

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Changes to the Strategic Engagement process from 2014/15

Date: 29 August 2014
Reference: W14/36HE
To: Heads and Chairs of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: No response required
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This circular details revisions to HEFCW's process for Strategic Engagement with institutions (which largely relate to Strategic Planning) following consultation with the sector in May 2014.

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Overview

1. This document provides detail on the changes to the Strategic Engagement process from 2014/15. In brief, these changes largely encompass the removal of the requirement to submit separate sub-strategies, with a new requirement being introduced for the submission of a single Strategic Planning and Engagement Document (SPED) based on a predetermined template (**Annex A**).
2. Feedback on initial proposals to modify the Strategic Engagement process was sought from Higher Education Wales in June 2013. Consultation was undertaken with those sector Directors and Pro Vice-Chancellors with a remit for planning over proposed revisions to the process, with finalised proposals published for consultation on 6 May 2014 (W14/16HE)¹. Following review of the responses to the consultation, this circular outlines the revised Strategic Engagement process. An overview of the responses to the consultation can be found at **Annex B**.

Why we engage with the sector on strategic direction

3. The purpose and principles of HEFCW's Strategic Engagement processes remain unchanged from those outlined in Circular W09/20HE² ('Strategic Engagement').
4. The SPED is required for information purposes, including (but not limited to) informing our engagement with institutions and key stakeholders. The SPED is not a document used for regulatory purposes (such as the Fee Plan) and does not therefore require formal HEFCW approval.

Why did we change the former process?

5. In addition to requesting Strategic Plans every three years, the former process also requested the supply of sub-strategies (such as sub-strategies relating to Innovation and Engagement, Learning and Teaching and Widening Access) on a three-year cycle (with Estates strategies being supplied on a periodic basis due to the longer timescales over which these strategies are effected). Under this former process, the reporting of progress against sub-strategies took place through the submission of separate Annual Monitoring Statements relating to each sub-strategy (AMS).³

¹ www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2014/W14%2016HE%20Strategic%20Engagement%20Consultation%20on%20proposals%20for%20changes.pdf

² www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2009/W09%2020HE%20Strategic%20Engagement.pdf

³ The exception here is the submission of the Estates strategy for which detailed information on estates condition, space utilisation etc. was submitted via separate arrangements.

6. The submission of separate Strategic Plans and sub-strategies, in addition to the submission of associated separate progress reports and AMS returns provided potential for duplication of effort, confusion and inconsistencies. The production of these separate documents, together with the number of related letters sent to institutions resulted in significant resource implications on institutions, with the analysis and feedback in respect of these separate documents also resulting in considerable resource implications for HEFCW.
7. We have therefore sought to streamline the Strategic Engagement process for all parties, whilst retaining access to the strategic information that HEFCW requires to effectively fulfil its role.
8. A high-level overview of the process that is replaced by this revision (“the former process”) is provided at **Annex C**.

The revised Strategic Engagement process

What are the main changes?

9. We no longer require separate sub-strategies to be submitted for the majority of sub-strategies, but instead, will require the return of a single SPED template covering a three-year period, with the template to be updated annually to provide reports on progress. The exceptions to this change are the Estates, Regional and Reaching Wider sub-strategies, which run over a longer time period or are submitted by groups of institutions and therefore are not able to be practically consolidated into a single SPED. In effect, the Estates, Regional and Reaching Wider sub-strategies will continue to run under a separate process, whilst all other sub-strategy information will be consolidated into the new SPED process.
10. Each SPED covers a three-year period to start from 2014/15. Higher education institutions are independent charitable organisations and the document should accordingly reflect the institution’s own strategy and strategic priorities and how they take account of Welsh Government priorities.
11. As outlined in paragraph 25, we will require the annual submission of an updated SPED to include a progress report.

SPED format and content

12. A standard template (**Annex A**) is provided for SPEDs to ensure consistency and enable ease of analysis by HEFCW. The template includes an Overarching Strategy section and sections covering Strategic and Enabling Themes which map to themes in HEFCW’s Corporate Strategy: Widening Access; Student Experience; Skills, Employability and Enterprise; Innovation and Engagement; Research; Reconfiguration and Collaboration; and Governance.

