

Council Meeting

For approval without discussion

Higher Education Academy Annual Report 2014/15Agenda: 21
HEFCW/16/28

Disclosable

18/03/2016**1 Issue**

- 1.1 This item provides for approval the Higher Education (HE) Academy annual report against the 2014/15 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: 'Improving learning outcomes by raising the status and quality of teaching in higher education.'

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 2014/15.

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 Dr Cliona O'Neill (029 2068 2283; cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Higher Education Academy Annual report 2014/15

- 7.1 The grant letter for 2014/15 from HEFCW to the Academy is attached at **Annex A**.
- 7.2 The final report of the Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter 2014/15 is attached at **Annex B**. This was provided to the January 2016 meeting of the Student Opportunity and Experience Committee (SOAC) (item 19 refers - HEFCW/16/26). The annual report for the UK is available at **Annex C**. Members of SOAC advised that the report for Wales met the requirements of the grant letter.

The Council is invited to approve the final report of the Higher Education Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter for 2014/15.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 At its January 2013 meeting Council approved funding in principle from HEFCW to the Academy of £628k in 2014/15 (item HEFCW/14/18 refers). Due to funding for the Higher Education Academy being phased out, the actual cost was £478,395. This included a cost of £8131 for running the National Teaching Fellowship Awards, plus an additional £10k for every award made. In 2014/15 Wales won three awards. 2015/16 is the last year of core funding from the funding bodies for the HEA.

9 Communications implications

- 9.1 The annual report for Wales will be published on the Wales section of the Academy's website. The UK report will also be published on their website.
- 9.2 The HEA has written to institutions notifying them of increase to subscriptions, as a result of the removal of core funding from the funding bodies. It has proposed moving to becoming a chartered body, which would then require fellows to undertake continuing professional development, and pay an annual fee, to maintain their status as chartered fellows within the UK Professional Standards Framework. Universities UK is not supportive of this, and opposes increased subscriptions, which is generating press interest. UUK have subsequently commissioned a review of sector bodies which may impact on the sector's engagement with those bodies in the short term (item 5 refers – HEFCW/16/CE2).

10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 These implications are dealt with in a number of ways in our liaison with the HE Academy.
- 10.2 Para 21 encouraged the HEA '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.
- 10.3 Para 27 stated that 'in addition, we would like you to undertake the following actions... 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.'
- 10.4 Para 33 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 Risk Assessment

11.1 Details of identified risks arising from the issues covered by the paper are provided below:

| Risk | Action to address risk |
|--|--|
| The Academy fails to deliver an efficient and responsive service. | The performance of the Academy is discussed at least termly by all the funders. SOAC and Council consider 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 reports to its board. The funding councils make joint appointments to the board and each funding council has an observer on the board. HEFCW and the other funders are engaging with the HEA and the sector to support the transition of the HEA to a sustainable funding model. |