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Cylchlythyr

Circular

HEFCW's strategic approach to the student experience: 2010-11 to 2012-13

Date: 27 April 2011
Reference: W11/16HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
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This circular sets out HEFCW's strategic approach to the student experience: 2010-11 to 2012-13.

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Introduction

1. This circular sets out HEFCW's strategic approach to the student experience for 2010-11 to 2012-13.

Background

2. Our corporate strategy identifies the student experience as one of five strategic themes which contribute to delivering the *For Our Future* priorities of social justice and supporting a buoyant economy. The aim of the theme is to ensure that the student learning experience in Wales is of high quality. The strategic themes within our corporate strategy are interdependent, with particular relationships between the student experience and the themes of skills and widening access.

HEFCW's strategic approach to the student experience

3. Our strategic approach to the student experience is attached at **Annex A**. It identifies the features of an excellent student experience, measures of success and actions we will undertake in relation to our strategic intentions, which are set out in our Corporate Strategy.

Equality and diversity

4. Our strategic approach to the student experience includes a section on equality and diversity. In addition, the approach has undergone equality impact assessment screening.

Further information / responses to

5. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).

Introduction

- 1 HEFCW's strategic approach to the student experience sets out our commitment to delivering the Welsh Assembly Government's expectations in relation to the student experience identified in *For Our Future: the Twenty-first Century Strategy and Plan for Higher Education*¹. It sits beneath our Corporate Strategy² and provides a fuller picture of our strategic intentions in the period 2010-11 to 2012-13, incorporating progress to date.
- 2 Through our approach we intend to be challenging in our aspirations, clear on our agenda for action, realistic in managing expectations, and transparent in providing a mechanism for measuring progress and demonstrating success.
- 3 We recognise that the context in which higher education (HE) is operating is shifting rapidly. Changes include fee arrangements, funding reductions, the regionalisation agenda and reconfiguration and collaboration, all of which have potential impact on the student experience and student expectations. We consider it essential to ensure that the quality of the student experience is maintained or improved during this period of change.
- 4 Through our strategic approach we intend to promote a clear understanding of what we perceive to be an excellent student experience, to assist Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to deliver the best possible experience for HE students in Wales, and to promote Wales as a destination of choice for prospective students.
- 5 Our approach encompasses the experience of the diverse student body, whether from Wales, the UK, or overseas, regardless of their level³ or mode⁴ of study.

Background

- 6 HEFCW has a statutory responsibility under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to secure that provision is made for assessing the quality of education provided in institutions for whose activities we provide, or are considering providing, financial support. One means by which we meet our statutory responsibility is via the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)⁵, which carries out the Institutional Review: Wales process (IRW)⁶.
- 7 The student experience incorporates academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, both of which are subject to outcome judgements in the IRW.

¹<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/forourfuture/?lang=en>

²http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/corporate_documents/Corporate%20strategy%202010%20-%20English.pdf

³ undergraduates and postgraduates

⁴ part-time, full-time, distance learners, on campus, etc.

⁵www.qaa.ac.uk

⁶<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reviewWales/default.asp>

HEFCW's Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13

- 8 Our approach to the student experience should be understood within the context of our Corporate Strategy, which is represented diagrammatically in **Appendix A**. The student experience is one of five strategic themes within this document which contribute to delivering the *For our Future* priorities of social justice and supporting a buoyant economy.
- 9 The strategic themes are interdependent. In particular there is a relationship between the student experience and the theme of skills, which addresses employability and flexible provision, including part-time provision. There is also a relationship between the student experience and widening access, which includes part-time provision and retention. These areas are dealt with more fully via the other themes, and are therefore not addressed in detail within this document, but we recognise the importance of the student experience to these areas. **Appendix B** provides our Corporate Strategy's high-level approach to the student experience.
- 10 The student experience theme aims to deliver the following *For our Future* expectations:
- Continuing efforts are made 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.

