

## **Consultation on the Options Available to the Council for Supporting Excellent Teaching**

To: Heads of higher education institutions in  
Wales

Summary: This circular sets out for consultation the  
options available to the Council for  
encouraging and rewarding higher education  
institutions (HEIs) in Wales to support  
excellent teaching in order continuously to  
enhance the quality of the student learning  
experience

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## ■ INTRODUCTION

- 1 This circular sets out for consultation the options available to the Council for encouraging and rewarding higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales to support excellent teaching in order continuously to enhance the quality of the student learning experience.
- 2 It also identifies a wide range of related Council activities and strategies that should be taken into consideration when responding to this circular.
- 3 Responses will be analysed and presented to the Council in October 2003.

## ■ THE COUNCIL'S REMIT AND CORPORATE STRATEGY

- 4 The Council's remit letter for 2003-04 from the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning states that:

*'Reaching Higher aims for a world-renowned higher education sector, which is a destination of first choice for students. Central to this ambition is excellence in teaching and learning. It is essential that teaching and learning are not viewed as second in importance to research. We need to redress the balance between teaching and research in Wales, as is now also being sought elsewhere in the UK'.*

- 5 The remit letter also linked the development of teaching reward mechanisms with the Council's existing work in promoting continuous quality enhancement, via institutional learning and teaching strategies. The Minister states that:

*'I also see this issue linking closely to work that you are taking forward on continuously enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, not least via institutions' Learning and Teaching Strategies. In the context of widening access, but also more generally, students are entitled to expect the adoption by HEIs of consistently sound pedagogical practice. I should be grateful if you would address this and encourage institutions, through their Learning and Teaching*

*Strategies, to place a greater emphasis on innovative approaches to teaching and not least on the needs of non-traditional students'.*

- 6 The Council's *Corporate Strategy 2003 to 2010* addresses these issues through 'The Deal for Students', the strategic aim designed to ensure that Welsh HEIs deliver the highest quality learning and related support to their students.
- 7 To achieve this strategic aim, the Council identified a range of priorities for the 2003-04 to 2005-06 planning period. These are outlined in **Annex A**.

## ■ RELATED COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND POLICIES

- 8 The Council's commitment to enhancing learning and teaching, (and widening participation) is already demonstrated through the main annual teaching grant, together with more targeted funds such as those for:

- ⇒ Learning and Teaching Strategies;
- ⇒ Reaching Higher – Reaching Wider;
- ⇒ Widening Access Strategies;
- ⇒ Disability Provision Development Fund.

- 9 Additionally, the Council currently contributes funding to the UK-wide LTSN – a subject-based support network for the promotion and dissemination of developments and innovation in teaching and learning. The Council has also contributed to the initial establishment and development of the Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE).

- 10 Until 2001, the Council also supported teaching quality enhancement by rewarding all HE provision designated as 'excellent' following a visit under the HEFCW/Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Teaching Quality Assessment (TOA) review process, or as an outcome of Estyn inspection of initial teacher training (ITT) provision. These rewards took the form of additional funded places or project funding.

- 11 However, in 2003, the Council announced a new quality assurance and standards framework for higher education in Wales (Circular W03/08/HE). This was developed in consultation with representatives from higher and further education institutions and the National Union of Students in Wales. The framework seeks to ensure a high quality student experience, whilst avoiding unnecessary burdens on institutions.
- 12 Implemented on a six-year cycle from 2003/04, the framework entails QAA institutional, rather than subject level, reviews. The framework has emerged from a context of confidence in the quality of HE in Wales, since all subject level provision has already been found by the QAA, through TQA reviews, to be of at least 'satisfactory' quality, with around 36% designated as 'excellent'.
- 13 The outcome judgements of the framework for Wales will be comparable with those elsewhere in the UK, despite the differences in processes employed
- 14 Also critical to the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience is the systematic professional development of academic staff. Circular W03/12HE advised the sector of the Council's commitment to supporting the development of institutional Human Resources (HR) Strategies and emphasised the importance of institutions including human resources development as a core element of their strategic planning.
- 15 Institutions are asked to be mindful of all these considerations when responding to this circular.
- **UK WIDE DEVELOPMENTS**
- 16 In January 2003, the importance of excellent teaching in higher education was further highlighted in two key publications:
- (a) the Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee (TQEC) Final Report.  
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/TQEC/final.htm>
- (b) the DfES White Paper *The Future of Higher Education*.  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hestrategy/>
- 17 Throughout 2002, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Universities UK, and the Standing Conference of Principals, through the TQEC, reviewed the arrangements for improving the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. HEFCW officers, and colleagues from SHEFC, participated as observers.
- 18 The TQEC's final report included a recommendation to establish an Academy for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching to support institutions, subject groups and individuals in enhancing the quality of learning and teaching across UK higher education.
- 19 The proposed Academy would unify the three main agencies currently responsible for quality enhancement in the UK, namely:
- ⇒ Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA);
  - ⇒ Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN);
  - ⇒ The Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHe).
- 20 In January 2003, the Council agreed in principle to support the TQEC recommendations. The Council's policy on rewarding teaching quality, arising from this consultation exercise, will therefore be developed in line with the outcomes of the TQEC proposal to establish the Academy.
- 21 The Council is assessing the likely implications for Wales of the DfES White Paper *The Future of Higher Education*. Chapter 4 'Teaching and Learning – Delivering Excellence' is of

