



HEA annual report to HEFCW September 2013 – August 2014.

Introduction:

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) champions excellent learning and teaching in higher education (HE). The HEA is a national and independent organisation, funded by the four UK HE funding bodies and by subscriptions and grants. This report outlines activities completed against Part Three: General Objectives and priorities in Wales of the HEFCW Grant letter for the academic year 2013-14. The report is supplemented by the Higher Education Academy 2013-14 annual report (by nation).

Key contacts:

Helena Lim, Assistant Director (Wales and Northern Ireland) and Head of Partnerships, and Lizzie Badrick, Policy and Partnerships Officer (Wales and Northern Ireland) left the HE Academy in July 2014, both of whom have played invaluable roles in supporting Future Directions and colleagues across Wales more generally.

After a number of recruitment rounds, the HEA resolved to split the role undertaken by Helen between Stephen Bostock, as Future Directions Strategic Lead from November 2015, and two Partnership Managers for the Wales institutions (Liz Thompson from December 2014 and Melvyn Smith from January 2015). In the interim, Mark Jones as Director of Services stood in for Helena and Howard Colley continues his role in Wales as consultant supporting our work. Administrative support is now provided from York through the wales@heacademy.ac.uk email. Stephen Bostock is attending the HEFCW SETQC and the LTAG, and is the HEA contact with NUS Wales and other partners in quality enhancement. Melvyn Smith now chairs the Wales Institutional Group which represents subscribers of the HEA in Wales.

Dr Mark Jones, Director of Services, mark.jones@heacademy.ac.uk

Dr Stephen Bostock, Future Directions Strategic Lead, stephen.bostock@heacademy.ac.uk

Liz Thompson, Partnership Manager, liz.thompson@heacademy.ac.uk

Melvyn Smith, Partnership Manager, melvyn.smith@heacademy.ac.uk

Wales support: wales@heacademy.ac.uk

Activities delivered against the grant letter:

Part Three: General objectives and priorities in Wales

I. Work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to raise awareness of the Academy's services and how the Academy can help enhance teaching through the medium of Welsh

The HEA continues to work closely with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. HEA Wales is committed to supporting Welsh medium HE and liaises regularly with the Coleg to identify and develop support offered by HEA Wales.

There is on-going discussion between the Coleg and HEA Wales about aligning the Coleg's staff development activities with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

The Coleg and the HEA have also continued to collaborate on the Future Directions Quality enhancement programme. A Coleg representative sits on the Future Directions Steering Group, and representatives / students of the Coleg sit on both the Graduates for Our Futures and Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning work strand groups. A Welsh medium co-chair has been appointed to the Students as Partners network for 2014/15.

Coleg staff have contributed to the production of Future Directions animations, most recently for the three work strands for the Graduates for Our Future theme: [Students as Partners](#), [Learning for Employment](#) and [Learning in Employment](#).

2. Support the sector in enhancing student engagement more generally, to include participation in the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE), making links with the NUS Wales Have your Say project and participating in HEFCW's student engagement task and finish group.

HEA Wales continues to be an active participant in Wise Wales and attended meetings on 25 October 2013, 11 February 2014 and 6 May 2014. The Wise Wales Development Officer was a member of the Future Directions Students as Partners work strand group, and will be a member of, and provide administrative support to the Students as Partners network. This provides an important link between the student engagement work of these two groups that will help to maximise the impact of their work.

HEA Wales was involved with the development and delivery of the Partnership Statement, launched in November 2013. The Partnership Statement is available from the [HEA Wales webpages](#) (along with the websites of other Wise Wales Partners).

An HEA Wales representative attended the Wise Wales Partnership Conference on 2 June.

Dr Helena Lim attended meetings of the HEFCW Student Engagement Task and Finish Group.

3. Continue to coordinate and deliver the quality enhancement themes for Wales under the Future directions umbrella, including monitoring and agreeing future themes with the sector

The HEA is continuing to support and develop the Future Directions Programme.

Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales: Launch of the new enhancement theme and work strands, 19 September, University of South Wales

The event acted as a soft launch for the new enhancement theme; Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning and the three new work strands (Distinctive Graduates, Inspiring Teaching and Learner Journeys). The event considered how the current work strands (Students as Partners, Learning for Employment, and Learning in Employment) could be consolidated into resources to support the new work strands, as well as how the new work strands could be structured and progressed. Thirty individuals from a range of institutions and sector agencies were in attendance.

Future Directions Conference 2014 – Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning, 2-3 April, Aberystwyth University

The HEA worked with the sector to deliver the second biennial Future Directions Learning and Teaching Conference, Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning, at Aberystwyth University, on the 2-3 April 2014; over 200 people attended. The conference built upon the work completed under the first Future Directions theme; Graduates for Our Future, and launched the new theme; Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning. The conference programme featured a wide range of sessions delivered from colleagues at institutions across Wales and beyond. The session presentations and videos of the keynote speakers can be viewed on the [Future Directions webpages](#).

Over 200 hundred delegates attended across the two days and feedback has been extremely positive, with 86% of survey respondents stating they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the event, and 75% intending to change their practice as a result of the event.

A conference report has been developed. It draws upon the outcomes papers, which presenters at the conference were invited to complete. The report will be launched as a live document, allowing more contributors to submit outcomes papers if they wish. To date 34 outcomes papers have been received. The report also includes reflections from each of the five work strand leaders and the Chair of the Future Directions Conference Programme Committee. The report is due to be published on the HEA webpages by 31 July 2014.

Conference outcomes and reflections have also been shared at both the Programme Committee meeting, on 20 May, and the Future Directions Steering Group meeting, on 4 June. The outcomes from these discussions will feed into the planning process for the next Future Directions Conference in 2016.

Finally a call for papers has been published, inviting contributions for a special edition of PESTLHE celebrating the Future Directions Conference. 12 expressions of interest were received and 9 papers were accepted. The journal is due to be published in autumn 2014.

Future Directions work strands.

Graduates for our Future

The Graduates for our Future work strands remained active until the Future Directions Conference 2014. The Students as Partners work strand met on the 9 December, at the University of South Wales Caerleon campus, and the Learning for Employment work strand have corresponded electronically. The Learning in Employment work strand merged with the Learner Journey work strand in September 2013.

The relevance and importance of the Graduates for our Future work strands will not be lost. The Learning for Employment work strand will merge with the Distinctive Graduates work strand and Students as Partners has been embedded as an approach within Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning through the establishment of a Students as Partners Network (see below).

Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning

Since the 19 September the three new work strands have held a mixture of face to face and online meetings to discuss both their work plan for the Future Directions Conference and their work plan for the next two years. Representatives from Welsh institutions, sector agencies, and student representatives are members of the work strands.

At the Future Directions Conference each of the three work strands (Distinctive Graduates, Inspiring Teaching and Learner Journeys) showcased interactive work strand displays inviting delegates to contribute to such questions and discussions as, how do you define a learner journey? Help us identify skills and attributes of a global graduate that may be developed or enhanced as part of the student experience in Wales, and what inspires teaching / makes an inspiring teacher? The outcomes will feed into the upcoming projects and work of the three work strands. A number of the conference sessions were also delivered along the themes of Distinctive Graduates, Inspiring Teaching and Learner Journeys, and there was a student panel on the theme of Distinctive Graduates.

Students as Partners Network

Students as partners has been embedded as an approach across the three new work strands, via the establishment of a Students as Partners network. Work was carried out to disseminate information about the network to sabbatical officers, by advertising it at the NUS Wales Couse Representatives conference in February 2014. The Students as Partners group and Wise Wales have also been kept abreast of developments around the network.

The network was launched at the Future Directions Conference 2014 – Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning. Two Chairs have been appointed to the network; Jacob Ellis (Aberystwyth University) and Cari Davies (Cardiff University), student members have been appointed from all eight universities in Wales, and terms of reference and expectations of the group have been developed. The two network Chairs have also been made members of FDSG.

