

**Council Meeting***For discussion***Funding for Quality Proposals**Agenda: 11  
**HEFCW/16/58**

Disclosable

**14/07/2016****1 Issue**

- 1.1 This paper provides for discussion information on the costs to HEFCW of participating in aspects of the quality assessment framework, both UK-wide, and jointly with England and Northern Ireland.

**2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper**

- 2.1 Under the HE (Wales) Act HEFCW has a statutory responsibility to assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the quality of education provided in Wales by or on behalf of each regulated institution. It does this within a UK-wide quality assessment approach.

**3 Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. approve the cost to Wales for 2016/17 of participation in elements of the UK-work on quality assessment

**4 Timing for decisions**

- 4.1 The decision is required now in order to enable the outcomes of the consultation to be published.

**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](mailto:cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk))

## 7 Costs of participating in the UK-wide work on quality assessment

7.1 In autumn 2014 HEFCE indicated it would be publicly tendering for the future contract to assess the quality of higher education in England. Council endorsed the desirability of remaining part of a UK-wide approach to quality assessment. HEFCW and DELNI agreed to participate in the procurement.

7.2 The review took place in two phases:

- January – March 2015 - a listening exercise, seeking views on a range of high-level principles and issues;
- From June 2015 – a consultation on more specific issues and options, following the general election.

7.3 Six contracts were subsequently put out to tender. The contracts awarded, and participation by country, were as follows:

Tender	Country	Total cost of work
Gateway into the higher education system (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA))	England; Northern Ireland; option for Wales to join from 2017/18	585,336
Verification of a provider's approach to its own review process (QAA)	England; Northern Ireland; option for Wales to join from 2017/18	204,000
Support for governing bodies (Leadership foundation for Higher Education)	England, Wales, Northern Ireland	48,000
Unsatisfactory Quality Investigations (QAA)	England; Northern Ireland; option for Wales to join from 2017/18	66,000
Degree Standards (Higher Education Academy)	England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland	664,664
International Activities (QAA)	England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland	126,664

7.4 Wales will pay a proportion of the cost for each of the contracts in which we are participating (5% for UK-wide contracts, and 5.7% for contracts covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland). The total cost to Wales for participation in the three work strands for the first (academic) year of the work is likely to be in the region of £63k. This will be met from funding previously spent on HEFCW's Service Level Agreement with the QAA, which will be re-negotiated separately. The contracts will run for up to five years.

7.5 Wales has the option to participate in the other contracts, should this be desirable and meet the requirements of the Higher Education (Wales) Act. This would also have cost implications.

***Council is invited to approve the cost to Wales for 2016/17 of participation in elements of the UK-work on quality assessment.***

## 8 Financial implications

- 8.1 The financial implications for HEFCW's participation in the UK-wide quality assessment work are provided above. It is likely that there will be future costs associated with this work, as it develops further. If a body is designated to operate quality assessment in England, this may also impact on how future work is taken forward, and the associated costs.

## 9 Communications implications

- 9.1 There has been press interest in the allocation of the contracts to date, and there is likely to be continued interest in developments around quality assessment. We do not expect the proposals to lead to further fragmentation of the UK-wide quality system. HEFCW will ensure that it publicises information on the work to regulated institutions and other stakeholders.

## 10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 This work will take account of the needs of the diverse student population.

## 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
Quality assessment in Wales does not give the perception of being part of a UK-wide system	Participation of Wales in UK-wide work on quality