particular relevance to developments associated with this consultation.

- 22 A distinctive approach to quality enhancement has also been initiated in Scotland with the introduction of enhancement-led institutional reviews from 2003 onwards. The Council will continue to follow these developments with interest.

## ■ PRINCIPLES FOR REWARDING HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

- 23 Against the background of Ministerial guidance, the Council's prior and current practice, and the evolving UK-wide position, the Council wishes to consult upon ways to recognise and reward high quality teaching.

- 24 The Council proposes to take the following principles into account in establishing new mechanisms to recognise and reward high quality teaching:

- a. mechanisms are likely to involve developments at three levels: the sector as a whole; institutions, acting alone or in collaboration; and individual members of staff;
- b. a rounded view of the meaning of 'teaching' under contemporary conditions will be taken by the Council. This view will need to encompass not only direct contact time, but also curriculum design, preparation of learning materials, student support, and programme review. It includes support for postgraduate students (taught and research) as well as undergraduates, and recognises teamwork as well as individual contributions, the role, where relevant, of non-academic staff, and support for the professional development of colleagues as teachers;
- c. an explicit link be forged between teaching and learning excellence, institutional mission statements, strategic planning, and human

resource management. In this last context, the Council will have particular regard to appropriate strategies and procedures for promoting staff that take full account of teaching quality, together with schemes to promote teaching innovation;

- d. in the light of the new quality framework, the Council will not link the outcomes of quality assurance processes and procedures with rewards for teaching excellence.

### **Question 1:**

***Do you support the principles to be considered by the Council when recognising and rewarding high quality teaching in Wales?***

## ■ MECHANISMS FOR REWARDING HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

- 25 You are invited to consider the following range of options that may be employed by the Council to reward high quality teaching in higher education in Wales, and to offer any additional proposals that would serve this purpose.

### **Sector Level Developments**

#### ***Option 1: Thematic and Subject Enhancement***

- 26 A funding mechanism could be established, similar to that being introduced in Scotland, to support sectoral collaboration through regular Wales-wide enhancement activities. These could be based on the outcomes of quality assurance processes, quality enhancement activities, or pedagogic themes, such as assessment or the use of ICT in large group teaching. This option would focus upon providing opportunities for the sharing of good practice across Wales, or even beyond.

- 27 Institutions could be invited to submit proposals for funding from a defined budget, or the Council could take the lead in defining the agenda for a programme of enhancement activities. Evidence of action flowing from these activities could be sought through subsequent institutional learning and teaching strategies.
- 28 There could also be scope for combining such thematic activities with teaching fellowship awards, such that the winners might receive funding (with appropriate institutional compensation) to contribute to the Wales-wide programme of activities.

### **Institutional Level Developments**

#### ***Option 2: Institutional Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies***

- 29 The Council already provides funding to support institutional learning and teaching strategies (currently more than £500,000 per annum). This fund could be enhanced, with a requirement to place greater emphasis on teaching quality enhancement. Indeed the Council approved, in principle, a move in this direction in May 2001, but there is scope to vary the degree of this step through this consultation.
- 30 This option would ensure that all institutions had funding for learning and teaching enhancement, and would emphasise the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience. Institutions could also be encouraged to report specifically on action being taken to address the outcomes of quality assessments and reviews (QAA, Estyn and professional and statutory bodies).
- 31 The Council could establish a fund similar to the English Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF). This provides funding at the levels of the institution, the subject and the individual. For the 'institutional' component, institutions could be asked to submit learning and teaching enhancement strategies and action plans to access an institutional allocation.

