

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR WALES**

from the

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

2008/09 - 2009/10

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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR OF THE RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

I am pleased to present this first annual report on behalf of all members – past and present - of the Council's Research, Innovation & Engagement Committee (RIEC). The report covers the period from the RIEC's inaugural meeting in April 2009 to its last meeting of the 2009/10 academic year in June 2010.

The RIEC was established in 2009 following a review of the Council's sub-committee structure, which was initiated by Roger Thomas on his appointment as Chair of HEFCW in 2008. The RIEC replaced both the Council's former Third Mission Committee and its Research Sounding Group. The role of the Committee is to advise HEFCW on the development and delivery of the Council's corporate plan as it relates to the research, innovation and engagement (third mission) capacity and activities of Wales' higher education (HE) sector.

As this report will demonstrate, the RIEC has had a very busy first year. It has also already seen a number of changes in its membership, which brings together representatives from different constituencies of the HE sector and stakeholders from the public and private sectors. I only joined the Committee in January 2010 myself, following the departure from HEFCW of the RIEC's founding chair, Professor Garel Rhys. I would like to record here my appreciation of the way in which Professor Rhys firmly set the RIEC on its way, giving me a sound platform on which to build.

It is with sadness that I must also record the untimely death of Professor Duncan Tanner from Bangor University in February 2010, whose research expertise was much valued by all members of the Committee.

I would also like to thank the following people who have now left the Committee; retired Council Member, Ken Richards; Gwennan Jones, the first representative of the Welsh Heads of Careers Services (WHECS) and former Welsh Assembly Government Observer, Karen Latham, for all their work on behalf of the RIEC and wish them well for the future. A list of all our current members and observers can be found at **Annex A**.

In the last annual report of HEFCW's Third Mission Committee, Dr Len Arthur wrote "*the present economic climate makes it all the more pressing that the impact of HEIs on economic and social well-being should be properly recognised and valued*". Since then the publication of the Welsh Assembly Government's new strategy for HE in Wales, *For our Future* and its new economic strategy, *Economic Renewal: a new direction* has indeed put the HE sector centre stage as a key driver for delivering a buoyant economy and social justice in Wales. As this report will show, the RIEC's first seven meetings have been very much focused on this agenda, including offering advice to Council on the most effective way to deploy its funding to support HEIs' research, innovation and engagement activities towards the successful delivery of HEFCW's and the Assembly Government's priorities for Welsh HE.

To this end, RIEC has engaged with key research and innovation & engagement practitioners and their stakeholders from both inside and outside Wales. With the exception of an inaugural scene setting meeting, all meetings to date have included an in-depth discussion of a key topic, which has actively included invited, expert guests. Debates have ranged across the full breadth of the sector's research and third mission agendas and covered themes as diverse as facilitating HE engagement with excluded communities; enhancing interactions between HE and business; ways of improving Wales' share of research council income and taking advantage of opportunities posed by the increasing internationalisation of research, innovation and engagement activities. In this way the RIEC aims to keep abreast of key developments and programmes at both an operational and theoretical (research and policy) level relevant to its remit, thus ensuring a current and evidence-informed base for the advice it delivers to the Council.

In the context of policy imperatives around strengthening the quality and quantity of the research base in Wales, 2009/10 has also seen the establishment of the RIEC's first task and finish group. A Research Sub-group, which draws on expertise both from within Wales and the wider UK, held its first meeting in June 2010 and is now in the process of finalising its advice, which will be reported more fully in next year's annual report.

It now only remains for me to commend this report to you and to thank all Members of the RIEC for their hard work and enthusiasm over this period.

Professor Robin Williams, CBE, FRS

MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE OF HEFCW's RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 1 The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Sponsored Public Body, established in May 1992, which assumed responsibility for funding higher education in Wales on 1 April 1993. Our mission is to promote internationally excellent higher education in Wales, for the benefit of individuals, society and the economy, in Wales and more widely. Working with partners, we deploy funds from the Assembly and others in order to:
 - Secure higher education learning and research of the highest quality;
 - Maximise the contribution of higher education to the culture, society and economy of Wales;
 - Ensure high quality, accredited teacher training provision across Wales.

