

Unconfirmed Minutes of 20 January 2010 meeting of
SETQ Committee

Disclosable

Meeting	Agenda Item	Reference No
12/03/10	28	HEFCW/10/35

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper presents for information the unconfirmed minutes of the Council's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) held on 20 January 2010.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 The SETQC 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. It also undertakes HEFCW's statutory responsibilities to ensure provision is made for assessing the quality of education in higher education institutions (HEIs) for whose activities it provides financial support.

3 Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 The Council is invited to note the unconfirmed minutes of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting on 20 January 2010.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 There are no timing implications for this paper.

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 SETQC undertakes HEFCW's statutory responsibilities under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 in respect of quality assessment.

8 Minutes of the SETQC meeting of 20 January 2010

8.1 The minutes of the January 2010 meeting of the SETQC are available at **Annex A.**

8.2 Members may particularly wish to note the following issues:

- The meeting began with a strategic discussion of the *For our Future* publication from the Welsh Assembly Government. Presentations were received from NUS, the HE Academy and HEFCW identifying matters for consideration in light of For our Future. The outcomes of that discussion are appended to the minutes.
- The Committee's Quality Working Group would examine areas identified by the report of HEFCE's Teaching, Quality and Student Experience sub-committee, *HEFCE's statutory responsibility for quality assurance* at its next meeting and would report to SETQC.
- A task and finish group would be set up to examine the implications of For our Future proposals on widening access. This would be a subgroup of SETQC including expert advice as necessary. The membership and remit would be determined by the Chair.
- Members sought the permission of the Assembly to publish guidelines based on the advice to the Minister on the costs of study to accompany the guidelines for the sector. HEFCW clarified that HEIs would not be monitored against the guidelines but that they would be drawn to the attention of the Quality Assurance Agency in relation to their consideration of accuracy and frankness of information provided, during Institutional Reviews.
- Members welcomed a report from the HE Academy on the engagement of Welsh HEIs with subject centres, and expressed their satisfaction with the HE Academy annual report against the 2008/09 grant letter from HEFCW. The Committee identified priorities they wished to reflected see in the HE Academy grant letter for 2010/11, including learning in the workplace; supporting academics to manage in current climate; enhancing part-time and flexible provision; and an increased emphasis on the international student experience. It was also resolved that the role of the HE Academy in the development of Welsh Medium strategies of the future would be considered outside of the meeting.
- The Committee noted reports from the Quality Assurance Agency on the *Outcomes from Institutional Review*¹, cycle 2003/04 to 2008/09, which looked at the outcomes in Wales, and also considered outcomes from Institutional Audit in England. Members discussed the lessons HEIs could learn from the reports. There was a discussion about changes to the review of collaborative provision, following limited confidence judgements at some HEIs in England, and recommendations from the QAA specific to Wales. Members agreed to discuss the assurance of collaborative provision at the next meeting.

¹ Outcomes from Institutional Review - <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reviewWales/outcomes/default.asp>

- Members recommended that the Coleg Ffederal shadow board consider a task and finish group approach to address issues such as the limited time-scale, the amount of technical work required, and the outcomes of *For our Future*.
- Members agreed to await the outcomes of the Assembly's review 'Research into part-time higher education supply and demand ' before addressing the evaluation of funding for part time students.

Members are invited to note the unconfirmed minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting of 20 January 2010.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 No immediate financial implications arise out of this paper. However, some of the suggestions made by the Committee with regards to *For our Future* might have financial implications if adopted.

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 There may be press interest arising from items discussed at the Committee meetings, such as the Coleg Ffederal, which may be subject to public scrutiny given the amount of funding involved and the wider political interest.
- 10.2 Quality matters, such as the outcomes of institutional reviews, and reviews of the quality of higher education in other countries of the UK may also generate press interest, particularly when the outcomes are not favourable.
- 10.3 Matters relating to widening access and skills are generating press interest as a result of the current economic climate, and emerging Welsh Assembly Government policies.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 There are no immediate diversity or equal opportunities implications arising from this paper. However, the terms of reference for the Committee confirm that the specific duties of the Committee include advising the Council on matters relating to learning and teaching in higher education, including widening access to higher education and Welsh medium provision.

12 Risk Assessment

- 12.1 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	The Committee advises Council on its statutory responsibilities in relation to quality assurance, using a subset of membership where appropriate.