

Meeting	Agenda Item	Reference No
23/10/08	17	HEFCW/08/83

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper presents, for information, a copy of a progress report on the development of new arrangements for research assessment which has recently been submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 The current Corporate Strategy states that HEFCW will work with the other UK higher education funding bodies to develop arrangements for a new, metrics based approach to research assessment, to be implemented after the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. note the progress report attached at **Annex A**.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 No decisions are required at the present time. However, the Council will need to take a firm decision in Summer 2009 on whether to implement the new research assessment arrangements in Wales, subject to any guidance which may be received from the Welsh Assembly Government.

5 Council members' interests

- 5.1 No conflicts of interests have been declared in advance of the meeting.

6 Further information

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7 Background

- 7.1 The *Science and Innovation Framework 2004-2014:Next Steps*, published in 2006 by the DfES, DTI and Treasury stated that the UK Government has a firm presumption that, after the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the system for assessing research quality will be mainly metrics based. In December 2006, Jane Davidson, then Assembly Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, asked HEFCW to engage closely with the other UK higher education funding bodies in the development of the new arrangements.
- 7.2 The Council considered initial proposals for the new assessment arrangements at its meeting in September 2007, and agreed to undertake a consultation in partnership with the other funding bodies. The outcomes of that consultation, together with proposals for a further programme of developmental work, were reported to the Council at its meeting in May 2008.

8 Progress Report to the Welsh Assembly Government

- 8.1 The progress report attached at **Annex A** was submitted to Jane Hutt, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, on 2 October 2008.
- 8.2 The Council will need to take a firm decision in Summer 2009 on whether to implement the new assessment arrangements in Wales. We have therefore requested that any discussions which may be required with the Welsh Assembly Government about the new approach should take place between now and Spring 2009.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this paper. In the longer term, it is envisaged that the outcomes of the revised research assessment method will be used as the basis for allocating QR funding.

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 There are no immediate communications implications arising from this paper.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 A full impact assessment of the proposed new approach to research assessment will be undertaken as part of the current programme of developmental work. This will include consideration of equal opportunities implications.

12 Risk Assessment

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
There is a risk that the new assessment arrangements may not be acceptable to the sector.	The new arrangements are being developed in consultation with institutions. An initial UK-wide consultation was undertaken in November 2007, and a further consultation is planned for Spring 2009. Additionally, the bibliometrics arrangements are currently being piloted, and a Welsh institution (Bangor University) has been included in the pilot sample.
There is a risk that the new metrics-based approach may not play to the strengths of the Welsh HE sector.	The inclusion of Bangor in the pilot project should provide some indication of the likely performance of the Welsh sector.