
LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN WALES

30 April 2004

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Summary: This circular invites higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales to submit an updated learning and teaching strategy for the three years 2004/05 – 2006/07. It also sets out the allocations to be made to institutions in 2004/05 to support the implementation of their strategies.

Response by: 6 Sept 2004 - 2003/04 Expenditure reports
10 Dec 2004 - 2004/05 – 2006/07 Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 This circular invites higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales to submit an updated learning and teaching strategy for the three years 2004/05 – 2006/07. It also sets out the allocations to be made to institutions in 2004/05 to support the implementation of their strategies.

BACKGROUND

- 2 Circular W01/59HE, *Learning and Teaching Strategies 2001*, confirmed that the Council had established a Learning and Teaching Fund, to support institutions in implementing learning and teaching strategies, covering the period from 2000/01 to at least 2002/03. In July 2003, Circular W03/45HE *Learning & Teaching Strategies 2003/04* confirmed that updated learning and teaching strategies would be required for institutions to access funding for 2003/04. This was identified as an interim measure pending the outcomes of a *Consultation on the Options Available to the Council for Supporting Excellent Teaching* (Circular W03/41HE, June 2003).
- 3 Circular W04/06HE, *Mechanisms for Supporting Excellent Teaching in Higher Education*, January 2004, provided a brief analysis of the responses to the HEFCW consultation. It also set out the key features of the mechanisms for supporting excellent teaching to be adopted for higher education in Wales from 2004/05 onwards, namely:
 - Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies
 - Institutional Human Resource Strategies: teaching-led promotions
 - Thematic and Subject Enhancement
- 4 The circular confirmed that the existing fund to support institutional learning and teaching strategies will be enhanced to £800k, to take account of new requirements for placing greater emphasis on teaching quality and the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience. The Council will support these three mechanisms, for a three-year period in the first instance, subject to availability of funds.
- 5 An element of funding to support the three reward mechanisms will be liberated from the Council's existing quality assurance and enhancement budget due, in part, to the reduction in costs associated with the new quality assurance and standards framework for Wales. This amount cannot however be determined until the Council's contributions to the new HE Academy and National Student Survey are agreed.
- 6 It is intended that, subject to the outcome of a separate consultation (Circular W04/07 *Annual Monitoring Statement: Proposals for Consultation*), the new three-year learning and teaching strategies will be monitored by means of an annual monitoring statement. This will include a breakdown of expenditure, at the end of each academic year. Subject to the availability of funds, external consultants will be commissioned to analyse and give feedback on the strategies.

INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES 2004/05 – 2006/07

- 7 Institutional learning and teaching strategy allocations for 2004/05 are set out in **Annex A**. To access this funding, HEIs are required to submit, by **10 December 2004**, a learning and teaching strategy for a period of at least three years, developed in accordance with the guidelines contained within this circular.
- 8 The strategy should continue to be a document of value principally to the institution itself, and should provide structured guidance for the strategic development and management of learning and teaching within the institution's overall management processes. Its secondary function is to inform and assure third parties, not least the Council, that the institution is properly addressing the needs and requirements of its students.

- 9 As emphasised previously, the Council does not wish to be prescriptive about the structure and content of the learning and teaching strategies. It recognises that these must be determined and implemented so as to enable institutions to pursue their distinctive missions and respond to their individual circumstances as they deem appropriate. The Council will, however, wish to be assured that institutions are continuing to address positively the need to have a coherent and pertinent learning and teaching strategies which are being effectively implemented. In this regard, it will expect institutions to take account of the individual feedback, due to be issued in June 2004, on the 2003/04 strategies.
- 10 The Council would encourage institutions to take a rounded view of the meaning of learning and teaching activities within their strategies. A wide range of mechanisms for assuring the ongoing enhancement of the student learning experience should be identified. Strategies should recognise the role, where relevant, of support as well as academic staff, and recognise the importance of providing pedagogic training and supporting for new staff, established staff and postgraduate teaching assistants.
- 11 Strategies should provide evidence that the institution will ensure that funding is provided for learning and teaching enhancement, with emphasis placed on the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience. Institutions should also report specifically on action being taken to address the outcomes of internal and external quality assessments and reviews (including QAA, Estyn and professional and statutory bodies).