Other aspects of Strategic Engagement

13. Those aspects of the Strategic Engagement process that relate to Institutional Assurance (Institutional Assurance Review Visits and Institutional Risk Review) and the Information Toolkit for Governors remain unchanged from those outlined in Circular W09/20HE⁴ ('Strategic Engagement') .

Guidance on completing the template

14. The Overarching Strategy section should provide HEFCW with the following brief information:
 - A statement of the institution's vision;
 - High-level narrative, outlining the key themes across the full breadth of the institution's strategy;
 - Brief narrative on the governance mechanisms by which progress, outcomes and success against all aspects of the institution's strategy will be monitored, reviewed and measured;
 - Brief narrative on how the institution's strategic approach and its impact will be evaluated on an on-going basis;
 - Confirmation that the institution possesses a risk register with adequate and effective controls over key risks in all areas; and
 - Specific information on the institution's approach to internationalisation, in the context of the Welsh Government's interest in enhancing the sector's international reputation.
15. The Strategic and Enabling Theme sections should provide institutional targets in relation to the HEFCW Corporate Strategy priorities. Each section should also include:
 - a) Institutional aims under each theme together with brief narrative text to provide a concise sense of how these aims are to be achieved. This narrative is required to enable HEFCW to understand the approaches taken to achieve the various aims and inform more detailed face-to-face dialogue with institutions. Some example text has been included in the template at Annex A to illustrate the level of detail that is sought; and
 - b) SMART targets against each aim.
16. In completing each section of the SPED, consideration should be given to how the institution might better effect its equality and diversity responsibilities. HEFCW analysis of the SPED will include consideration of the equality and diversity provisions stated within each strategic section.

⁴www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2009/W09%20HE%20Strategic%20Engagement.pdf

Specific sectional reporting requirements

17. In most instances it will be up to institutions to determine the range of aims, narrative and targets included. However, there are some areas in which specific information is required, which are outlined below.

Student Experience Strategic Theme reporting requirements

18. Within the Student Experience Strategic Theme section, institutions should include coverage of:
 - a) student experience;
 - b) quality assurance and enhancement; and
 - c) enhancing learning and teaching through technology.
19. In the case of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers, this information should also cover ITT.

Innovation and Engagement Strategic Theme reporting requirements

20. A specific requirement exists in respect of the content of the Innovation and Engagement Strategic Theme section. In accordance with the Welsh Government's innovation strategy 'Innovation Wales' and as a condition of future Welsh Government support, the institutional aims and accompanying narrative and targets should confirm an institution's long-term commitment to knowledge exchange and commercialisation activity, to the benefit of the social, cultural and economic development of society.

Research Strategic Theme reporting requirements

21. Where research is central to institutional mission, institutions should include coverage of a number of specific topics under the Research Strategic Theme, as indicated in the template.

Alignment of SPED with Fee Plans and regional work

22. Where institutions have previously submitted joint sub-strategies in specific areas (e.g. Learning and Teaching, Innovation and Engagement etc.) they should prepare the relevant sections of the SPED on a joint basis.
23. Each institution's SPED must be aligned with its Fee Plan. HEFCW will consider it acceptable that those elements of the SPED which are covered by the Fee Plan (e.g. Widening Access) include only strategic information additional to that contained within the Fee Plan, so as to avoid duplication.
24. In addition, the Strategic Planning targets in individual sections of the SPED (e.g. Widening Access, Learning and Teaching etc.) will need to be fully aligned with those included with the Fee Plans, albeit recognising the differing timeframes covered by the documents and that the targets may need to be reviewed as Fee Plans change.

Annual progress reporting

25. We require that reports on progress against all sections of the SPED be submitted at the end of each year of the three-year planning cycle. The format of the SPED includes space to provide these annual reports. This negates the requirement for separate reporting documents and replaces the requirement for the submission of both Strategic Plan Progress Reports and AMS for HEFCW purposes. The document format allows the 'aims and measures' to be updated annually as necessary.

