

Minutes of the second meeting of the Council's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee held Friday 26 June 2009 in HEFCW Offices, Llanishen.

Present:

Members: Prof Leni Oglesby, Member of Council (Chair)
Michelle Creed, Alliance of Sector Skills Councils
Ben Gray, National Union of Students, Wales
Stephen Griffiths, National Leadership and Innovation Agency for
Healthcare
Rob Humphreys, institutional representative
Julie Lydon, institutional representative
Prof Danny Saunders, institutional representative
Eirwen Malin, on behalf of Richard Spear, National Institute of Adult
Continuing Education, Dysgu Cymru
Prof Alan Speight, Chair of Reaching Wider Partnerships
Dennis Thomas, institutional representative
Gavin Thomas, Fforwm
Pauline Thomas, Member of Council

Observers: Katie Dalton, National Union of Students, Wales
Dr Julian Ellis, Quality Assurance Agency
Helen Jones, on behalf of Mike Hopkins, Department for Children,
Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly
Government
Gabriel Jezierski, on behalf of Sean Mackney, Higher Education
Academy
Dr Ioan Matthews, Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education
Lisa Newberry, Higher Education Wales

Officers: Prof Phil Gummett
Celia Hunt
Jane Johns
Emma King
Gemma Long (Clerk)
Dr Cliona O'Neill (Secretary)
Dr Alyson Thomas

Apologies: Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams, Dr Peter Noyes, Dr Carl Peters, Jacqui Hare, Richard Spear, Sean Mackney, Mike Hopkins, Simon Brown.

- 1 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (SETQC/09/06)
- 1.1 Information on Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK for 2007/08, published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, was provided to the Committee for information.
- 1.2 Members noted that:
- Universities in Wales continued to perform well in widening access, recording similar or higher proportions of students from most under-represented groups in higher education compared to the UK as a whole;
 - There were issues to address regarding the recruitment and retention of non-traditional students in higher education which would be brought into the discussions on the following agenda item
 - Welsh institutions showed a dedication to widening access, but there had been a dip in performance on some indicators, related to areas of low participation, in these latest figures.
- 2 WIDENING ACCESS – ISSUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS (SETQC/09/07)
- 2.1 The Committee received a paper on widening access policy and implementation issues, and a presentation on the widening access implications arising from the Welsh Assembly Government's Review of Higher Education in Wales.
- 2.2 It was noted that the Higher Education Academy review of widening access strategies (2006 to 2009) and Reaching Wider proposals (2008 to 2010) would be published in the autumn followed by a HEFCW/HE Academy/sector strategic dialogue in November 2009.
- 2.3 Members considered a series of widening access policy-related questions and officers confirmed that members' advice to Council on the future development of widening access policies, including the Reaching Wider initiative, would be collated and appended to the SETQC minutes as Annex A. These would be compiled into a report by HEFCW officers. Members were requested to send any additional contributions to Jane Johns by 3 July 2009.
- 2.4 HEFCW would be invited to submit data on a range of HE issues, including widening access, to inform the Welsh Assembly Government's development of its Manifesto for Change, to be published in the autumn.
- 2.5 Action:
- i) *HEFCW to produce a report summarising the conclusions of the discussions, to be appended to the minutes of the meeting (Annex A).*

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (SETQC/09/08)

3.1 Members agreed the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

3.2 Resolved:

- i) to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 29 April 2009.*

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 2.5 Remit and Terms of Reference: The Chair proposed that, following consideration of Members' submissions to the Secretary since the previous meeting, the Committee be renamed the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee. Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams had agreed to be Deputy Chair of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee.

4.1.1 Resolved:

- i) to accept 'Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee' as the new name for the Committee, with immediate effect.*

4.2 4.2.7 Learning and Teaching: Members noted that engagement between higher education institutions and the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres was the subject of an HE Academy report due in September. The Academy would check whether this report would be available for the October 2009 meeting.

4.2.1 Action:

- i) The Academy would confirm whether the report on subject centre engagement with HE institutions would be available for the October meeting.*

4.3 4.3.6 Quality Assessment, Assurance and Enhancement: The Committee was informed that a meeting would be held between the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLI AH) and HEFCW in September 2009 to discuss the possibility of collaboration between the QAA and relevant agencies for the quality assurance of healthcare subjects to reduce the burden of assessment.

4.4 4.4.6 Skills and Employability: The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) had provided information for tabling on the continued relevance of its skills and employment strategy. Members noted that WAG proposed establishing a Sector Priorities Fund aiming to address skills needed, the details of which would be subject to consultation in the autumn. There was potential for HE to work with the sector skills councils regarding priority sectors and HE might also be involved through addressing the developmental needs of tutors delivering training. Concerns were raised about identifying priority sectors, as priorities could shift quickly. One member suggested there should be more reference to the role of the lifelong learning sector within the skills agenda. The Chair clarified that the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Committee would also cover the skills agenda. Coordination of

the two Committees regarding skills would be achieved via: the committees sharing minutes, officers discussing issues of common interest, and Dr Alyson Thomas attending both committees.

- 4.5 4.5.1 Jones Review A summary of recommendations from the very recently published Jones Review of Higher Education in Wales was tabled. Members noted that Council was awaiting clarification from the Minister on next steps.