SPECIFIC ISSUES

- 12 Guidelines providing a general indication of possible areas of coverage have been prepared to assist institutions to further develop their strategies (attached as **Annex B**), on the understanding that the elements for inclusion in the strategies may be adapted in line with institutional formats, reducing the administrative burden on institutions. Institutions will also be expected to set out qualitative and quantitative targets within the strategies. A sample template illustrating the degree of detail sought is attached as **Annex C**.
- 13 The Council asks institutions to consider in their submissions:
 - the need for consistency between the institution's mission and the learning and teaching strategy;
 - how the strategy and its development fit into the institution's planning and resource allocation process, in particular, the link with the capital fund for learning and teaching;
 - progress to date since the previous strategy;
 - arrangements for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of quality and standards linked to the strategy.
- 14 In light of the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy document, *Reaching Higher*, the Council invites institutions to provide an indication of how the learning and teaching strategy takes account of the Assembly's higher education priorities in respect of:
 - reconfiguration and collaboration;
 - widening access;
 - research;
 - excellence in teaching and learning;
 - Welsh medium provision;
 - developing a skilled workforce.
- 15 Additionally, Institutions should note that the Council's remit letter for 2004/05 confirmed that the Minister considers: '*reviewing pedagogical practices as central to ensuring that teaching methods evolve to meet the needs of all learners, especially those of non-traditional students*'. Strategies should also take account of the Council's strategic aims in

relation to learning and teaching excellence, available in the 2004/05 – 2006/07 Corporate Plan at: <http://www.elwa.ac.uk/elwaweb/elwa.aspx?pageid=3101>.

- 16 Institutions may find it helpful to take account of learning and teaching summaries and strategies that will become available through the HERO TQI website, in August 2004, when developing and refining their learning and teaching strategies. Additionally, institutions are encouraged to consult the HEFCE Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund's National Co-ordinating Team (NCT) web-site <http://www.ncteam.ac.uk/ilts/> which provides examples of learning and teaching strategies from seventy five HEIs across England. It also publishes a wide range of good practice materials, case studies and guidelines. Examples of good practice can also be obtained from other European and international web-sites.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

- 17 Institutional allocations for 2004/05 are set out in Annex A. Funding will be released on the basis of the previous learning and teaching funding formula: allocations are made pro-rata to each institution's total funded credit values for 2004/05. This approach brings together the institution's learning load for full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate provision. To ensure that all institutions receive a sufficiently increased allocation to undertake worthwhile actions no institution receives less than £30,000 a year. An upper limit of £105,000 on individual allocations has been set.
- 18 First tranche funding will be released in September 2004. Given the timetable outlined in para 25 below, Institutions are advised to operate transitional arrangements in the period between September and December 2004 based on a continuation of the 2003/04 strategies. Interim feedback will be issued in early January 2005 to enable institutions to initiate new and/or more innovative elements of their strategies from January 2005 onwards. Formal feedback on the new strategies will be issued in March 2005 in advance of second tranche payments. Institutions are welcome to discuss possible uses of their funding with Council officers before formally submitting their strategies.
- 19 Second tranche payments will be made in April 2005, following submission in December 2004 of a satisfactory strategy. Institutions will be asked to submit a progress report, in the form of an annual monitoring statement, which will include a breakdown of expenditure, at the end of July 2005. It is anticipated, that following consultation, the annual monitoring statement will be introduced incrementally as the principal reporting mechanism for all Council initiatives.
- 20 Subsequent allocations will be calculated against 2005/06 and 2006/07 funded credit values respectively, once available. Institutions in the process of merger should expect future allocations to be subject to the upper and floor limits outlined in 17 above. The overall amount available will depend upon the level of HEFCW contributions to the entire quality assurance and enhancement agenda, including funding for the QAA, HE Academy, and HERO TQI web-site and the NSS.
- 21 Learning and teaching development, and the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience, are core functions of higher education institutions. Consequently, the funding provided by the Council through this allocation should therefore continue to be used to enhance the implementation and impact of the learning and teaching strategies. It should act as a catalyst for extending existing activity or generating new activities, encouraging the dissemination and adoption of good practice, recognising and rewarding contributions to the enhancement of the student learning experience, and for fostering innovation.

