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HEFCW/16/28: Annex A

16 June 2014

Professor Stephanie Marshall
Chief Executive
Higher Education Academy
Innovation Way
York Science Park,
York   YO10 5BR

Dear Stephanie

The Higher Education Academy: Common grant arrangements for 2014/15

Part One: Provision of grant by HEFCW

1.   I am writing to confirm the arrangements for providing grant from HEFCW to
        The Higher Education Academy (Academy) (Company No: 4931031) under
        section 65 (3) (b) of the Further & Higher Education Act 1992 in respect of
        services falling within section 65 (2) (d).

2.   The grant we are providing is to support the Academy's work on behalf of the
        publicly funded higher education sector. For the period 1 August 2014 to 31
        July 2015, HEFCW is prepared to provide the following maximum grant to the
        Academy:

        a. £478,395 in core grant for the Academy to address the UK wide general
            objectives and priorities set out in Part Two, and the Wales-specific
            priorities set out in Part Three;

        b. Monies for the Academy to address the individual awards and the
            administration of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS),
            shared between England, Northern Ireland and Wales, as set out in Part
            Four.

3.   We will pay the grant subject to an agreed cash flow forecast. The Academy
        may approach HEFCW to adjust the funding profile at any time.

4.   HEFCW supports the Academy's aim, set out in its Strategic Plan 2012-16,
        and its continued efforts to develop a sustainable organisation both through
        developing and securing new sources of revenue and through its planned
        approach to:

        •   be more agile - by focusing its work on fewer areas;

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- achieve greater impact and outcomes in the sector through supporting projects over 2-3 years;
- work in closer partnership with other sector agencies to support the sector more effectively and efficiently;
- work to effect and encourage positive change at multiple levels by aligning activities to suit e.g. at individual/practitioner, discipline, strategic/institution, sector and policy levels.

5. We welcome this approach and strongly encourage the Academy to work closely with other sector bodies across all of its activities to avoid duplication, to ensure clarity of mission and to deliver value for money in addressing the priorities of funders and meeting the challenges of the sector in learning and teaching. This will allow the Academy to concentrate its resources in the areas where they will have the greatest impact. Examples include working with the NUS and QAA in student engagement, with Jisc and ALT in technology enhanced learning and with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in effecting strategic change.

6. This letter signals our intention to move to more clearly targeted grant funding with an impact and outcomes focus. We appreciate the Academy's willingness to accommodate this shift of focus and welcome the opportunity to work with the Academy to better define the outcomes sought and to support broader programmes of work with a longer-term focus where appropriate.

7. In the paragraphs below we invite the Academy to consider how it will reflect our priorities in the services it delivers to the sector.

Part Two: General objectives and priorities UK wide

8. The funding bodies wish to work more collaboratively with the Academy as a trusted partner to raise the standing of learning and teaching (L&T) at all levels in higher education (HE). In considering the UK priorities, we note the Academy's strategic aims listed in paragraph 4 and its plans to achieve these aims by working across two identified broad sector challenge areas:
- Curriculum design and innovative pedagogies
- Transitions - into, through and out of HE.

9. We also welcome the Academy's proactive and engaged response to the independent review of the Academy and its decision to put in place measures to address key findings at the earliest opportunity.

UK priority areas

10. We are aware that the Academy intends to address its identified priorities and those of the funding councils through its programme areas listed in paragraph 8 and its services. The funders' UK-wide priorities stated below are grouped under these programme headings where possible, to aid clarity.