#### ***Option 3: Institutional Human Resource Strategies – teaching-led promotions***

- 32 Institutions could be encouraged to reward teaching through their HR strategies, specifically by making excellence in teaching a demonstrably genuine criterion for promotion.
- 33 This could be undertaken by the Council allocating a sum of money to each institution (pro rata to student numbers) to reward and promote teaching. The Council would then review institutional mission statements, HR strategies and policies, and criteria for promotion, to ensure that full recognition was being given to teaching.
- 34 Funding linked to HR and promotion strategies could require institutions to provide evidence of:
- ⇒ an explicit commitment to teaching quality in institutional missions and learning and teaching strategies;
  - ⇒ teaching excellence being defined more explicitly, with clear guidance on the evidence required for promotion based on teaching quality, and how this was integrated with other elements of promotion criteria;
  - ⇒ procedures for the evaluation of staff teaching performance, broadly defined, including student evaluation and peer review;
  - ⇒ provision for guidance and support to be available for established, as well as new, staff in the development of teaching portfolios;
  - ⇒ appropriate guidance and training of promotion panels to enable them to make informed judgements regarding evidence about teaching quality;
  - ⇒ monitoring of promotion procedures so as to be able to demonstrate that measures to recognise teaching quality were proving effective.

#### ***Option 4: Institutional Human Resource Strategies – other than promotion***

- 35 The Council could provide funding to institutions that are establishing mechanisms within institutional HR strategies that do not involve

promotion to recognise and reward teaching quality. Funding could be allocated linked to evidence and successful implementation of mechanisms such as:

- ⇒ the creation of institutional teaching awards and prizes;
- ⇒ a requirement for successful completion by new teaching staff of an accredited training programme;
- ⇒ publicity and dissemination of good practice events that showcase teaching innovation and excellence;
- ⇒ the appointment of teaching fellows, readership positions in educational development, and professorial posts linked to teaching and learning;
- ⇒ financial and practical support for ILTHE (and, in due course, Academy) membership;
- ⇒ the availability of teaching development grants for individual and collaborative activities (within and between institutions).

- 36 The Council could also seek evidence within HR strategies that greater effort is being made to develop and strengthen the teaching skills of graduate students.

### **Individual Staff Level Developments**

#### **Option 5: National Teaching Fellowships**

- 37 The ILTHE on behalf of HEFCE administers the 'National Teaching Fellowships Scheme', the 'individual' part of the TOEF in England. HEFCW could request to 'buy-in' to this English Scheme (approximately £50,000 per award).
- 38 This could serve to raise the profile of teaching in Wales and provide substantial awards for the winner(s). It could also raise the external profile of Welsh HE learning and teaching .
- 39 In addition, (or alternatively), HEFCW could run a Wales-specific fellowship scheme to meet relevant Assembly, sectoral and Council priorities. Such a scheme could be tailored more specifically to Welsh interests and

needs, though it would lack the visibility of a larger England-Wales scheme.

#### **Question 2:**

***Your views are invited on the pros and cons of each of the options identified, in terms of the impact on the individual, the institution and the sector as a whole.***

#### **Question 3:**

***You are asked to consider the most appropriate ways for the Council to release funding linked to each of the options identified.***

#### **Question 4:**

***Are there any other funding mechanisms that should be considered by the Council?***

### ■ **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- 40 The Council invites responses to this consultation document. It would assist the analysis of responses if they could be structured to address the issues listed in the text, which are repeated below:

#### **Question 1:**

Do you support the principles to be considered by the Council when recognising and rewarding high quality teaching in Wales?

#### **Question 2:**

Your views are invited on the pros and cons of each of the options identified, in terms of the impact on the individual, the institution and the sector as a whole.

#### **Question 3:**

You are also asked to consider the most appropriate ways for the Council to release funding linked to each of the options identified.

**Question 4:**

Are there any other funding mechanisms that should be considered by the Council?

