

Meeting
12/03/15

Agenda Item
16

Reference No
HEFCW/15/22

1 Issue

- 1.1 This item provides for approval the Higher Education (HE) Academy annual report against the 2013/14 grant letter from HEFCW.

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 2013/14.

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 Dr Cliona O'Neill (Tel 029 2068 2283; E-mail: cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)

¹www.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. HEFCW pays 5 per cent of the UK funding bodies' contribution to the Academy. The payment for the Academy is allocated within the HEFCW Learning and Teaching Fund.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 In Spring 2014, HEFCE announced reductions in funding for national facilities and initiatives, which impacted once more on Academy funding. They indicated a cut of a third of the funding in 2014/15, a further third in 2015/16, with no funding from 2016/17. HEFCW, together with the other funders, is committed to funding by formula, and therefore agreed to reduce its contribution in line with that of the other funders. This resulted in a further restructure of the Academy, including the Wales team. An independent review of the Academy reported in Spring 2014, the outcomes of which were taken into account in the restructure.

8 Higher Education Academy reports for 2013/14

- 8.1 The grant letter for 2013/14 from HEFCW to the Academy is attached at **Annex A**.
- 8.2 The Academy's work has been organised under three broad areas:
- Teacher Excellence;
 - Institutional Strategy and Change;
 - Academic Practice Development.
- 8.3 The final report of the Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter 2013/14 is attached at **Annex B**. This was circulated to the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee electronically for comments prior to the February 2015 meeting. The Academy has taken account of SETQC's feedback in the version of the report attached, and the Chair of SETQC used her delegated authority to approve the final version.
- 8.4 In addition to the report for Wales, the Academy is asked by the funding bodies to produce an annual report at a UK level. This is available on the [Academy's website](#)².

The Council is invited to approve the final report of the Higher Education Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter for 2013/14.

² <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/about/governance/annual-report>

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 At its January 2013 meeting Council approved funding in principle from HEFCW to the Academy of £628k in 2013/14 (item HEFCW/13/03 refers). It was subsequently confirmed that this figure would be £627,498. From this total, and in line with the other funders, HEFCW withheld a sum of £4,909 from the grant to pay for its usual contribution to a review of the HE Academy.(item HEFCW/13/CE4refers). HEFCW also received a rebate of £39,229 from an underspend of funding from the previous Gwella project³.
- 9.2 HEFCW also funds the NTFS separately. This has a cost of £8131, plus £10k for every award made. In 2013/14 Wales won five awards⁴.

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. Para 14 of the 2013/14 grant letter noted that:
- 'Throughout its operations, we expect the Academy to address the requirements of all relevant legislation, being proactive where needed. Such legislation includes: the requirements placed on the English, Scottish and Welsh higher education funding councils under the Equality Act 2010, and the relevant specific duties, and those placed on the Department for Employment and Learning under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.'
- 11.2 Para 21d encouraged the Academy to continue its 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, HE staff and the broader public covered by equality and diversity legislation, in institutional policy development and equality impact assessments.'
- 11.3 Para 25 asked the Academy to support 'HEFCW and HE providers to make progress against the student-focussed equality objectives in HEFCW's Strategic Equality Plan.' It also asked the Academy to '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' and to '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.'

³ https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Gwella_2011_200212_1547.pdf

⁴ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition/awards/national-teaching-fellowship-scheme-ntfs/national-teaching-fellows>

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 and Council 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 Academy 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 Academy 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.
The Academy does not deliver effective support for Wales in terms of enhancing student experience.	HEFCW encourages institutions to engage with the Academy.