

## News release

**Date:** 27 June 2018

**Title:** Report sheds light on impact of £1 million investment in teaching technologies

A new report has found that HEFCW's ten-year plan to improve the use of teaching technologies in universities has had a positive impact on the higher education sector.

The strategy, bolstered by a £1 million investment, has been instrumental in encouraging higher education providers to use sector-leading innovations, and in helping providers and senior management to focus on developments in this area.

The strategy has also encouraged universities to share good practice in this area, both through ongoing conversations between staff and more widely through conferences.

This was supported strongly by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) through the *Gwella* project, which focused on the impact of technology on learning and teaching and on the student experience through a series of events and publications, and project support. Jisc's 'Building Capacity' programme also brought together resources both it and the HEA developed to support institutions' technology-enhanced learning strategies.

Dr David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "The slow burn of this ambitious strategy has been key to its success, with the long-term approach providing plenty of time for technology-enhanced learning to become properly

mainstreamed at universities. Influencing academics and senior management, early technology adopters have had opportunities to work with those who required an additional push, with the result being a widespread culture change throughout the whole higher education sector. We hope that the next phase of developments in this area will work to continue the practice of sharing expertise, and give institutions the confidence to become even more flexible, confident and innovative in using teaching enhanced learning in both Welsh and English.”

## **Ends**

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## **Notes**

The Wales Higher Education Strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology (ELTT) ran from 2007/2008 to 2016/2017 in consultation with the higher education sector. The programme was jointly developed by HEFCW and the higher education sector.

[The review, undertaken in March 2018](#), concluded that:

- the aims of the strategy have been met successfully;
- universities have moved forward with the basis of the strategy;
- ELTT has been mainstreamed in institutions;
- universities in Wales are engaging with sector leading innovation;
- collaboration to progress with ELTT has been encouraged by the strategy.

The £1 million investment over the 10 years of the programme has had a positive impact on the higher education sector.

- focused thinking an institutional and national level;
- the *Gwella* programme included a series of national conferences organised by HEFCW to build on ongoing digital collaboration and innovation;
- the strategy validated importance of ELTT to senior management and encouraged partnership working between departments and members of staff;
- strengthened organisation of institutions' own technology enhanced learning tools.

The [summary of recommendations](#) from the ELTT programme highlighted:

1. *Sharing good practice across Wales*: Institutions should continue to work in partnership with Welsh initiatives such as Wise Wales, WHELF and HEWIT. Focus on Welsh specific groups can provide a shared understanding of particular issues effecting Wales.
2. *Staff conferences including a digital thread*: continued focus on incorporating a digital thread into conferences on enhancing tools in learning, teaching, assessment and the student experience.
3. *Interprofessional working and staff-student partnership*: institutions are encouraged to review the whole student experience from academic staff to IT staff working in partnership to provide a well-rounded student experience. It is recognised that student-led change should be explored for pushing traditional educational boundaries.
4. *Stimulating and evidencing innovation*: Institutions should collect case studies and it is recommended that they explore opportunities to demonstrate the impact of investment in technology led projects. The value of sharing good practice and informal methods such as social media should be encouraged where appropriate to help serve the wider purposes such as TEF submissions and HEA fellowship.
5. *Digital capability and confidence*: This area has been acknowledged as a challenge for institutions in the future as it has an increasing impact on employability. Institutions are encouraged to continue drawing on resources

to support students in this area, for example through participation in the Jisc building digital capability programme.

6. *Technology to enhance flexibility and accessibility:* Institutions should seek opportunities to share effective practice for increasing and encouraging participation through the implementation of technology despite withdrawal of support e.g. Disabled Students' Allowance. The exploration of enhancing technology to provide flexibility and accessibility should benefit all students.
7. *Data informed decision making:* The adoption of learning analytics at the earliest opportunity is encouraged as is the engagement with the Jisc Learning analytics network. It has been recommended that any analytics initiative is led at strategic level and encompasses decision makers from different departments with the institution.
8. *Welsh language Provision:* Institutions should continue to work closely with y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to share digital resources within Welsh language provision. Other Welsh language provisions should also be utilised.
9. *The Welsh Language Standards; software challenges:* Following the implementation of the Welsh language standards in March 2018, institutions have had to increase effort to obtain Welsh Language versions of software.
10. *Network capacity, security and compliance:* Institutions should ensure that their network capacities remain secure, resilient and up to date which also includes consideration of cybersecurity and GDPR.
11. *Strategic engagement with sector bodies:* Institutions are recommended to collaborate with each other to provide an excellent student experience. Institutions should engage strategically to provide their staff and students with the maximum capacity to enhance digital capability. Universities should continue to work with AdvanceHE and Jisc to enhance the student experience of learning analytics.
12. *The value of strategy documentation:* It is recommended that HEFCW ensures that the availability and discoverability of appropriate public documentation relating to the strategy is made available for future reference.

The programme's ambition and open-ended approach has been a strength to ensure that all institutions have benefitted from the programme.

### **About HEFCW**

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales – HEFCW – is the public body that sits between universities and the Welsh Government. We regulate fee levels at higher education providers, ensure a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education and scrutinise the performance of universities. We distribute resources for higher education teaching and research, and help to deliver Welsh Government priorities for higher education for the wider benefit of society and the economy.