11. The four funding bodies identify the following UK-wide priorities for the Academy in 2014/15:

Curriculum design and innovative pedagogies

Strategic themes

12. We request you continue to focus your activities around a number of strategic themes to progress aspects of student learning and quality enhancement that are of importance to the sector. As part of this approach, the Academy must maintain its reputation as a focus of expertise in the pedagogy of specific disciplines and recognising the importance of engaging students as partners in enhancing teaching and learning. Specific strategic themes we would like the Academy to support are listed below:

   a. Across and through the Academy's identified programmes of work support institutions to develop their international strategies, including internationalising curricula, and coordination with the Joint International and Europe Unit.

   b. Continued support to institutions and their students in enhancing their approaches to assessment and feedback, including emphasising the importance of assessment for learning; for example, through developing resources and activities to identify and share effective practice.

   c. Supporting the development of diverse provision across the sector. Institutions are developing more flexible forms of provision responding to the needs of employers and the diversity of learners. Learners increasingly expect flexibility in choosing where and how they learn and at what level of intensity. We request you continue your efforts, in particular:

      • in developing strategic approaches to the use of technology to support flexible learning;
      • through support for institutions, contributing to work in the use of the credit frameworks relevant to each country;
      • by embedding the principle of inclusivity across all areas of work, to enhance institutions' growth of inclusive cultures and the development of policies and practices that anticipate the needs of diverse student bodies;
      • focusing on taking the needs of part-time learners into account and supporting institutions in meeting these needs;
      • In developing your support and services to FECs engaged in delivering HE.

13. We look to the Academy to continue with its theme of student engagement in decision-making about their own learning, and more generally to consider the student interest in the work it does.

14. Across the HE sector in the UK there is an increasing focus on students as active participants in a learning community. We believe the Academy remains well placed to lead, in partnership with others, a debate on the benefits and purposes of student engagement and to provide support to institutions in identifying how they can actively respond to this agenda at thematic, institutional and discipline levels.

Education for Sustainable Development.

15. We see the contribution that education and learning for sustainability can make to job and wealth creation, and the green economy, as an important element in moving the UK to a more sustainable and prosperous future. We therefore encourage the Academy to continue supporting institutions in meeting the education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship agenda. In particular through embedding of ESD opportunities into the wider curriculum, and working with professional and sector bodies and staff in subject communities to support ESD. In this respect we are mindful of the recent guidance developed by the HEA and QAA for UK higher education providers on education for sustainable development and its implications for best practice in this area.

Disciplines

16. We would like the Academy to continue to provide subject-specific support with both individual disciplines and through interdisciplinary activity, working closely with discipline associations and networks. This includes:

    a. Working with discipline communities to support professional development activity for new and experienced staff;

    b. Identifying professional development needs arising from emerging areas in learning and teaching and supporting discipline communities in addressing them;

    c. Displaying and promoting expertise in pedagogy and innovation in teaching relevant to discipline communities.

    d. Taking forward subjects that are a priority (e.g.STEM) for governments in each nation.

Technology-Enhanced Learning

17. Embedding effective approaches to technology-enhanced learning continues to be a priority, and we value the Academy's contribution in this area including through:

- encouraging institutions to take a strategic, institution-wide approach to the use of technology in enhancing learning and teaching and improving the student experience;
- taking account of relevant research and reports in this area, for example on information about online programmes and strategic approaches to embedding online learning in organisational structures and processes;
- considering the digital literacy of staff across its programmes including continuing to work with Jisc on support for staff in managing, developing and utilising online resources and learning;
- Continuing to explore the implications and impacts of the open agenda including in the areas of open educational resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and to disseminate and embed good practice.

Transitions and success

18. We recognise the Academy's work supporting the development of graduates equipped to contribute to a modern sustainable economy and request that this important work continues.

19. In working with the sector we invite the Academy to further develop its support for the employability and social mobility of graduates, particularly at a time when the funding bodies look to institutions to do everything they can to support the economy in continuing its recovery from recession. For 2014/15 we are particularly interested in the Academy focusing on the following areas:

   a. There are significant pressures on universities and colleges to demonstrate their impact on employability and the employment outcomes of graduates. The Academy is well placed to draw together the leading strategies and practices across higher education and to continue to develop a range of support;

   b. We invite the Academy to continue work related to mentoring support of undergraduate students in their transition to the workplace and to further strengthen HE provider and business collaboration.