TEACHING QUALITY INFORMATION (TQI) REQUIREMENTS

- 22 Circular W04/05HE, *Teaching Quality Information (TQI) Requirements for Higher Education in Wales*, reported that HEIs in Wales should provide a summary of the institution's learning and teaching strategy through the medium of English and Welsh, where possible, for publication on the HERO TQI web-site. A template was provided at Annex B to that circular. Additionally, it confirmed that the summary should be updated when the strategy itself is updated. Circular W04/21HE, *National Student Survey And Teaching Quality Information Developments In Wales*, clarified that institutions are asked to begin loading their learning and teaching strategy summaries onto the HERO TQI web-site from 31 May 2004 onwards, to enable the site to go live (with partial datasets) in July 2004, subject to developments elsewhere in the UK. Institutions should therefore produce summaries of their existing learning and teaching strategies for this purpose. A HERO/HEFCW dissemination/training event will be held on Friday 21 May 2004, at the Marriott hotel, Cardiff, to assist this process.
- 23 An institutional TQI web-site should also be established to supplement the core qualitative and quantitative information provided on the HERO TQI web-site. Information presented should be tailored specifically towards stakeholders, particularly students, and should provide an effective mechanism for publishing additional teaching quality information. It is expected that the full current learning and teaching strategy will be posted on the institutional TQI web-site.
- 24 The information provided by institutions on the institutional and HERO TQI web-sites will be reviewed in accordance with the arrangements set out in the QAA's Handbook for Institutional Review: Wales. As part of the institutional review process, the QAA will make a judgement about the reliance that can be placed on the accuracy, integrity, completeness and frankness of the information that an HEI publishes about the quality of its programmes and the standards of its awards. This judgement will contribute to the main review judgement about the confidence that can be placed on the soundness of an institution's management of quality and standards.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

- 25 The timetable for implementation is as follows:
- a. HERO/HEFCW TQI dissemination/training event, 21 May 2004;
 - b. Summary of 2003/04 strategies to be uploaded by each HEI onto the HERO TQI website by 31 May 2003 (subject to developments elsewhere in the UK);
 - c. HEFCW feedback and request for expenditure report on 2003/04 strategies published June 2004;
 - d. 2003/04 Expenditure reports submitted to the Council by **Monday 6 September 2004**;
 - e. First tranche funding released September/October 2004;
 - f. Learning and Teaching Strategies (covering the period 2004/05 – 2006/07) submitted to the Council by **Friday 10 December 2004**;
 - g. Interim feedback issued January 2005;
 - h. Following acceptance of satisfactory institutional strategies, the Council will confirm second tranche allocations in March 2005, with funding released in April 2005;
 - i. Annual monitoring statement submission, including a breakdown of expenditure, July 2005 (further information will be provided in an outcomes circular, in May 2004).

DISSEMINATION

- 26 The Council has agreed to support sectoral collaboration through Wales-wide enhancement activities, similar to those being introduced in Scotland. It is hoped that information on quality enhancement activities obtained from an analysis of institutional learning and teaching strategies will provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice across Wales, and beyond. The Council has agreed that the new Higher Education

Academy should play a role in sectoral thematic and subject enhancement activities in Wales. Evidence of action flowing from these activities would be sought through subsequent institutional learning and teaching strategies.

SUBMISSION

27 Strategies should be submitted to the Council by **Friday 10 December 2004**.

28 Plans should be submitted to:

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**Learning and Teaching Strategies –
Actual Allocations 2004/05**

Institution	Total Credit values 2004/05	Total Allocation 2004/05	1st Tranche 50% of Total Allocation Paid Sept 2004	2nd Tranche 50% of Total Allocation Paid April 2005
University of Glamorgan	1,396,865	105,000	52,500	52,500
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	799,260	82,540	41,270	41,270
University of Wales, Bangor	678,532	70,072	35,036	35,036
Cardiff University	1,625,881	105,000	52,500	52,500
University of Wales, Lampeter	184,186	30,000	15,000	15,000
University of Wales Swansea	856,259	88,426	44,213	44,213
University of Wales College of Medicine	136,150	30,000	15,000	15,000
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	753,771	77,842	38,921	38,921
University of Wales College, Newport	588,994	60,825	30,412	30,413
North East Wales Institute	418,013	43,168	21,584	21,584
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	456,352	47,127	23,564	23,563
Trinity College Carmarthen	158,203	30,000	15,000	15,000
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	62,216	30,000	15,000	15,000
Total	8,114,682	800,000	400,000	400,000

Guidelines on Institutional Submissions

1 Executive Summary

- This could be the summary statement published on the HERO TQI web-site. A template (with word limits) is provided in Circular W04/05HE at Annex B for this purpose.