- 41 Please send your response by **Monday 22 September 2003** to:

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## THE 'DEAL FOR STUDENTS'

*delivering the highest quality learning and related support*

### **Priorities for the Planning Period (2003-04 to 2005-06)**

- Work with the sector, including FE providers of HE, and the Quality Assurance Agency to implement a new quality assurance and standards framework in Wales
- Develop a mechanism for rewarding high quality teaching
- Re-draft guidance so that institutional strategies for learning and teaching increasingly make enhancement a central feature
- Consider the particular implications for quality assurance arrangements arising from proposals for a single University of Wales
- Ensure that institutions have in place robust institutional complaints procedures with an appropriate external element
- Work with the sector and the University of Wales Board for Welsh Medium Teaching to develop a strategy and collaborative framework for the development and delivery of Welsh medium provision
- Work with the National Council - ELWa to ensure that the two Councils' strategies for the development of Welsh Medium provision are aligned, evidence based and suitably targeted
- As resources allow, conduct a strategic review of modern language provision in the HE sector, and consider whether similar reviews are required in other subjects
- Work with the sector to develop a framework for e-learning, and ensure its coordination with parallel work by the National Council
- Continue working with the e-University, with appropriate funding support, and ensure that institutions in Wales are aware of the opportunities available
- Work with the Learning and Teaching Support Network, with funding support, to ensure that institutions in Wales are aware of, and contribute to, subject-based and generic good practice in learning and teaching

- Implement the outcomes of the Council's review of Careers Services, and progress the employability agenda through development of Graduate Wales/Cymru Prosper Wales
- Work with institutions to increase overseas student recruitment to Wales

### **Current Situation and Recent Achievements**

Proposals for a new quality assurance and standards framework have been developed by an advisory Quality Working Group and published for consultation.

A Welsh Medium premium, worth an additional 0.26 on the standard unit of resource for the module studied through the medium of Welsh, contributes to the additional costs of Welsh medium provision and institutions have been encouraged to take a strategic approach through the production of Welsh medium provision plans.

The Council reported in July 2002 to the Welsh Assembly Government on supply and demand in Welsh Medium learning and possible initiatives to stimulate demand, and continues to work closely with the University of Wales Welsh Medium Teaching Unit in the development of Welsh Medium provision.

The Council assumed responsibility in 2001 and 2002 respectively for the Graduate Wales and Cymru Prosper Wales programmes, and has begun work on their further evolution within a broader framework of support for graduate employability; recommendations were submitted to the Assembly in June 2002.

A UUK report on employability and diversity, published in summer 2002, recommended that other funding councils should "encourage...a strategic approach [ to this agenda] as is the case in Wales".

An analysis of the current status of alumni support (where the Council has already been assisting database development) was presented to the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2002.

We have funded a post to support international student recruitment through the Wales Higher Education International Liaison Association and the British Council, and commissioned a study of Welsh higher education institutions' practice in international recruitment. Following submission of the report in July 2002, work is in hand to take forward implementation of best practice and joint approaches.

We have provided funds to enable Welsh participation in the e-University.

## **Outcomes**

A higher education sector which:

- stands well in comparison with the rest of the UK and overseas in terms of the provision of high quality learning and teaching
- offers a range of Welsh medium higher education provision to meet the needs of Wales

## **Targets/Outputs**

- New quality assurance and standards framework to be launched in January 2003, with institutional audits to commence in January 2004
- Programme of support activities to assist the implementation of the new process, commencing January 2003
- Mechanism for rewarding high quality teaching to be proposed for consultation in early 2003, with report to Minister on progress in January 2003
- Further report and recommendations on Welsh medium provision to be presented to the Welsh Assembly Government in January 2003
- Progressive improvements in overseas (non-EU) student recruitment, reducing the gap between the current position and the UK average (discounting the effect of London) by at least one-third by the end of the planning period
- Subject to additional funding, minimum standards of careers service delivery for all higher education institutions to be in place by the end of the planning period, putting Wales at the forefront of UK performance
- Subject to additional funding, improved alumni network provision to be in place by the end of the planning period
- By the end of the planning period, implement outcomes of the review of modern languages learning
- By April 2004, develop an e-learning framework for HE in Wales, coordinated with parallel activity by the National Council

**Means** (Budgets, other resources, partnerships)

The primary means for much of the above will be the main annual teaching grant. More specific additional sources will include

- Learning and Teaching Fund, and funding allocated for the Learning and Teaching Support Network
- Depending on the nature of the mechanism for rewarding high quality teaching, a new fund may be established
- Welsh Medium Premium and Provision funds, and funds currently identified for Welsh Medium Teaching Unit
- Funding transferred to the Council for the Graduate Wales/Cymru Prosper Wales developments, potentially augmented by European funds
- Funding support already identified for the Quality Assurance Agency, the e-University, and the Joint Information Systems Committee

Partners, beyond the higher education sector, will include the National Council - ELWa, Careers Wales, FE colleges, the Quality Assurance Agency, the Learning and Teaching Support Network, the British Council, and the e-University.