Timing

26. The first tranche of SPEDs should be submitted by all institutions by Monday 15 December 2014. Updated SPEDs including annual reports on progress should be submitted by mid-December in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The exact submission dates for 2015 onwards will be notified to institutions nearer the dates.
27. We expect each institution's Governing Body to have reviewed and approved the SPED prior to submission.

Analysis and feedback

28. HEFCW analysis of the first tranche of SPEDs will take place in January 2015, with this analysis to be used to initiate a dialogue with institutions prior to drafting a single feedback letter for each institution covering all aspects of strategic planning.
29. In subsequent years, a similar process will be adopted for the updated SPEDs containing annual progress reports.
30. A single letter for each institution will be issued each year to provide analysis and feedback on the reported progress. In addition to written feedback, HEFCW staff will engage as appropriate with institutions to discuss the various Strategic and Enabling Theme sections and the work being performed against them.
31. The SPEDs and subsequent annual reports will be treated as confidential by HEFCW, although information derived from these documents will be used to inform other HEFCW processes such as the Institutional Risk Review (IRR) process, and also to fulfil Welsh Government information requirements.
32. The SPED document format will be reviewed after the first year of use, via informal consultation with the sector. Any revisions based on sector feedback will be notified to the sector accordingly.

Further information

33. For further information, contact Ewen Brierley (tel 029 2068 2291; email ewen.brierley@hefcw.ac.uk).

Equality and diversity implications

34. We have carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about EIAs.
35. A similar responsibility rests on higher education institution partners to assess the impact of your strategies to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.

Annex A – SPED Template format

STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENT

Please note: Equality and diversity must be considered throughout the document and your strategic approach.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY
<p>VISION <i>A brief statement of institutional vision, for example:</i> ‘A world-class research university in the top 20 in the UK that provides an excellent student experience and equality of opportunity’</p>
<p>KEY THEMES <i>A high level narrative, outlining the key themes across the full breath of the institution’s strategy, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating opportunities: breaking down barriers to access, supporting students and staff to succeed and grow, embedding employability across our curriculum and promoting experiences that allow our students to test and develop their skills, valuing people and maximising their potential.• Research excellence: building on our research successes to address global challenges.• Teaching that inspires: enhancing our recognised world class student experience through investment in infrastructure and an excellent portfolio which emphasises employability and lifelong skills, equipping our students for future success.• Etc.
<p>MANAGING DELIVERY <i>Brief narrative text on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The governance mechanisms (including students) by which progress, outcomes and success against all aspects of the institution’s strategy will be monitored; reviewed; and measured.</i>• <i>How the institution’s strategic approach and its impact will be evaluated on an on-going basis.</i>• <i>Confirmation that the institution possesses a risk register, which includes adequate and effective controls over key risks in all areas.</i> <p><i>For example:</i> Implementation of the strategic plan and its related business processes are led and managed by a Senior Management Team comprising the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Director of Finance and Pro-Vice-Chancellors. In order to enable the effective monitoring and evaluation of progress against the University’s vision of being in the top 20 in the UK, a range of KPIs have been established at institution and department level which are benchmarked against leading institutions. Identified actions at both institution and department level will be undertaken in consultation with student representatives, wherever appropriate. The delivery of the strategic plan will be overseen by the Council’s Strategy and Resources Committee, with progress against the KPIs to be a standing item at all Committee meetings.</p> <p>Etc.</p>

STRATEGIC THEME – WIDENING ACCESS

Objective: secure inclusion, progression and success in higher education

Welsh Government expectations:

- Participation is maximised through different and more flexible ways to experience higher education, including through part time study
- Improved part-time learning opportunities are offered
- Inconsistencies in access and opportunity are addressed

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 1 – Widening Access</u> A rise in the proportion of all Welsh domiciled students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales who are domiciled in the bottom quintile of wards in Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas, from 20.0% in 2011/12 to 22.4% in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.8%)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 2 - Participation</u> An increase in the proportion of all UK domiciled students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales who are from UK low participation areas from 33.2% in 2011/12 to 35.3% in 2015/16 (a rise of 6.3%)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 3 - Retention</u> (a) A decrease in the percentage of full-time undergraduate students no longer in higher education following year of entry from 9.2% in 2011/12 to 8.2% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%) (b) a decrease in the percentage of part-time first degree students no longer in higher education two years following year of entry from 33.7% in 2011/12 to 30.1% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 4 – Part-Time</u> The percentage change in the number of part-time students attending higher education courses in Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions to be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for the UK					

STRATEGIC THEME – WIDENING ACCESS

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Key themes to cover in this section: Widening Access, Participation, Retention, Regional Progression Pathways, Part-time/Flexible Study, Reaching Wider, HE in FE, Evidence-based Strategic Developments.

FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i> <i>Aim 1: To increase and widen access to and through higher education from WA priority groups</i> The University will continue to deliver targeted activities aimed at raising the aspirations of potential learners from Communities First and Low Participation Neighbourhoods, and BME communities, including through the Reaching Wider programme. These activities will include a programme of workshops and outreach events aimed at providing a taste of higher education programmes in schools, FE colleges, communities and the workplace. These will include the delivery of annual STEM Summer Schools and a range of industry sponsored events aimed at encouraging applications to Engineering and Mathematics courses from Communities First and Low Participation Neighbourhoods. A dedicated programme of support will also be established to care leavers to access HE. These activities will include opportunities for potential students to increase their awareness of the financial support that is available. This approach will be coupled with the introduction of a contextual admissions system and transitional and continuing academic support for full time widening access students.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase the number of WA STEM Pathways adult/young participants securing a place at HE from X% (and actual number) in base year to Y% (and actual number) in year 1, year 2, year 3, etc. of strategy</i> • <i>Increase the number of CF learners, care leavers, BME students applying to HE, admitted to HE, attending WA</i> 	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

*outreach provision from X% (and actual number) baseline
year to Y% (and actual number) in year 1, year 2, year 3)*

- *etc.*

Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc.

STRATEGIC THEME - STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Objective: Secure excellent quality higher education and student experience, enhanced by the student voice

Welsh Government expectations:

- Make continuing efforts to deliver an excellent student experience
- Enable study through the medium of Welsh to take place in a wider range of programmes and locations in Wales
- Ensure that the student voice strengthens higher education
- Make Wales a destination of choice for international students and staff

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 5 – National Student Survey</u> The three year rolling average score for Wales in the National Student Survey 'overall satisfaction' question will be equal to, or greater than, the comparative score for the UK					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 6 – Welsh Medium</u> The number of students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales undertaking at least 5 credits of their course through the medium of Welsh, per annum, will rise from 4,335 in 2011/12 to 5,600 in 2015/16, including a rise from 2,269 to 3,030 in the number of those studying at least 40 credits per annum					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 7 – Overseas Students</u> The percentage change year on year in the number students attending higher education courses in Welsh higher education institutions will be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding London and the South East)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 8 - Quality</u> All institutions being reviewed in the Corporate Strategy period to meet the UK thresholds for quality and standards in the QAA Institutional Review					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 9 – Initial Teacher Training</u> Welsh Government intake targets for ITT undergraduate primary, postgraduate primary, undergraduate secondary, postgraduate secondary priority and postgraduate secondary other subjects to be met annually					

STRATEGIC THEME – STUDENT EXPERIENCE

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Key themes to cover in this section: Student Experience, Learning & Teaching, Welsh Medium, Internationalisation, ITT

FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:

Aim 1: To ensure provision is of high quality

The University is committed to providing an outstanding student learning experience. We will continue to review and adapt our programme of provision with teaching informed by research excellence, engagement with employers and professional bodies. This will involve the evaluation of all modules against a framework of requirements in order to ensure consistency in the quality of provision across all subject areas. The University will also continue to work in partnership with the student body, with student involvement on relevant committees underpinned by training programmes to ensure effectiveness. This will be coupled with the introduction of online questionnaires seek to student feedback on provision at programme and module level. The University will also continue to review the outcome of NSS and student feedback, with a Working Group established to oversee delivery of the action plans for those areas of provision where weaknesses have been identified. Areas for development previously identified via the NSS will be addressed through a series of measures including the introduction of electronic coursework feedback; and the building in of opportunities for formative feedback within modules. These developments will be underpinned by a programme of CPD for all teaching staff.