20. The Academy has a particular role in working in partnership with institutions and other sector bodies to disseminate good practice that will assist UK graduates to maximise their potential and impact on leaving higher education.

21. We urge you to continue your efforts and to work with the funders in addressing differentials in attainment according to different ethnic groups and gender, including work on inclusive teaching, assessment and curriculum design; and ensuring that institutions are meeting their obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

22.   We invite the Academy, working with the funding bodies and other partners where appropriate, to:

- support the planning, development and implementation of initiatives and strategies for transition into HE and the improvement of student success for all students;
- support institutions' widening access activities to meet the diverse needs of their students throughout the student life-cycle, especially once they have entered higher education; and
- continue to work in close partnership with the appropriate bodies, to facilitate institutions in supporting success and improving provision for disabled students.

Raising the Status, and the Professionalisation of Teaching

23.   We request the Academy continues its efforts, in particular regarding:
- the reward and recognition of teaching;
- professional recognition and accreditation of programmes against the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), with increasing numbers of staff becoming recognised;
- examining how greater clarity could be provided to the sector on the interrelationship between the NTFS and the UKPSF.

Research, surveys and analysis

24.   To support the Academy's work in curriculum design, innovative pedagogies, transitions and success we welcome a targeted programme of research into learning and teaching. In setting priorities for this research, we request the Academy to have due regard to UK-wide priorities and desired outcomes and to advise us of any implications for HE policy, as and when they may arise from this research. In all areas of its work, we expect the Academy to continue with its evidence-based approach to improving student learning. This should include:

a.   Working with higher education providers to take a strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching and make use of the evidence base to inform practice and policy;

b.   Contributing insight into the Review of the funding bodies' roles in the provision of information about HE, including the 10-year review of the NSS and understanding the place of information in prospective students' decision-making;

c.   Continued pilot work into the reliability of a student engagement survey tool in the UK for evaluating the amount and quality of effort that students invest in their studies;

d. Continued support for and development of both postgraduate taught and postgraduate research surveys;

e. In consultation with funders undertake further work into understanding the elements at play in postgraduate education (demand, student experience, provision, fees, etc.) and support for the funding bodies' work on understanding the needs of prospective PG students and developing better ways of meeting these;

f. Supporting institutions and discipline communities to use analysis of student feedback to bring about improvement and enhancement of the student learning experience.

General

25. From time to time issues arise and priorities change. We look to the Academy to respond flexibly to changing and emerging priorities in-year where funding levels permit.

Part Three: Wales-specific priorities

26. We would like you to continue:
    - working with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol;
    - working with the Higher Education Wales Open Educational Resources/Practice Group;
    - supporting the sector in enhancing student engagement including participation in Wise Wales;
    - coordinating and delivering the Future Directions quality enhancement themes;
    - and participating in the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship network for Wales.

27. We would also like you to map your activities against the Future Directions work plan in order to gain maximum impact. In addition, we would like you to undertake the following actions:
    - an event on good practice in the NSS, focussing on assessment and feedback, in order to share and promote good practice. This should cover a range of institutional approaches (including from outside Wales) and types of students;
    - promoting good practice in engaging with non-traditional students, and considering equality and diversity, social mobility, and progression, including employability for those who are less likely to engage in extra-curricular activities;
    - supporting work to take forward Welsh studies;

- support the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship network for Wales to enable institutions to secure membership of the Welsh Government Sustainable Development Charter.

Part Four: National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

28.   We invite the Academy to continue to support the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS). In 2010-11 the scheme was expanded to 55 fellows annually, each with a £10k award, and is open to nominees from the three countries for the awards to be announced in academic year 2014-15. Each country will pay the costs of the number of awards it has achieved directly to the Academy, or the relevant host institution in the case of Northern Ireland, following the judging process. (The maximum amount that HEFCW would be asked to contribute for awards in 2014/15 is £270,000).