Measures of success

- 11 Our Corporate Strategy identifies three measures of success in relation to the student experience:
- 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;
 - The number of Welsh domiciled students at Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh will rise from 4667 in 2008/09 to 5600 in 2012/13;
 - The percentage growth in the number of overseas 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).
- 12 In addition to these measures, we monitor the quality of the student experience through the National Student Survey results, Estyn inspections of Initial Teacher Training and FE in HE provision, and IRW outcomes. We also monitor data for individuals with protected characteristics⁷.

⁷ As defined in the Equality Act 2010

HEFCW's Role

- 13 Our role in relation to the student experience is to:
- a) Work with the Welsh Assembly Government and the higher education sector to ensure that the student experience takes account of related Assembly Government policies and priorities, as appropriate;
 - b) Work with UK-wide and pan-Wales agencies, and with the National Union of Students Wales (NUS Wales) to inform policy development and ensure that Wales remains at the forefront of developments in relation to the student experience;
 - c) Provide strategic direction and support to enable HEIs to implement *For our Future* expectations in relation to the student experience;
 - d) Ensure that institutions place the quality of the student experience at the core of their strategic development plans;
 - e) Work with sector-related bodies to ensure a strategic approach to the student experience in Wales;
 - f) Develop, implement and monitor a range of mechanisms to achieve our strategic intentions, as defined in our Corporate Strategy;
 - g) Develop, implement and monitor a range of mechanisms to ensure that the quality of the student experience is assessed, in line with our statutory responsibilities;
 - h) Emphasise the importance of the student voice in the assessment of the quality of the student experience by institutions;
 - i) Support institutional developments relating to the student experience through the provision of learning and teaching strategy funding and through other HEFCW funding streams;
 - j) Emphasise the need for institutions to ensure that the student experience is considered in the context of the diverse student body, to include individuals with protected characteristics, and regardless of level or mode of study;
 - k) Monitor fee plans, to include identification of how they support the student experience in the rapidly changing HE environment
 - l) Review our teaching funding method in light of new fee arrangements;
 - m) Support the implementation of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, which will work to deliver increased and sustainable Welsh medium learning and teaching opportunities at all levels and contribute to a professional, well-trained, bilingual workforce;
 - n) Promote and disseminate current and effective practices relating to the student experience, including through the quality enhancement theme of *Graduates For Our Future* and other themes as they emerge, and via sector networks and conferences;
 - o) Ensure that HEIs reflect sustainability appropriately within both the academic context and the wider student experience.

Definition and aim of an excellent student experience

- 14 We recognise that the experience of students will be different at each institution, and that the appropriate learning opportunities may vary with the level and mode of study. It may also vary to take account of, and be

responsive to, the diverse student body. However, in all cases, we expect institutions will aim to provide an excellent student experience.

- 15 We define an excellent student experience as being one that:
- results in high levels of student satisfaction;
 - meets or exceeds the appropriate UK academic standards;
 - includes the provision of appropriate, accurate and timely information relating to their institution, programme of study, and employability;
 - clearly identifies the institution's expectations of students, and the expectations that the students should have of the institution;
 - provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities of high quality;
 - enables students to be able to play an active role in shaping their learning experience;
 - provides value for money;
 - takes account of national policy developments as appropriate;
 - takes account of professional standards and requirements where relevant;
 - results in highly employable graduates.
- 16 Our strategic approach to the student experience aims to deliver our Corporate Strategy measures of success relating to an excellent student experience, sets our agenda for action, and provides a mechanism for monitoring progress. It confirms how we will support the higher education sector and its partners in order to achieve our strategic intentions. This will continue to make Wales a destination of choice for applicants to Higher Education.