Targets

- Development of a consistent approach for module evaluation by 2014/15
- Ensure a holistic process is in place for the analysis of survey outcomes by Sep 2015, and review annually
- Annual training programme for student representatives
- Introduction of online questionnaires for all programmes and modules by 2014/15
- Introduction of electronic coursework feedback by 2014/15

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

- Quarterly NSS Working Group
- All teaching staff to have engaged in CPD programme by 2016/17

Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc. (To include reference to delivery of an internationalised student experience and an improved volume of overseas students. It should also cover student experience; quality assurance and enhancement; and enhancing learning and teaching through technology. In the case of ITT providers, this should include ITT)

STRATEGIC THEME – SKILLS, EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTERPRISE

Objective: Secure graduates who are equipped for life and work, and universities that contribute to an up-skilled workforce

Welsh Government expectations:

- A greater proportion of the population achieves higher level skills
- Greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery is developed, to match need and demand
- Employability is a key outcome of the higher education experience
- The contribution of higher education to workforce development is strengthened

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 10 - Employment</u> The proportion of leavers from Welsh higher education institutions obtaining undergraduate qualifications through full-time and part-time study who were employed, studying or both six months after leaving will be equal to, or greater than, the UK proportion					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 11 - Employability</u> The proportion of leavers who were working, or working and studying, who were working in a managerial/professional job six months after leaving to rise from 67.5% in 2010/11 to 72.7% in 2015/16 (a rise of 7.7%)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 12 - Continuing Professional Development</u> The total number of learner days delivered by Welsh higher education institutions for continuing professional development will rise from 202,498 in 2011/12 to 226,000 in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.6%)					

STRATEGIC THEME – SKILLS, EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTERPRISE

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Key themes to cover in this section: Skills, Employability, Employer Engagement

FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i></p> <p><i>Aim 1: Internationalisation - To develop global skills and employability</i></p> <p>The University improve the employability of its graduates through a range of measures to improve their global skills. Activities will include the development of new student placement opportunities in identified industry sectors in Europe and mainland China by 2016/17. This will be underpinned by the active role played in the UK HE Mobility Unit Community of Practice. The University will also refresh its undergraduate curricula in partnership with international employers, with new credit bearing placement modules to be developed in a range of disciplines with business partners operating overseas by 2016/17. In addition, the number of students undertaking a work placement opportunity abroad will be expected to double from the current level by 2016/17.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduce 10 new credit bearing placement modules in a range of disciplines with business partners operating overseas by 2016/17.</i> • <i>x students taking up a work or study opportunity overseas: 2014/15 x; 2015/16 x; 2016/17 x (= x% of total student population)</i> <p><i>Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc. (To include promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurship; contribution to workforce development)</i></p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

STRATEGIC THEME: INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Objective: Secure the application and exploitation of knowledge to deliver social justice and a buoyant economy

Welsh Government expectations:

- The economy is supported by strengthened and systematic knowledge exploitation
- The cultural and civic role of higher education is enhanced
- Closer links between universities and businesses operating overseas

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 13 - Collaborative Research Income</u> The total amount of income from collaborative research involving both public funding and funding from business will rise from £65,253k in 2011/12 to £72,000k in 2015/16 (a rise of 10.3%)					

STRATEGIC THEME: INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Key themes to cover in this section: Innovation & Engagement

FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>In line with Innovation Wales, and as a condition of future Welsh Government support, the University confirms its long-term commitment to knowledge exchange and commercialisation activity, to the benefit of the social, cultural and economic development of our society. We demonstrate this as follows:</i></p> <p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i></p> <p><i>Aim 1: Knowledge exchange and the commercialisation of research</i></p> <p>The University will ensure core support for the innovation and engagement infrastructure, with an innovation and commercial services unit to be established. This unit will oversee all collaborative research and development and commercial work, including the management of the relationship with venture capital providers. The Unit will undertake an audit of intellectual property across the university, drawing on professional support, in order to identify and screen potential opportunities for commercialisation in partnership with existing companies (e.g. via the A4B programme), through licensing or spin-out. This activity will be underpinned by the provision of shared space across the campus where academics and industry can undertake collaborative research and development. We will identify potential commercial opportunities within the university and provide professional support in order to progress them through licensing to spin out</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish Innovation and Commercial Services Unit by 2014/15</i> • <i>Initial screening of intellectual property by 2015/16</i> • <i>Establish 3 research and innovation institutes by 2015/16</i> <p><i>Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc. (To cover areas such as contribution to</i></p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