- 2 On 12 December 2008 following a review of HEFCW's committee structure initiated by its then newly appointed Chair, Roger Thomas, the Council approved a new committee structure. This new structure included a Research, Innovation & Engagement Committee (RIEC) that brought together the roles of the former Third Mission Committee and Research Sounding Group.

- 3 The remit of the RIEC together with a list of current members is presented at **Annex A**.

REVIEW OF BUSINESS

- 1 Dates of the two meetings held in 2008/09 and the four held in 2009/10 are listed at **Annex B**, together with the date of the first joint meeting between the RIEC and the Council's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality and its Reconfiguration and Collaboration Committees. Key business items considered over this period were:
 - Final annual report from the Chair of HEFCW's Third Mission Committee;
 - HEIs and Community Engagement (with Dr Paul Benneworth researcher in the UK-wide research venture into *The Impact of HEIs on Regional Economies*);
 - Preparations for consultation on the proposed Research Excellence Framework (REF);
 - First annual report from the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB);
 - Taking stock of the Welsh Research base following the 2008 RAE;
 - Improving Wales' share of research council income and enhancing research collaboration (with Dr Louise Bright from DCELLS);
 - WAG and HEFCW programmes relevant to HE-business interactions (with presentations from members and officers);
 - Analysis of responses to HEFCW's consultation on future third mission funding arrangements;
 - Emerging outcomes from the HEFCW-funded *Strategic Insight Programme* and the *Dragon Innovation Partnership* (with representatives from all partner HEIs in each initiative);
 - *For our Future* and research, innovation & engagement activities;
 - Criteria for the designation of national research centres in Wales;
 - Outcomes of the 2008/09 HE-Business and Community Interaction Survey (with Adrian Day, Senior Policy advisor at HEFCE);
 - Foundation degree policy in Wales;
 - Independent evaluation of the effectiveness of links in Wales between HEIs and sector skills councils (SSCs);
 - Progress of the WAG's Economic Renewal Programme;
 - European and International Opportunities and Challenges for Welsh HE (with Berwyn Davies, Head of Office at Wales Higher Education Brussels – WHEB);
 - Interim Third Mission (Innovation & Engagement) Funding arrangements for 2010/11);
 - Report of the UK Research Integrity Futures Working Group;
 - Establishment of a Research Sub-group.

- 2 This list of topics evidences the breadth of the agenda, which falls within the remit of the RIEC. The Committee's business discussions are further informed by a flow of information papers, regular and ad hoc. Amongst the former, RIEC members receive a paper that draws attention to all relevant publications since the last meeting and copies of all minutes and relevant papers from meetings of

HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality (SETQ) Committee. Ad hoc papers tabled for information include evaluations of activities relevant to the Committee's remit; information about UK-wide research or innovation and engagement activity (including at European or wider international levels) and updates on HEFCW engagement in such UK programmes as the research venture into the *Impact of HEIs on Regional Economies* and the National STEM Programme.

