

For discussion

Proposal for match funded Learning Analytics work and outcome of Jisc evaluation of HEFCW e-learning strategy

Agenda: 11
HEFCW/18/42

Disclosable

17/05/2018

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper provides the outcome of the review of the 10 year strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology (ELTT) in Wales. It also provides information on a project on learning analytics to be funded jointly by HEFCW and institutions, for discussion.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 HEFCW provided funding to support the implementation of the ELTT strategy, which was introduced in order to enhance the student experience. The proposal provides a route to take forward the very positive outcomes achieved through the ten year strategy.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. Note the outcomes of the review of the ELTT strategy, including the views of the Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee (SOAC);
 - ii. Consider the proposal for HEFCW to match fund participation of Welsh institutions in the Jisc Learning Analytics work, to take forward the outcomes of the ELTT review;
 - iii. Approve £266k for HEFCW's contribution to this work over a two year period.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 The decision is required now in order to enable HEFCW to jointly fund this work.

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 (029 2085 9731; cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology

Outcomes of the review of the strategy

- 7.1 The Higher Education [Strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology](#) in Wales ran from 2007/08 to 2016/17. It was developed by HEFCW in consultation with the higher education sector. HEFCW allocated £1m to universities in order to kick-start the Strategy, with the intention that by the end of the ten-year period its objectives would be mainstreamed. The strategy was revised twice over its lifespan to take account of rapid changes to this area.
- 7.2 HEFCW commissioned [Jisc](#) to carry out the final review of the ten year strategy. The executive summary of this is provided at **Annex A**. HEFCW plans to publish the final review following the May 2018 Council meeting.
- 7.3 SOAC considered the outcomes of the review at its May meeting. Officers will provide a verbal update on their views.
- 7.4 The review concluded that:
- The aims of the Strategy were met successfully;
 - All universities had continued to move forward in the direction anticipated by the Strategy;
 - ELTT had been mainstreamed and processes were in place to facilitate this in all institutions;
 - Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales were engaging with sector-leading innovation;
 - Value continued to be placed on collaboration and shared endeavour to progress with ELTT, as encouraged by the Strategy.
- 7.5 The review made the following recommendations: HEIs should
- Continue to maximise ways to exchange innovative thinking and practice within Wales;
 - Continue to embed regular internal conferences on learning, teaching, assessment and student experience into their enhancement activity, incorporating a digital thread and involving appropriate professional services as well as academic staff;
 - Recognise and enable, at strategic level, the role of inter-professional teams working in partnership with academics and students to enhance the student experience;
 - Continue to stimulate innovation in learning, teaching and assessment through creative use of relatively small sums of project funding;
 - Continue to ensure that all students and staff are able to become equipped with a degree of digital confidence appropriate to their current role and future work;
 - Seek opportunities to share effective practice in implementation of technologies;
 - Work towards adopting learning analytics at the earliest opportunity, as a means to inform reflection and decision-making as well as to address specific challenge areas such as student retention;
 - Continue to work closely with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and other organisations with expertise, to share digital resources and digital methods in the area of Welsh language provision;
 - Renew efforts to influence software providers to make available Welsh language versions, harnessing support from relevant national bodies;

- Ensure that their network capacity remains secure, resilient and capable of keeping pace with growing demand;
 - Continue to seek ways to collaborate with each other and with wider organisations as appropriate to enable an excellent student experience, including Advance HE and Jisc.
- 7.6 In addition, the review recommended that HEFCW should ensure the long-term availability and discoverability of appropriate public documentation relating to the Strategy, including case studies and published reports, in view of their potential value for academic researchers and policymakers of the future. We are taking this recommendation forward.

Council is invited to note the outcomes of the review of the ELTT strategy, including the views of the Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee.