2 Institutional Mission and Planning

- A statement of the institution's mission on learning and teaching and how it fits into the institution's overall mission;
- The relation of the learning and teaching strategy to the institution's overall strategic plan;
- The institution's planning process for learning and teaching and its place in the institutional strategic planning process.

3 Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy 2004/05 to 2006/07

Give an account of the:

- key activities/priorities in relation to the institutional strategic plan and mission;
- key activities/priorities in relation to the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government and the HEFCW;
- key activities/priorities for enhancing the quality of the student learning experience by responding to the needs of learning;
- mechanisms employed for identifying, disseminating and embedding changes in learning and teaching across the institution;
- mechanisms for supporting and introducing innovation in teaching and learning;
- mechanisms used to support teaching excellence and innovation amongst new staff, established staff members and postgraduate teaching assistants;
- key activities/priorities for recognising and rewarding academic and support staff commitment to enhancing the student learning experience,
- plans for encouraging institutional and individual engagement with the HE Academy and other organisations/bodies focuses on staff development and learning and teaching excellence;
- measures taken by the institution to improve the employability of graduates and diplomats;
- measures taken to respond to issues of teaching quality enhancement identified through internal and external quality assurance procedures.
- Measures taken in response to diversity in learning and teaching matters.

4 Links with other Institutional Strategies and Plans

The learning and teaching strategy can be expected to have implications for virtually all aspects of an institution's activities and to be closely linked to other policies and strategies.

Give a brief account of links in relation to the following policy areas:

- Capital funding allocations for learning and teaching and IT infrastructure

- Estates management;
- Human resources;
- Information systems and services;
- Quality assurance and academic standards;
- Recruitment and retention;
- Staff development;
- Students with disabilities;
- Welsh medium provision;
- Widening participation and lifelong learning.

5 Qualitative and Quantitative Targets

- Qualitative and quantitative targets are to be submitted for the short (2004/05) and long term (2005/06 onwards) on Tables 1 & 2, attached as **Annex C**. This will ensure that the institutional learning and teaching strategies are sufficient for the Council's purposes and so minimise the need for requests for supplementary information or clarification. The Council through the Annual Monitoring Statement, due July 2005, will monitor these targets.

6 Management of the Strategy

- Give a description of the systems in place for managing the development, oversight and implementation of the strategy and for review and revision;
- Outline arrangements for the ongoing and annual monitoring of progress in the development and implementation of the strategy and for evaluating the impact of the strategy on the wider institutional mission and strategy;
- Outline arrangements for the development, monitoring and revision of qualitative and quantitative targets contained within the strategy;
- Outline the mechanisms for bringing about changes to the strategy in the light of lessons learned from evaluation and good practice across the sector.

**INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES
SHORT TERM QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE TARGETS (2004/05)**

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES BEING SUPPORTED	QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE TARGETS	BY WHEN	COST £	SOURCE(S) OF FUNDING	OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	COMMENTS
Rewarding Teaching Excellence	Award 5 Learning and Teaching Fellowships within the Institution	May 2005	£K	L&T fund	Publicity & Administrative support for the scheme	To continue teaching fellowships scheme that was established with T&L funding in 2001/02.
Curriculum Design and Innovation	Establish a teaching development grant scheme	June 2005	£K	L & T fund	Publicity & Administrative support for the scheme	
Supporting the Learning Experience	Install the following standardised equipment in at least 4 lecture theatres: Overhead video projector Integral PC projector Networked PC with DVD player NIXAM stereo sound output Interactive whiteboard Induction loop for hearing impaired students	March 2005	£K	Capital Funding for L&T	Staff training	

**INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES
LONG TERM QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE TARGETS (2005/06 ONWARDS)**

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES BEING SUPPORTED	QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE TARGETS	BY WHEN	COST £	SOURCE(S) OF FUNDING	OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	COMMENTS
Supporting the Learning Experience	Install the following standardised equipment in all lecture theatres: Overhead video projector Integral PC projector Networked PC with DVD player NIXAM stereo sound output Interactive whiteboard Induction loop for hearing impaired students		£K	Capital Funding for L&T		
SAMPLE						