Summary of our strategic intentions regarding the student experience

- a) Continue our partnership working with the National Union of Students Wales, and others, through the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) and supporting the 'Have Your Say' campaign;
- b) Encourage institutions to continuously enhance the student experience for the diverse student population, including through the National Student Survey;
- c) Support sector agencies which are able to provide UK wide approaches to working with the Welsh higher education system;
- d) Implement our mechanisms for supporting the enhancement of learning opportunities;
- e) Evaluate our Technology-Enhanced Learning strategy to reflect new and innovative forms of learning;
- f) Continue to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through sector networks;
- g) Work to establish the Coleg Ffederal, now the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, to extend the range of Welsh medium provision;
- h) Support the Welsh Assembly Government's international strategy;
- i) Ensure that higher education institutions contribute effectively to the Bologna process and linked European developments;
- j) Work with providers to encourage innovation in programme design and modular approaches to improve the flexibility of provision, building on the

existing advantages of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and our credit-based funding method;

- k) Continue to meet our statutory responsibilities for initial teacher training.

Priorities within these strategic intentions

- 17 Our priorities within these strategic intentions are set out below, together with our initial actions.

Continue our partnership working with the National Union of Students Wales, and others, through the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) and supporting the 'Have Your Say' campaign

- 18 We will continue to work with NUS Wales and, through that organisation, with students' unions in Wales, to enhance the student experience. We will also consult on the introduction of a Key Information Set for Wales to provide richer information for prospective students.

- 19 The 'Wales Initiative for Student Engagement' (WISE), is a cross-sector commitment supported by Higher Education Wales (HEW), NUS Wales, the QAA, the Higher Education Academy, and HEFCW, and launched in October 2009. It aims to make Wales the best place for students to study and continually to empower students to engage with the processes that will enable them to participate in the enhancement of their own learning experiences. It has three strands: valuing feedback, harnessing expertise, and working in partnership. These are detailed in a statement agreed jointly by all partners⁸.

- 20 HEFCW has funded NUS Wales to run the 'Have Your Say' Campaign for 2009/10 and 2010/11. The campaign aims to enhance student representation and support the institutional review process. The annual report on the 'Have Your Say' campaign for 2009/10 reported positive achievements in enhancing student representation. A course representative guide has also been launched.⁹ The changes to student finance and fee arrangements mean that the student voice is increasingly important, which will be reflected in the 'Have Your Say' work in the future.

We will:

- A1 Work with NUS Wales to establish good practice in the funding of effective, democratic students' unions, and student representation on decision-making bodies, and to ensure that best practice in respect of student union representation becomes the norm in the Higher Education sector in Wales;
- A2 Work with partners to develop an action plan to underpin and strengthen WISE and keep the joint WISE statement under review to ensure it remains relevant to the changing context;
- A3 Take account of good practice elsewhere and apply it appropriately to the Welsh HE context;

⁸ http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/policy_areas/learning_and_teaching/WISE%20Commitment.pdf

⁹ <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/6010/177/>

A4 Work with NUS Wales to support, further develop and implement the 'Have Your Say' campaign across all institutions.

Encourage institutions to continuously enhance the student experience for the diverse student population, including through the National Student Survey (NSS)

- 21 HEFCW evaluates the NSS outcomes annually. The results for 2010 were good and the HE sector in Wales achieved the measure of success prescribed in the HEFCW Corporate Strategy, to have a three year rolling average score for overall satisfaction equal to or better than that for the UK as a whole for the period 2007/08 to 2009/10.
- 22 Surveys of post-graduate taught and research students are available to institutions via the Higher Education Academy, which is supported by HEFCW. Participation in these surveys is optional, but provides HEIs with a means of determining the satisfaction of these groups of students, and using the outcomes to enhance their experience. The results of this survey are not published.
- 23 The Higher Education Academy developed a Professional Standards Framework (PSF) for teaching and supporting learning on behalf of Universities UK, GuildHE and the funding bodies. The Framework is currently being updated to strengthen it, ensure it remains fit for purpose, and enhance as appropriate.

