of risks and would like to know whether senior management think sufficient arrangements were in place or whether further work would be required to manage each risk.
- Page 3 HR – As discussed at the recent balanced Scorecard meeting the Board would find it helpful to see a report from HR every 6 months .

Action: The updated risk register would be tabled at the next meeting.

Complaints procedure

18. The Board agreed the agency's new complaints procedure.

Customer Survey Results

19. It was agreed there was a need to be more specific in the survey questions and it may be useful to ask our statisticians to look at the wording of the questionnaire. **Action:** It was agreed to provide the Board with an update on feedback from staff at awaydays.

Gaelic Language plan

20. The Agency had been notified of a potential requirement to have a Gaelic language plan. Our statistician was currently investigating the number of Gaelic students we had. We would then decide what impact the Gaelic language plan would have on our operation. **Action:** An update would be provided at the next meeting.

Balanced Scorecard

21. A revised draft balanced scorecard was provided as a result of the meeting held in January. The Board agreed that the new covering sheet was useful and that information on

trends (adding an additional column) would also be useful over time. The Board were happy with the redraft and thanked Ewhan Barschtschik for all his good work.

Any Other Business

22. No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting

23. To be arranged shortly.

Chief Executive's Office
24 February 2009