Learning analytics

- 7.7 The ELTT review recommended that HEIs work towards adopting learning analytics at the earliest opportunity. This work is developing rapidly across the UK, and is considered to be key to retention and progression. All institutions should be engaging in this work, but to date fewer than half of the institutions in Wales have engaged, and their participation is unlikely to have been optimised, given the pace of developments.
- 7.8 To support this, Universities Wales have proposed a match funded project, working with Jisc. Information on this, including the funding that would be required, is available at **Annex B**. Originally the proposal related to universities, but officers requested that this be extended to all regulated institutions.
- 7.9 The proposal is that HEFCW match fund the costs for all regulated institutions for participating in the Jisc learning analytics work for two years. Institutions would pay the other half of the cost. In addition, it is proposed that HEFCW fund a part-time additional Jisc post over the period of the project, together with some consultancy, to work closely with Welsh institutions and enable them to maximise the benefit of their participation in this work. Institutions would need to commit staff time to the work in order to adopt good practice in the use of learning analytics.
- 7.10 This proposal would be open to all regulated institutions, although there would be no obligation on any institution to participate. Any funding released as a result of institutions deciding not to participate would be withdrawn from the project. However, the benefits of the work will be greatest if all HEIs, and/or all regulated institutions, participate.
- 7.11 The work will also address the 2018-19 remit letter task ‘to place a particular focus on the student experience and consider, in collaboration with the sector, what specific measures are required in order to deliver improvements in the areas identified [assessment, feedback and student voice].’ This will be achieved through a launch workshop, which will identify how effective use of learner analytics can benefit the student experience, including in the identified areas. It will also be achieved through the ongoing work with institutions, which will culminate in UK-wide dissemination of what has been achieved across Wales through this work.
- 7.12 HEFCW would require institutions to commit to participating in the work for up to two further years, once the HEFCW funding has ended.

7.13 SOAC considered this proposal at its May 2018 meeting, and the Chair of the meeting will provide a summary of their views.

Council is invited to consider the proposal for HEFCW to match fund participation of Welsh institutions in the Jisc Learning Analytics work, to take forward the outcomes of the ELTT review;

Council is invited to approve £266k for HEFCW's contribution to this work over a two year period.

8 Financial implications

8.1 The project would require £266k of contribution from HEFCW for a two year period to 2019/20.

9 Communications implications

9.1 The project would be likely to result in good communications outcomes:

- There would be an opening workshop, which would include addressing HEFCW's remit letter task;
- Final outcomes could be disseminated across the UK, including through presentations at the Jisc Digifest;
- If all HEIs, or all regulated institutions, choose to participate then there could be additional communications regarding Wales as a learning analytics nation
- We would issue press releases relating to different aspects of the project. We would also work with Universities Wales and Jisc to promote the work.
- The work should complete by July 2020.

10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

10.1 The work would benefit particular groups by enabling institutions to support students most in need, which can facilitate their progression and retention. It should also enable the voice of the diversity of the student body to be heard. An impact assessment screening will be conducted prior to the funding allocation.

11 Risk Assessment

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

Risk	Action to address risk
If one or more HEIs fails to fully respond to expectations to improve student engagement then they would fail to fully deliver on WG expectations and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaison arrangements HEFCW/NUS Wales;• NUS Wales President on Council and SOAC;• Wise Wales programme and action plan;

<p>UK practice, with resulting potential reputational damage and impact on applications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising student engagement in our strategic approach and corporate strategy; • Guidance on Student charters and on SU funding and relationship agreements; • Inclusion of quality assurance statements in annual governing body assurance return, including a focus on student engagement; • Development of a MoU with NUSW.
<p>If providers do not deliver excellent quality HE and student experience they will not be able to compete resulting in a decline in the student experience in one or more institutions, with an associated impact on morale, recruitment of students and staff, FAP approval, and ultimately HEFCW's reputation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, which maps student engagement with quality. • Institutions required to commission regular external quality assessment reviews, which include student-focussed engagement; • HEFCW will carry out triennial quality visits to institutions, which will include engagement with the student body, piloting with WGU; • Funding support for teaching (eg expensive subjects) whilst affordable; • Fee and access plans' quality expectations; • Monitoring of Welsh performance against TEF indicators; • Liaison with WG and HEFCE to enable TEF outcomes to be broken down against factors of importance to Wales (eg WM provision); • Governor training commissioned by HEFCW (delivered by Leadership Foundation).