29.   Additional funds are provided to support the total costs of managing the NTF Scheme and support of National Teaching Fellows (HEFCW provides £8,132 as its contribution).

30.   Looking to the future, we invite the Academy to reconsider the scheme in a context of reduced funding for this activity and in particular examine how the reputation and value of the awards may be maintained in this environment.

Part Five: Reporting and Accountability

31.   Full terms and conditions of funding are detailed in the annual Funding Agreement operative from 1 August 2014. Additional terms and conditions of funding attached to this grant are as follows:

a.   Annual operating plan: For the period 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015, an operating plan should be provided to all the funding bodies by the end of July 2014. This should include an annex detailing the key performance and impact measures by which the HEA's achievement of the objectives and priorities outlined in this grant letter will be monitored and reported upon.

b.   Annual report: The Academy's annual report for 2014/15 should be provided to all the funding bodies by the end of November 2015. (As stated in the 2013/14 grant letter, the annual report for 2013/14 should be provided by end of November 2014).

c.   Annual Report of Performance against Funding Body Grant Letters: Recognising that the grant letters identify matters of particular interest to the funding bodies, the Academy should provide a single report covering UK-wide and nation specific outcomes against all the elements of the grant letters by the end of November 2015. The report should focus on the

outcomes and impact of activities aimed at addressing funder priorities as outlined in annex A.

d. Quarterly Management accounts: including an income and expenditure account, balance sheet and cash flow statement and a comparison with the overall budget which should be provided at the start of the year. The following quarterly deadlines have been agreed:
28 November 2014
27 February 2015
29 May 2015
31 August 2015.

32. The Academy should convene meetings with the funding bodies and owners on a six-monthly basis to report on progress and consider future strategic priorities and policy considerations. It should also respond positively to any requests to engage the relevant strategic advisory committees of each of the funding bodies in strategic discussions of the Academy's approach and future priorities.

33. 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;
- the Data Protection Act;
- the principles of the Freedom of Information Act;
- all other relevant laws as enacted by Parliament and/or the devolved administrations.

Part Six: Conclusion

34. We recognise the considerable pressure that the reduction in grant funding places on the Academy in maintaining its services and high standards. However, we look forward to working together to assist wherever possible in making the transition to becoming a self-sustaining organisation that remains of great value to the sector.

35. I should be grateful if you would confirm your acceptance in writing of the terms and conditions of grant described in this letter.

36. In your response we would also welcome an outline of how you will address the priorities described in paragraphs 12 to 24 above including example performance indicators and long term impact. It would be helpful if the

template in **Annex A,** which describes our sought outcomes, could be used for this purpose.

Yours sincerely

David Blaney

Annex A – Outcomes

Programme 1. CURRICULUM DESIGN (Curricula for graduate success)

14-15 grant priorities	Programme	Outcomes (yr1 14-15)	Performance Indicators (yr1 14-15)	Longer-term impact (5yr)
Sector challenge: Curriculum Design and Innovative Pedagogies				
Employability (UK ref paras 18-20) Education for Sustainable Development (UK ref para 15) Internationalisation (UK ref para 12a)	**1. Curriculum design** *(Curricula for graduate success)*	**Policy** – UK national and institutional policy makers and strategic leaders are better informed about the evidence base and institutional mechanisms to design curricula that equip graduates with a range of key attributes, including interdisciplinary curricula and co-curricula. **Institutions and discipline communities** – HEPs have implemented institutional and departmental level frameworks that embed employability, internationalisation, ESD, and digital literacy, outcomes into discipline curricular provision. **Individuals** – HE teachers and professional services staff change their practice to deliver exciting and innovative curricula and co-curricula for student learning (in areas including: employability; global citizenship; ESD; Maths in the disciplines; quantitative skills, etc.) Students are engaged contributors in developing curricula and pedagogies through their involvement: as change agents; in policy discussions; in strategic conversations; and in cross-institutional initiatives.		
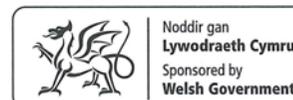
Programme 2. INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGIES (Engaged student learning)

