

Meeting
24/01/14

Agenda Item
16

Reference No
HEFCW/14/10

1 Issue

- 1.1 This item provides the Higher Education (HE) Academy annual report against the 2012/13 grant letter from HEFCW for approval.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 HEFCW provides an annual grant letter to the Academy stipulating areas to be addressed in the coming year. This includes UK-wide activities and Wales-specific activities. This paper facilitates the monitoring of the Academy's activities in Wales. The student experience is a strategic theme in our Corporate Strategy, with an aim to 'ensure that the student learning experience is of high quality'. The Academy's mission aligns with this, to 'support the sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students'¹.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. Approve the final report of the Higher Education Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter for 2012/13;

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 Steve Williams (Tel 029 2068 2285; E-mail: steven.williams@hefcw.ac.uk)

¹http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/aboutus/Academy_2008-13_Strategic_Plan.pdf

7 Background

- 7.1 The Academy's mission is to use its expertise and resources to support the higher education community in order to enhance the quality and impact of learning and teaching. It is funded primarily by the UK funding bodies through an annual grant, and by institutional subscriptions.
- 7.2 The Higher Education Funding Council for England indicated in a letter to the Academy that, between 2010/11 and 2012/13 there would be a 10% reduction year on year from all the funders from the 2009/10 level of funding. In response to this the Academy underwent substantial restructuring. HEFCW pays 5 per cent of the UK funding bodies' contribution to the Academy. The payment for the Academy is allocated within the learning and teaching fund.
- 7.3 HEFCW provides an annual grant letter to the Academy stipulating areas to be addressed in the coming year. This includes UK-wide activities funded by all four funding bodies, and Wales-specific activities.
- 7.4 In addition to activities funded via the core grant from HEFCW to the Academy, HEFCW has funded Wales' participation in the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) from 2010/11.
- 7.5 An independent review of the Academy is currently taking place and it is expected to report in Spring 2014. The review's findings will inform the grant letter for 2014/15 and will be reported to Council via the SETQC minutes.

8 Higher Education Academy reports for 2012/13

- 8.1 The grant letter for 2012/13 from HEFCW to the Academy is attached at **Annex A**.
- 8.2 The Academy's work has been organised under three broad areas:
- Academic Practice Development;
 - Teacher Excellence;
 - Institutional Strategy and Change.
- 8.3 The content of work reflects the following themes in higher education:
- Internationalisation;
 - Assessment and feedback;
 - Employability;
 - Flexible learning;
 - Retention and success;
 - Reward and recognition of teaching;
 - Education for Sustainable Development.
- 8.4 The final report of the Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter 2012/13 is attached at **Annex B**. This was circulated to the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee electronically for comments in December 2013.
- 8.5 HEFCW and the HEA have agreed that it would be more helpful to move to a more strategic approach for annual reporting on Wales activities, which focussed on impact, and would minimise duplication of other reporting activities.

- 8.6 In addition to the report for Wales, the HEA is asked by the funding bodies to produce an annual report at a UK level. This is not yet available and will be circulated to Council members for information once it is available.

The Council is invited to approve the final report of the Higher Education Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter for 2012/13;

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 At its January 2012 meeting Council approved funding in principle from HEFCW to the Academy of £628k in 2012/13 (item HEFCW/12/02 refers). It was subsequently confirmed that this figure would be £619,366 (item HEFCW/12/CE3 refers). This represented a decrease of 30% from the £884,809 funding provided by us in 2009/10.
- 9.2 HEFCW also funds the NTFS separately, as reported in para 7.4. This has a cost of £8131, plus £10k for every award made. In 2012/13 Wales won one award.

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 The annual report for Wales will be published on the Wales section of the Academy's website.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 These implications are dealt with in a number of ways in our liaison with the HE Academy. Paragraph 23c of the 2012/13 grant letter noted that 'We encourage you to continue your efforts, in particular regarding...
- support for institutions, continuing work with the funders and ECU, in addressing differential degree attainment according to different ethnic groups and gender, including work on inclusive teaching, assessment and curriculum design;
 - the involvement of students and the broader public covered by equality and diversity legislation, in institutional policy development and equality impact assessments.'
- 11.2 Paragraph 26 asked the HEA to 'Work with HEFCW and the sector to provide leadership in developing and disseminating evidence-informed practice to enhance the student learning experience, including in... equality and diversity policy areas.' It also asked the HEA to 'support institutions to improve access to and through higher education for groups under-represented in higher education, to ensure equality of opportunity.'

12 Risk Assessment

- 12.1 Risks are identified in the table below:

Risk	Action to address risk
The Academy fails to deliver an efficient and responsive service.	The performance of the Academy is discussed twice a year by all the funders. SETQC considers the final report of the

	Academy on performance against the grant letter for each year.
Academy places insufficient focus on priorities for Wales	HEFCW officers hold regular meetings with the Academy to identify priorities for Wales and monitor activities being carried out. The grant letter reflects UK-wide priorities and specific priorities for Wales.
Institutions decide not to subscribe to the Academy	The Academy is liaising regularly with institutions in Wales to identify areas with which it may be able to provide support for enhancement purposes.
The reduction in funding may result in the HEA being unable to meet the needs of HEIs.	The Academy has restructured and reports on activities to its board. The funding councils make joint appointments to the board and each funding council has an observer on the board.
Restructuring may result in the HEA being unable to deliver at subject level.	The Academy is restructuring and they report to their board. The funding councils make joint appointments to the board and each funding council has an observer on the board.
HE Academy does not deliver effective support for Wales in terms of enhancing student experience	HEFCW encourages institutions to engage with the HEA.