We will:

- A5 Encourage institutions, via Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy guidance, to: monitor the student experience, including through benchmarking and identifying indicators of quality;
- A6 Work with NUS Wales and institutions to ensure joint agreement of a charter identifying the roles, responsibilities and expectations of institutions and students;
- A7 Provide information both on the institution's expectations of students, and the expectations that the students should have of the institution¹⁰;
- A8 Fund the participation of Wales in the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme co-ordinated by the HE Academy, in order to raise the profile of learning and teaching, and recognise and celebrate individuals who make an outstanding impact on the student learning experience;
- A9 Encourage institutions to engage with the updated PSF for teaching and supporting learning, and to facilitate staff development to enhance the student experience, via Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy guidance;
- A10 Liaise with the HE Academy and other UK-wide agencies to promote good practice in relation to NSS results, including a particular focus on assessment and feedback;

¹⁰ including provision of information on cost of study

- A11 Monitor and follow up on institutional outcomes against our Corporate Strategy measure of success to have a three year rolling average score for overall satisfaction equal to or better than that for the UK as a whole, and take action to ensure institutions are addressing poor NSS outcomes, including at subject level;
- A12 Engage with the other UK funding bodies to take forward UK-wide projects to enhance the student experience for individuals with protected characteristics.

Support sector agencies which are able to provide UK wide approaches to working with the Welsh higher education system

- 24 HEFCW currently provides funding for the following sector agencies which are able to provide UK-wide approaches to working with the Welsh higher education system and thus add value on a pan-Wales basis:
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education;
 - The Higher Education Academy;¹¹
 - The Joint Information Systems Committee;¹²
 - The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education;¹³
 - The Equality Challenge Unit;¹⁴
 - Supporting Professionalism in Admissions;¹⁵
 - The International and Europe Unit¹⁶.
- 25 HEFCW also currently provides support for the following pan-Wales organisations:
- The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹⁷;
 - The Welsh Video Network¹⁸;
 - Welsh Higher Education Brussels (WHEB)¹⁹;
 - Wales International Consortium (WIC)²⁰.

We will:

- A13 Encourage institutions to analyse the use they are making of HEFCW-funded resources and to maximise their utilisation of them to enhance the student experience;
- A14 Keep support of external agencies under review to ensure the most effective, value for money support that meets the needs of Wales.

¹¹ www.heacademy.ac.uk

¹² www.jisc.ac.uk

¹³ <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/>

¹⁴ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/>

¹⁵ <http://www.spa.ac.uk/>

¹⁶ <http://www.international.ac.uk/home/> and <http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>

¹⁷ <http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/thecoleg/>

¹⁸ <http://www.wvn.ac.uk/>

¹⁹ <http://www.wheb.ac.uk/>

²⁰ <http://www.walesinternationalconsortium.com/>

Implement our mechanisms for supporting the enhancement of learning opportunities

- 26 Our mechanisms for supporting the enhancement of learning opportunities are:
- Supporting institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies;
 - Sector level support;
 - Coordination of thematic priorities;
 - Encouraging student engagement²¹.
- 27 We have asked HEIs to submit new Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies from 2011/12 to 2013/14. We have used a joint approach for the strategy guidance in order to reduce bureaucracy, increase transparency, and to assist institutions in joining up their approaches to learning and teaching and widening access.

We will:

- A15 Provide funding for Learning and Teaching Strategies from 2011/12 to 2013/14;
- A16 Ask the HE Academy to support institutions in the development, implementation and evaluation of their Learning and Teaching Strategies;
- A17 Ask the HE Academy to co-ordinate quality enhancement thematic priorities for the sector to maximise resources, reduce duplication, and encourage collaborative approaches between institutions, in order to enhance students' learning experiences.

Evaluate our Technology-Enhanced Learning strategy to reflect new and innovative forms of learning

- 28 HEFCW provided £1m of implementation funding to institutions to support our strategy for enhancing learning and teaching through technology. We also funded additional support via the HE Academy to support the implementation of the strategy. Both funding streams covered the period from 2007/08 to 2009/10.
- 29 The initial funded phase of the strategy implementation became known as *Gwella*²². *Gwella* is a Welsh word with meanings including to improve, to get better and to enhance. It therefore reflected the ethos of the programme as focusing on enhancement rather than on technology.
- 30 HEFCW subsequently provided funding, through JISC, to assist institutions in meeting strategic concerns in enhancing learning and teaching through the use of technology, building on, and learning from, the HEFCW-funded *Gwella* Programme.