5 OUTCOMES OF QUALITY REVIEWS AND AUDITS (SETQC/09/09)

- 5.1 Julie Lydon, Danny Saunders and Alan Speight were noted to have interests regarding this item.
- 5.2 Members noted:
- the confidence outcomes of institutional reviews in Swansea University, the University of Glamorgan, Cardiff University and the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff;
 - the confidence outcomes of the overseas audit of the University of Wales at St Petersburg Christian University;
 - that there had been two very positive reviews of directly funded HE in FE institutions; and
 - that the report on the institutional review of Swansea Metropolitan University would be published soon;
- 5.3 The QAA would prepare four summary reports capturing the outcomes of the institutional review cycle 2003/2004 to 2008/2009, for publishing in December 2009.
- 5.4 Members noted that the new institutional review process had placed a renewed focus on collaborative provision, and this was the only area arising from the reviews discussed in this paper which should be addressed sector-wide.
- 5.5 Congratulations were offered to all higher education institutions (HEIs) which had received outcomes of confidence.
- 5.6 Resolved that:
- i) *The QAA would provide four summary reports on the institutional review cycle to a future meeting of the Committee;*
 - ii) *The QAA would be requested to undertake a further review of collaborative provision in the institutional review process to run from 2009.*

6 QAA HANDBOOK FOR THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW FROM 2009/10 (SETQC/09/10)

- 6.1 The Committee noted the consultation on the draft QAA handbook for institutional review from 2009/10, which would end on 29 June 2009.

- 6.2 National Union of Students (NUS) in Wales noted that they had been pleased with the involvement of students in the ongoing dialogue to develop the review process, and noted the importance of students' unions producing an annual statement in order to record the issues that each executive faced and to facilitate the production of the student written submission. Members noted the ongoing discussions between HEFCW and NUS Wales regarding student participation in quality.
- 6.3 The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils would discuss National Occupational Standards and benchmarking with the QAA outside of this meeting.
- 6.4 Members agreed that continuous involvement and dialogue with students were valuable aspects of the new review process, but that more detail was needed on the identity and role of student reviewers, training of students, and the purpose of the annual student statement.
- 6.5 The flexibility to introduce changes through the rolling process was welcomed, including the opportunity to continually enhance the review process to reflect priorities in different parts of the UK. Members added that it was important to have comparability of judgements in institutional reviews in the UK based on a common framework, though it was not necessary for review processes to be the same.
- 6.6 A member suggested that institutions be given 24 months notice prior to a review, as opposed to 12.
- 6.7 Members broadly supported the proposed changes to the institutional review process.
- 6.8 Resolved that:
- i) *There was broad support for the institutional review handbook.*
 - ii) *Additional information in the institutional review handbook on the role of student reviewers, their appointment and training would be welcomed.*
- 7 FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WALES EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS BOARD (SETQC/09/11)
- 7.1 The Committee noted the first annual report of the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) and its recommendations, and that Prof Danny Saunders provided a useful cross membership on the Board and SETQC.
- 7.2 WESB had only been in operation for seven months by the time of production of the report. The report clarified the role of HE as the provider of research, leadership and advanced skills.
- 7.3 Members accepted the economic analysis underlying the report's conclusions on skills and employment. They accepted the need for education and skills providers to give far stronger emphasis to basic skills

and employability. However, it would be helpful to have clarification on the meaning of basic skills in the context of HE. Members agreed that HE had a role in addressing the teaching of skills via initial teacher training, and graduate level employability skills.

- 7.4 Other issues raised in the report were brought to the attention of the committee, including: the need for HEIs to develop further their strategies for the provision of flexible workbased and workplace skills training, the under-employment of some graduates, employers' increasing expectations of graduates' basic skills levels, that improving leadership and management skills in the workforce required collaboration between HE and FE, and that there were challenges in gathering and disseminating labour market intelligence.
- 7.5 The Committee shared the Board's concerns that a sector-based approach did not meet the broadest needs of the labour market, and would deter enterprise in areas that are not prioritised. It noted that more could be achieved by working collectively than separately. It was reminded that the data available is not 'real time' data, and changes to the marketplace are not reflected rapidly in the data reported.
- 7.6 Members noted that the project to scope an all Wales workforce development centre had been completed, and that HEFCW was working with the sector to consider next steps.
- 7.7 The Committee agreed that the WESB report should inform discussion at the next meeting which would focus on HEFCW future priorities in this area.
- 7.8 Resolved: that
i) the skills and employability agenda would be the discussion item for the next meeting, and would be complemented by a paper from the Alliance of Sector Skills Council Wales.

8 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY UPDATE (SETQC/09/12)

- 8.1 Members noted the update on National Student Survey arrangements for 2009/10.
- 8.2 The Committee approved the recommendations that the results for franchise HE in FE provision should be reported separately in the NSS from 2009/10, and that HEFCW should investigate the logistics of including directly funded HE in FE provision in the Survey.
- 8.3 The National Student Survey results would not be published until the end of September due to technical difficulties, and would therefore be unavailable to inform the choice of prospective students at the time of clearing. Members were disappointed that the NSS had failed to deliver to schedule again, and asked that the Chair of Council write to UCAS on behalf of the Committee detailing its concerns.

- 8.4 Resolved: that
- i) the results for franchise HE in FE provision should be reported separately in the NSS from 2009/10;*
 - ii) HEFCW should investigate the logistics of including directly funded HE in FE provision in the survey;*
 - iii) the HEFCW Chairman be requested to write to UCAS on behalf of the Committee to detail concerns regarding the delays to schedule for publishing 2009/10 survey data.*

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was no other business.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting would be on 21 October, to start at 11 am, and finish by 3 pm.

11 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 21 APRIL 2009 (SETQC/09/13)

11.1 The unconfirmed minutes of the Council's Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on the 21 April 2009 were presented for information.

11.2 Resolved:
i) to note the minutes of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee.

12 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP – ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICE (SETQC/09/14)

12.1 Resolved:
i) to note the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Analysis of Best Practice report.

Signature.....

Date.....