- 3 To deal with such a broad agenda, the RIEC decided early on to maintain the practice of themed meetings initiated by one of its predecessor bodies, the Third Mission Committee. Following the change of Chair in January 2010, a new way of working was introduced to refine this approach still further and address members' concerns about ensuring adequate discussion time for key issues. This new approach provides for:
 - One major policy issue for presentation and discussion in depth for around one hour;
 - Discussion of appropriate short business items usually involving specific proposals;
 - No discussion of information papers unless specifically requested by a Member in advance of the meeting;
 - Greater use of ad hoc working groups to focus in on key issues/areas of activity.
- 4 The key policy context for the period covered by this first annual report has been the publication of a new Welsh Assembly Government strategy for HE, *For our Future*, and a new Assembly economic development policy, *Economic Renewal: a new direction*. Not surprisingly the role assigned to HE in these policies has been and will continue to be writ large in RIEC debates. In addition, the focus of RIEC's first joint meeting with HEFCW's SETQ and Reconfiguration and Collaboration Committees in March 2010, was advising the Council on the shaping of its corporate strategy for 2010-11 to 2012-13 in the wake of *For our Future*.
- 5 The Committee also took up its research remit in the context of the outcomes of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which contained some mixed messages for the Welsh research community. One of the Committee's first tasks was to advise the Council on its response to the proposed drafting of a UK-wide consultation on the development of a successor mechanism to the RAE, the UK Research Evaluation Framework (REF). At its meeting in October 2009, the RIEC looked in depth at the current position of the HE research base in Wales following the 2008 RAE. In their deliberations members also drew on the emerging outcomes of a project by the Assembly's Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, investigating ways to improve Wales' share of Research Council grants, including through enhanced levels of collaboration. Members concluded that the research base in Wales faced significant challenges that warranted a more strategic approach from HEFCW to the funding of research activity. It is therefore not surprising that the first ad hoc working group to be established by the RIEC is a Research Sub-group, which was set up following the Committee's meeting in April 2010. The Sub-group is

currently in the process of finalising its report, the outcomes of which will be covered in next year's annual report. Suffice it to say here, that in formulating its recommendations the Research Sub-group has been careful to keep abreast of developments in research policy and funding across the UK in general as well as with Wales-specific activity such as the work of the Research and Development Panel established by the Assembly Government to inform the development of its economic renewal programme.

- 6 In the area of innovation and engagement activity, a new year three cycle of funding should have commenced in 2010/11. The RIEC played a key role in formulating the consultation on future third mission funding arrangements that took place between October 2009 and January 2010 and the Chair of the Committee also presided at a consultation workshop for the sector and key stakeholders on 4 December 2009. The outcomes of this consultation exercise were considered by RIEC on 26 January 2010 and on its advice the Council subsequently decided to:
 - Defer the start of a new three year funding cycle from 2010/11 to 2011/12 in the light of *For our Future* and the Assembly Government's (at this point) still ongoing economic renewal programme;
 - Extend the existing third mission funding cycle by one further academic year;
 - Rename the Council's Third Mission Fund as its Innovation & Engagement Fund from 2011/11;
 - Delegate authority to the Chair of the RIEC and the Chief Executive to take forward new innovation & engagement funding arrangements from 2011/12 that take appropriate account of Assembly Government priorities for HE in relation to delivering social justice and supporting a buoyant economy.

- 7 The RIEC is also mindful of the fact that the sector's research and innovation engagement activities play out on an international as well as a domestic stage. At its meeting in April 2010 the Committee therefore focused on European and wider international opportunities for Welsh HE, which resulted in a number of key issues being brought to the attention of the Council. This included a lack of overarching strategic direction and support to enable Wales in general to maximise opportunities arising from international engagement and a corresponding need to develop more of a *Team Wales* approach in which Welsh HE and the Welsh business sector should be key contributors alongside both Assembly and Local Government in Wales. This is a theme that RIEC will also return to in the context of the implementation of the Assembly's *Economic Renewal: a new direction* policy, which has amongst its priorities raising the international profile of Wales.