The first meeting of the Students as Partners network took place on 11 July at the Atrium, University of South Wales, Cardiff. Around 21 delegates attended, including FDSG members and students from Swansea University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, Aberystwyth University, University of South Wales, and the Open University. The Distinctive Graduates, Inspiring Teaching and Learner Journeys work strand leaders each gave interactive presentations detailing their work to date and inviting input from the Network.

Moving forward the Students as Partners Network will be administered by Wise Wales.

4. Help the sector with its aim to develop the postgraduate environment, including student community, student voice, and CPD and skills development

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) supports Welsh institutions in enhancing the postgraduate environment. Eight institutions from Wales have agreed to participate in PTES 2014. Seven institutions in Wales participated in the PTES in 2012 and 2013.

The full list of institutions who have agreed to participate in PTES 2014 can be found [here](#).

5. Contribute to developing a Wales-specific evidence base for widening access in Wales, working with HEFCW and institutions, including through the WISERD grant-funded project

The Retention and Success team at the HEA regularly liaise with colleagues at HEFCW on Widening Access matters.

The HEA has been represented on the WISERD Steering Group to ensure linkages with UK wide work. Work around this has included providing verbal contributions (through meetings) and written feedback into the project design and working papers on widening access in Wales.

The Retention and Success team are working with three institutional disciplinary teams and the core team of the University of South Wales as part of the [What Works? Student retention and success change programme](#).

6. Support the sector in developing and enhancing flexible learning in its broadest sense, including through supporting Wales in becoming an Open Educational Practices nation

The new Future Directions quality enhancement theme Global graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning is directly related to the subject of flexible learning, and the body of work carried out under this theme will support the sector in developing and enhancing flexible learning.

Following the HEA Wales Learning and Teaching Summit: mapping pathways through learning, in June 2013, a report has been produced detailing the outcomes and next steps for the sector. The full report can be accessed [here](#). The outcomes and next steps will be taken forward by the Academic Lead (Flexible Learning).

The HEA provides expertise to the OER / P expert group. The last meeting was in September 2013 and Alex Fenlon, Academic Development Officer, Online Learning was in attendance. The OER / P Project Manager attended the HEA Wales showcase event at the Future Directions Conference 2014 and disseminated information to delegates about the project.

7. Continue to embed the implementation of our strategy for enhancing learning and teaching through technology, including participating in its review and helping the sector to take account of the outcomes of the Minister's Online Digital Learning Working Group

The HEA has provided support in the review of HEFCW ELTT strategy. The HEA Academic Lead: Educational Learning Technologies attended the ELLT Strategy Review Group meeting on 13 February 2014 and contributed to discussions around the revision of the strategy.

The HEA will follow up on any relevant outcomes from Minister's Online Digital Learning Working Group.

8. Work with HEFCW in the delivery of our skills and employability agreement and action plan

The HEA will support HEFCW officers in the Skills and Employability Agreement and Action Plan by ensuring synergies with activities of the relevant Future Directions work strand groups including Learning for Employment, Learning in Employment Groups, Distinctive Graduates and Learner Journeys.

9. Continue to participate in the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Network for Wales and ensure links are maintained between the network and the Academy's work on sustainability.

The HEA has continued to provide support for the ESDGC network in Wales. The network met on 15 October 2013 at Swansea University, on 17 January 2014 at Cardiff University and on 23 May 2014 at Aberystwyth University.

The HEA continues to ensure appropriate linkages between ESDGC and the UK wide ESD group.

10. Supporting HEFCW and HE providers to make progress against the student focussed equality objectives in HEFCW's Strategic Equality Plan.

The relevant team (s) at the HEA maintain an open dialogue with HEFCW on equality objectives and regularly liaise with colleagues at HEFCW on Widening Access matters (as described in item 5).

The HEA have offered support to HEFCW in this area including offering a contribution to HEFCW's 2014 Widening Access to Higher Education National Conference (originally due to take place in May 2014).