<i>inward investment and regional development; cultural, community and civic role of the university; strategic partnerships with businesses operating overseas).</i>	
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STRATEGIC THEME: RESEARCH

Objective: Secure research of internationally excellent quality to deliver a buoyant economy and support social justice

Welsh Government expectations:

- Research activity thrives and is effective
- The impact of university research is increased, through targeting support on areas of strength and national priority, and especially through collaboration
- Internationally excellent research in selected areas

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 14 - Research Council Income</u> The annual percentage change in income from Research Councils will exceed the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London)					
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 15 - Research Excellence Framework (REF)</u> An increased proportion of research submitted to REF by Welsh higher education institutions will achieve 3* and 4* in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 from a baseline of 35% at 3* and 14% at 4*in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise					

STRATEGIC THEME: RESEARCH INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY Key themes to cover in this section: Research	
FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>Where research is central to institutional mission, we are asking institutions to include coverage of the following topics: any planned changes to the overall profile of research activity; provision for researcher development; measures to increase Research Council and other research income; plans for PGR; plans for capital investment; high level arrangements for performance monitoring; and strategic partnerships with world-leading universities.</i></p> <p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i></p> <p><i>Aim 1: Develop our research base and increase our ability to attract larger company inward investment to Wales and the UK</i> The University will establish new facilities that will enable applied researchers in life sciences and engineering to be co-located with transnational companies and SMEs to drive forward the regional and national economy. This will be coupled with expansion of the Biosciences, Medicine and Engineering departments through a programme of new professorial appointments. These appointments will develop research capacity in key interdisciplinary areas and build on the University's involvement in the Sêr Cymru programme, especially in Engineering and Advanced Materials and other collaborative research developments.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintain and consolidate our relationship with existing lead industrial partners, and establish research partnerships with two new multi-national companies by 2016/17</i> • <i>Establish research partnerships with 10 SMEs by 2016/17</i> • <i>Appoint 10 new Professors in identified priority areas (4 Engineering, 4 Biosciences and 2 Medicine) by 2016/17</i> <p><i>Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc.</i></p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

STRATEGIC THEME: RECONFIGURATION AND COLLABORATION

Objective: Secure a reconfigured higher education system with strong providers that, through collaborative partnership working, particularly regionally, offers more accessible higher education opportunities and a stronger HE offering across Wales

Welsh Government expectations:

- Increased collaboration among higher education providers and between
- higher education and other providers,
- A particular focus on appropriate reconfiguration of the higher education sector
- A regional dimension to the planning and delivery of higher education

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 16 - Reconfiguration and Collaboration</u> At least 75% of the Welsh higher education institutions to have an annual income in excess of the UK median, with no institution to be in the lower quartile by 2015/16					

ENABLING THEME: RECONFIGURATION AND COLLABORATION	
INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY	
Key themes to cover in this section: Reconfiguration & Collaboration, Regional Planning	
FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i></p> <p><i>Aim 1: Development of Regional Partnerships</i> The University will develop strategic partnerships with FE colleges to underpin regional FE-HE progression. The University will also continue to develop and deliver the regional strategy for the planning and delivery of HE, including the implementation of agreed collaborative arrangements in staff development and training.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strategic partnerships established with 4 FE colleges by 2015/16</i> • <i>SLA for staff development and training established with regional partners by 2015/16</i> • <i>Delivery of regional strategy targets</i> <p><i>Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc.</i></p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

ENABLING THEME: GOVERNANCE

Objective: Secure continual improvement in the quality of governance and long term sustainability of the higher education system

Welsh Government expectations:

- Promote the civic role of higher education providers and their role as corporate citizens
- Review institutional governance in higher education

INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL TARGETS	2011/12 BASELINE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 TARGET
<u>HEFCW Corporate Strategy Target 17 - Governance</u> No higher education institution to be classified as 'high risk' in accordance with HEFCW institutional risk review processes					

ENABLING THEME: GOVERNANCE	
INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY	
Key themes to cover in this section: Governance, Financial Sustainability, HR Strategy, Estates Strategy, Sustainable Development, Equality & Diversity, Student Voice	
FOCUS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY UP TO 2015/16	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS
<p><i>Example aim, narrative and targets for illustrative purposes:</i></p> <p><i>Aim 1: Governing body performance</i> The University is committed to delivering continual improvement in its governance arrangements. The University has actively worked to enhance the effectiveness of the Council, and it will continue to drive up the quality of governance. A key aspect of this will be to encourage active engagement by Council and Committee members, including student governors, supported by training and development. The University will also seek to engage with appropriate stakeholder groups to work to enhance the diversity of Council membership. An independent review of Council effectiveness will be undertaken in 2015/16.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual programme of governor training</i> • <i>Quarterly briefings for student governors initiated by 2014/15</i> • <i>Produce an annual ‘dashboard’ of KPIs for the Council, with quarterly updates, to be utilised alongside the HEFCW Information Toolkit and National Student Survey results</i> • <i>Meetings with local community and business groups to stimulate participation by under-represented groups to have been initiated by 2014/15</i> • <i>Independent review of Council effectiveness by 2015/16</i> <p><i>Aim 2, Aim 3, Etc.</i></p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p><u>2016/17</u></p>

Annex B – Overview of responses to consultation

The themes of consultation responses are set out below.

Too great a level of detail being sought

Six universities expressed reservations regarding the level of detail to be sought in the SPED. HEFCW is of the view that the level of detail to be sought in SPED is significantly less than is currently sought through the combination of institutional strategies and sub-strategies. HEFCW will, however, review the use of the SPED in one years' time via informal consultation with the sector.

Submission deadline to be put back to December due to data availability

Four universities suggested that the proposed timescale for submission of SPEDs be put back from the proposed 31 October deadline, in part due to the timing of data availability. We agree with this proposal, and accordingly have amended our submission deadline to mid-December.

Strategy funding has ceased therefore there should be no obligation on an HEI to provide strategic information

One university suggested that, following the cessation of the current strategy funding in 2013/14, HEFCW's information requirements on individual strategic areas should be discontinued. In addition to suggesting discontinuation of detailed information on those areas currently covered by HEFCW strategy funding (e.g. Widening Access, Innovation and Engagement, Learning and Teaching etc.) the University suggested that strategies in relation to Estates, Reaching Wider and Regional developments should also be discontinued. HEFCW considers that such information is essential to underpin HEFCW's understanding of the sector and the contribution institutions make to Welsh Government priorities.

Annual income target is anachronistic

One university requested that the HEFCW Corporate Strategy target in relation to annual income be removed from the SPED template as the University considers the target to be anachronistic. This is a current HEFCW Corporate Strategy target and therefore should be included in order to underpin HEFCW's understanding of the contribution institutions make to each Strategy target and Welsh Government priorities.

Annex C – Current Arrangements for Strategic Engagement

Our current Strategic Engagement process is based to a large extent on the submission and analysis of institutional Strategic Plans, and subsequent engagement with institutions in relation to these plans and their implementation. We currently request Strategic Plans every three years, on a cycle agreed with each institution to inform/fit its planning process. The detailed analysis and triennial feedback in relation to plans includes dialogue with the head of institution and others. This complements the existing range of meetings with the sector, including the institutional visits. We also currently seek an annual report on progress against plans from each institution.

We also currently request and review sub-strategies, such as Innovation and Engagement, Learning and Teaching and Widening Access on a three-year cycle and those in relation to Estates on a periodic basis. Reporting of progress against sub-strategies takes place through the submission of Annual Monitoring Statements (AMS), with the exception of Estates strategies for which detailed information on estates condition, space utilisation etc. is submitted via separate arrangements.

Full details of the former process can be found in circular [W09/20HE](#).