- 8 Over the past year the RIEC has also supported a number of external events and initiatives in support of the sector's research and innovation and engagement activities. These have included:

13 May 2009	Update on progress with the UK-wide venture, <i>Research into the Impact of HEIs on regional economies</i> by the <i>Impact</i> Co-ordinators
8 October 2009	Official launch of the Aber-Bangor Skills Centre (funded via HEFCW's Third Mission Fund)
11 November 2009	REF Consultation Workshop
30 November 2009	<i>Impact Venture</i> dissemination event at the Wales Millennium Centre
4 December 2009	I & E Funding Consultation Event in Newport
1 – 10 March 2010	High-Level Welsh HE delegation to India
16 April 2010	Dissemination event at Swansea Metropolitan University on outputs of an independent evaluation commissioned by HEFCW into the effectiveness of links between HEIs and SSCs
21 April 2010	Strategic Insight Programme <i>celebration</i> event in Cardiff
23 June 2010	International HE Strategy seminar (organised by Higher Education Wales)

- 9 In addition, HEFCW's HE-SSCs Communications Group (on which WILOs and WHECS are represented) continues to meet on a regular basis and various members of the committee are also represented on the European Structural Funds Executive Steering Group and in various other international collaborations via WHEB and the Wales International Consortium (WIC). Finally, a close working relationship is maintained with SETQ in respect of the skills and employability agenda, which spans the remit of both Committees. This is achieved via officer attendance at SETQ Committee meetings and the sharing of all relevant papers and presentations.

FORWARD LOOK

- 1 It is still early days for HEFCW's new committee structure. However, the RIEC has most definitely begun to make its mark and has already been called upon to offer advice to Council across the full breadth of its remit. The quality of the advice provided to date in areas such as the development of the new REF or HEFCW's future I & E funding arrangements reflect the breadth and expertise of the Committee's membership. The bringing together of the various constituencies that sit on the RIEC provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, practice and experience that is unique in Wales. This was particularly well demonstrated in the April 2010 meeting that focused on international research and I & E activities where opportunities for closer collaboration between different stakeholders were clearly identified for the first time. As the Committee moves forward so hopefully will this spirit of increased collaboration between the sector and its stakeholders.
- 2 The Committee looks to a future that represents a period of great challenge for the HE sector, both in Wales and on the wider UK and international stage. At home, these challenges include the Assembly Government's regionalisation agenda; the current economic climate and associated budget cuts in all areas of HEFCW core funding; and the implications for Wales arising from the Westminster Government's response to the Browne Review of HE funding and finance. On a UK-wide scale, challenges are presented by the forthcoming Research Evaluation Framework; changes in population demographic; the increasing internationalisation of HE; and the increasingly different UK HE funding and student support regimes, which all have the capacity to increase competition across the UK HE sector. The current economic climate also presents challenges in relation to the future development of HE-business interactions at local, national and international.
- 3 It will, therefore, be a busy next year for HEFCW's RIEC as it navigates its way through these challenges. As it does so, the Committee will continue to advise Council on how it can most effectively work with the partner constituencies represented in RIEC's membership to maximise the impacts of the sector's research, innovation and engagement activities.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

REMIT

1 CONSTITUTION

A Committee of the Council to be known as the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee (the Committee) established with the following Terms of reference and standing orders by a resolution of the Council dated the 12th day of December 2008.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) To advise the Council on its strategies for innovation, engagement (third mission) and research activities and the policies and principles that need to underpin them in the long term, including funding arrangements.
- b) To act as a source of and sounding board for new ideas and approaches in the field of innovation, engagement and research activity.
- c) To recommend to the Council strategies in support of HEFCW's corporate plan as it relates to third mission and research activities, and which also promote and facilitate joint working between the Council and its key partner organisations in these areas.
- d) To consider any matters referred to the Committee by the Council.
- e) In all of the above to seek and take account of the views of such stakeholders as it considers appropriate and of appropriate research and, likewise, to incorporate advice from independent specialists where appropriate.

3 STANDING ORDERS

3.1 The standard HEFCW Committee Standing Orders shall apply.

3.2 Membership and Attendance

3.2.1 The Committee shall comprise up to seventeen members, including four members from within the membership of the Council members, one of whom will be the Chair of the Committee.

