

Minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee and
annual report of the Learning and Teaching and Quality
Assessment Committees

Disclosable

Meeting	Agenda Item	Reference No
13/03/09	25	HEFCW/09/30

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper presents for approval the confirmed minutes of the Council's Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) held on 16 January 2009.
- 1.2 The paper also presents the Annual Report of the LTC and Quality Assessment Committee (QAC).

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 The LTC is one of the standing committees of the Council and its purpose is to advise the Council on matters relating to the promotion of teaching excellence in higher education, and the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- 2.2 The QAC supports HEFCW in its statutory duty to ensure provision is made for assessing the quality of education in higher education institutions (HEIs) for whose activities it provides financial support.
- 2.3 The terms of reference of the LTC requires it 'to report annually to the Council on the enhancement of teaching and learning, and the operation of the SLA with the QAA [Quality Assurance Agency], monitored by the QAC'.

3 Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
 - i. Approve the confirmed minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting on 16 January 2009;
 - ii. Approve the Annual Report for 2007/08 of the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Quality Assessment Committee.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 Council must approve the minutes and annual report before they can be published.

5 Council members' interests

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

6 Further information

- 6.1 Contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (Tel 029 2068 2283; E-mail: cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Background

- 7.1 The purpose of the LTC is to advise the Council on all matters relating to the promotion of teaching excellence in higher education, and the enhancement of the student learning experience. A small subset of the LTC forms the QAC and advises the Council on its statutory responsibilities in respect of quality assurance. Specifically, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 requires the Council to secure that provision is made for assessing the quality of education provided in institutions for whose activities it provides, or is considering providing, financial support.
- 7.2 At its meeting on 18 March 2005 the Council ratified arrangements to establish the LTC and reconvene the QAC from 2005/06 onwards.
- 7.3 At the December 2008 Council meeting Members approved a new committee structure for HEFCW. This included merging the LTC with the Widening Access Committee, with its remit expanded to include the skills agenda, and the undertaking of HEFCW's statutory responsibilities under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 in respect of quality assessment (item HEFCW/08/87 refers).

8 Minutes of the LTC meeting of 16 January 2009

- 8.1 The minutes of the January 2009 meeting of the LTC are available at **Annex A**.
- 8.2 This was the last meeting of the former LTC, and so minutes were confirmed with Members electronically.
- 8.3 Members may wish to note the following issues:
- Members suggested enquiring whether the Assembly's ProAct funding to support additional training to priority businesses during the economic downturn could be used to support foundation degrees (item 6.3 refers);
 - Members reported their appreciation of HEFCW's work to ensure that students of NHS subjects could participate in the National Student Survey, including additional questions on placements, through all methods (item 8.4 refers);
 - Members agreed that it was not appropriate at present to include students of directly funded HE in FE provision in the National Student Survey in Wales (item 8.7 refers);
 - The two FE institutions which had undergone HE in FE developmental reviews had reported the process to be rewarding (item 9.3 refers);

- HEFCW's recommendations for the IR process from 2009/10 had been sent to the QAA, which would draft the handbook and publish it for consultation in May/June 2009 (item 9.4 refers);
- 8.4 Members are invited to approve the following recommendation made by the LTC:
- HEFCW should invite the HE Academy to convene a steering group to facilitate a conference on a quality enhancement theme or themes in alternate years (item 7.6.2 refers).

9 Annual report of the LTC and QAC

- 9.1 The annual report of the LTC and QAC is attached at **Annex B**, together with the terms of reference of the committees. The report summarises the principal issues considered by the LTC and QAC from August 2007 to July 2008 and the outcomes to date. It has been approved by the LTC. No separate meeting of the QAC was held to approve the annual report, but as the QAC is a subset of the LTC membership, members were invited to comment at the January 2009 LTC meeting.
- 9.2 The principal issues discussed by the LTC were as follows:
- Higher Education Academy;
 - Learning and teaching strategies;
 - Quality Assurance Agency;
 - Quality assurance of higher education in further education institutions;
 - Teaching quality information/National Student Survey;
 - Informing HEFCW's approach to quality enhancement;
 - Measuring and recording student achievement;
 - Equality and learning and teaching;
 - European issues.
- 9.3 The main areas of work of the QAC were as follows:
- The QAA's mid-cycle review report;
 - Evaluation of the institutional review cycle;
 - Outcomes of the institutional reviews of the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (now Glyndŵr University) and the University of Wales, Lampeter;
 - Relationship between HEFCW and the University of Wales;
 - Outcome of the Estyn inspection of initial teaching training at Aberystwyth University;
 - NSS results for medical students at Cardiff University.

10 Financial implications

- 10.1 No financial implications arise out of this paper.

11 Communications implications

- 11.1 Communications issues arise from items discussed at the Committee meetings, such as the publication of institutional review reports and the National Student Survey results.

12 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 12.1 There are no immediate diversity or equal opportunities implications arising from this paper. However, the terms of reference for the LTC confirm that the specific duties of the Committee shall include: (a) assisting HEFCW officers to review pedagogical practices across Wales to ensure that teaching methods evolve to meet the needs of all learners, especially those of non-traditional students, and (b) promoting the enhancement of Welsh Medium provision in institutions. Furthermore, the QAC terms of reference identify the need to ensure that the distinctive features of the higher education sector in Wales, including those related to Welsh Medium provision, are reflected in the Service Level Agreement between HEFCW and the QAA, and that the QAA has the capability to provide an appropriate Welsh language service.

13 Risk Assessment

- 13.1 Risks associated with the areas arising in this paper are detailed below:

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
Council is unable to meet its statutory responsibilities regarding quality assurance	QAC advises Council on its statutory responsibilities in relation to quality assurance – these responsibilities to be taken over by the new LTC, using a subset of membership of the LTC where appropriate.