14-15 grant priorities	Programme	Outcomes (yr1 14-15)	Performance Indicators (yr1 14-15)	Longer-term impact (5yr)
Sector challenge: Curriculum Design and Innovative Pedagogies				
Student Engagement (UK ref paras 13,14) Assessment & Feedback (UK ref para 12b) Technology Enhanced Learning (UK ref para 17)	**2. Innovative pedagogies** *(Engaged student learning)*	**Policy** – UK national and institutional policy makers and strategic leaders are better informed about the evidence base and institutional mechanisms for the promotion of engaged student learning. **Institutions** – HEPs have trialled an institutional level framework on embedding 'high impact' pedagogical practices that foster engaged student learning across a range of discipline areas (including pedagogies of partnership and learning technologies) and emerging evidence of impact collected by HEA. **Individuals** – individual practitioners change their practice to implement pedagogies that engage students with their learning. Students are engaged contributors in developing curricula and pedagogies through their involvement: as change agents; in policy discussions; in strategic conversations; and in cross-institutional initiatives.		

Programme 3. STUDENT TRANSITIONS (Learner journeys in a changing environment)

14-15 grant priorities	Programme	Outcomes (yr1 14-15)	Performance Indicators (yr1 14-15)	Longer-term impact (5yr)
Sector challenge: Transitions – into, through and out of HE				
Inclusivity (UK ref para 12c) Postgraduate education (UK ref para 24d/e)	**3. Student transitions** *(Learner journeys in a changing environment)*	**Policy** – UK national and institutional policy makers and strategic leaders are better informed about policy and strategic issues relating to student transitions, including issues of access, inclusivity, diversity, flexibility, retention and success, and progression to employment or further study (e.g. BME attainment, part-time study and vocational entry). **Institutions** – HEPs implemented strategic frameworks that embed practices that narrow the differences in access and achievement of students with different characteristics, at undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels, and promote flexible learning. **Individuals** – HE teachers and professional services staff change their practice to adopt interventions that most effectively support successful student transitions into, through and out of HE into employment.		

Programme 4. STAFF TRANSITIONS (Teaching excellence, professionalisation and CPD)

14-15 grant priorities	Programme	Outcomes (yr1 14-15)	Performance Indicators (yr1 14-15)	Longer-term impact (5yr)
Sector challenge: Transitions – into, through and out of HE				
Raising the status and professionalisation of teaching (UK ref para 23).	**4. Staff transitions** *(Teaching excellence, professionalisatio n and CPD)*	**Policy** – UK national and institutional policy makers and strategic leaders are better informed about policy and strategic issues relating to the professionalisation of teaching in UK HE including teaching excellence, the changing nature of academic careers, and scholarship of L&T. **Institutions** – HEPs have an institutional action plan to systematically enhance teaching across their institution, through a strategic approach to professional standards and the reward and recognition for teaching. HEPs have changed their institutional policies, strategies, and practices, in supporting teaching excellence, including embedding the UKPSF into promotions criteria and other mechanisms for reward and recognition. **Individual** - Senior leaders (e.g. PVCs L&T, Deans, Heads of department, etc.) have developed their L&T strategic leadership through HEA development programmes, and other interventions.		
General priorities				
Support for the disciplines (UK ref para 16) Evidence-based approach (UK ref para	General priorities (covered by all programmes)			

24) Diverse provision (UK ref para 12c)				
HEA Services				
Recognition and Accreditation (UK ref para 23).	HEA Service – Recognition and Accreditation			
Student feedback (UK ref para 24f).	HEA Service – Surveys			
NTFS (UK grant ref part 3)	5. NTFS – Managed on behalf of HEFCE, HEFCW and DELNI			A proposal for the longer term development of NTFS will be developed and circulated to the funding bodies for comment before a more detailed operational plan is developed.