3.2.2 The quorum for Committee meetings is four members, including the Chair or his/her nominee.

3.2.3 The Director of Strategic Development/Head of the Research, Business and Communities Team and his/her relevant officers shall normally attend the meetings of the Committee.

3.2.4 A member of the Research Business and Communities Team shall service the Committee.

3.3 Authority

3.3.1 The Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers.

3.3.2 The Committee shall have the authority to establish Task and Finish Groups to provide advice as it considers necessary.

Composition of Research Innovation and Engagement Committee

Members

Council

Member of Council (Chair)
Three members of Council

Appointments committee appointees

Two business sector representatives
Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent (Innovation)
Third Mission/Engagement/Innovation staff member
Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent (Research)
Academic researcher

Nominees

HEW (with research experience)
RCUK
DE&T (A4B)
DE&T (Enterprise/Entrepreneurship)
Wales European Liaison Officers Network (WELOs)
Welsh (HE) Industrial Liaison Officers Network (WILOs)
Welsh Heads of Careers Services (WHECS)

Observers

DCELLS
HEW officer
Wales Higher Education Brussels (WHEB) (when applicable)
Wales International Consortium (WIC) (when applicable)

Officers

Head of Research, Business and Communities
Senior Economic Development Managers
Senior Research Manager
European/International Manager (for meetings where applicable)
GO Wales Programme Manager (for meetings where applicable)

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Member of Council (Chair)	Professor Robin Williams
Three members of Council	Nina Park Professor Sir Brian Smith One vacancy
Two business sector representatives	Professor David Walker, OPTIC Technium Simon Bradley, EADS
Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent (Innovation)	Professor Brian Hobbs, PVC Research, University of Glamorgan
Third Mission/Engagement/Innovation staff member	Professor Dylan Jones-Evans, Director of Research and Innovation, University of Wales
Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent (Research)	Professor Peter Blood, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff University
Academic Researcher	Professor Michael Woods, Aberystwyth University
<i>Nominees</i>	
Higher Education Wales (HEW)	Professor Richard B Davies, Vice-Chancellor, Swansea University
Research Councils UK	Dr Steven Hill, Head of RCUK Strategy Unit
DE&T (A4B)	Dr Alastair Davies, Senior Manager, Science, R&D and Knowledge Transfer
DE&T (Enterprise/Entrepreneurship)	Sue Morgan, Head of Enterprise Education
Wales European Liaison Officers Network (WELOS)	Nick Bodycombe, Chair of WELOS and European Office Manager
Welsh HE Industrial Liaison Officers Network (WILOS)	Chair of WILOS (Currently Geraint Jones, Director of Research & Commercial Division at Cardiff University)
Welsh Heads of Careers Services (WHECS)	Ruth Brooks, Head of Careers Services at the Open University in Wales
<i>Observers</i>	
DCELLS	Rachel Garside-Jones, Head of Skills Policy, Employability and Research, DCELLS
Higher Education Wales	Elizabeth Clark, Policy Advisor, HEW
Wales Higher Education Brussels (WHEB) – when appropriate	Berwyn Davies, Director
Wales International Consortium (WIC) – when appropriate	Virginia West, Director

DE&T (when appropriate)

Richard Rossington, Head of Policy for Business Support & Science Policy Unit, Economic Development Group, DE&T

HEFCW Officers

Head of Research, Business and Communities

Senior Economic Development Managers

Senior Research Manager

GO Wales Programme Manager

European/International Manager

(for meetings where applicable)

Roger Carter

Teresa Cooper (Joint Secretary)

Dr Alyson Thomas

Linda Tiller (Joint Secretary)

Jackie Cresswell-Griffiths

Dr Tove Oliver

2008/09 MEETINGS

21 April 2009

7 July 2009

2009/10 MEETINGS

20 October 2009

26 January 2010

19 April 2010

29 June 2010

A joint meeting of HEFCW's Research, Innovation & Engagement, Student Experience, Teaching and Quality and the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Committees was also held on 12 March 2010