²¹ Circular W10/02HE Mechanisms for supporting the enhancement of learning opportunities http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2010/W10%2002HE%20Mechanisms%20for%20Supporting%20the%20Enhancement%20of%20Learning%20Opportunities.pdf

²² <http://elearning.heacademy.ac.uk/weblogs/gwella/>

- 31 HEFCW, JISC and the HE Academy will capture and build on the achievements of the Gwella and Building Capacity projects in order to inform the development of new Learning and Teaching Strategies for the sector. This will include the role the strategy has played in increasing flexibility and accessibility of provision and taking full account of equality and diversity.

We will:

- A18 Undertake a formal evaluation of the technology-enhanced learning strategy, which we will publish in summer 2011;
- A19 Ask institutions to take account of the outcomes from the work on technology-enhanced learning in the development of their new Learning and Teaching Strategies.

Continue to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) through sector networks

- 32 HEIs play a key role within ESDGC in educating future professionals and leaders in addition to providing professional development and training opportunities for the existing workforce. They have a role to play in ensuring that globally aware, ethically sound and environmentally balanced processes are implemented internally, including through environmental management systems and procurement policies. The Welsh Assembly Government has yet to publish its revised ESDGC Action Plan, however, it is likely to include further actions for higher education.

We will:

- A20 fund a pilot approach for baselining ESDGC to identify how progress in mainstreaming and embedding can be measured, identify potential difficulties, and how the approach might be integrated with existing reporting mechanisms;
- A21 ask the HE Academy to participate in the ESDGC network for Wales, ensure links are made with the Academy's work on sustainability, and work with the sector to enable it to deliver the Welsh Assembly Government's ESDGC policy actions for HE, when available;
- A22 take account of the Welsh Assembly Government's revised ESDGC action plan, when available, in the development of HEFCW policies, procedures and guidance.

Work to establish the Coleg Ffederal, now the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, to extend the range of Welsh medium provision

- 33 The Coleg Ffederal Implementation Board established the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in March 2011, which will work with, and through, higher education institutions in Wales to deliver increased and sustainable Welsh medium learning and teaching opportunities at all levels and contribute to a professional, well-trained, bilingual workforce. Professor Merfyn Jones (former Vice-Chancellor of Bangor University) has been appointed as the chair.

- 34 The Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education is being incorporated into the Coleg, and has undertaken considerable preparatory work including putting in place an Academic Staffing Scheme and an Undergraduate Scholarship Scheme.

We will:

- A23 support the work of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol;
 A24 monitor progress of achievement of our target for the number of Welsh domiciled students at Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh to rise from 4,667 in 2008/09 to 5600 in 2012/13 and work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to achieve it.

Support the development of an International HE strategy for Wales

- 35 HEFCW is supporting HEW in its work to develop an international HE strategy for Wales for presentation to the Welsh Assembly Government. This work has explored the advantages to Welsh higher education institutions of becoming fully internationalised. In this way, students in Wales can learn to be global citizens and develop the high level skills sought after by employers.
- 36 It has also examined the importance to Wales of continuing to have an international reputation as a welcoming destination for international students and staff, and for Welsh HEIs to be recognised for some of the world's leading teaching and research. All of these elements are fuelled by a growing international network of academic and industrial alliances and partnerships.
- 37 The number of international student enrolments (ie non-EU domiciled) at Welsh HEIs increased by 26% between 2008/09 and 2009/10.²³ In 2007, the Wales Student Barometer managed by i-graduate found that students in Wales were generally more satisfied than students elsewhere in the UK. This growth in the international student population and in trans-national delivery will result in changing needs in learning environments and student support.
- 38 The UK government will reduce the level of annual net migration to the UK and expects the student route to make its contribution towards this. It will be important to continue to work carefully through the implications of these new arrangements, taking into account the risks to institutions over the recruitment of international students and staff.

²³ Source: HESA student record

We will:

- A25 Continue to support HEW in its work to establish and implement an International HE Strategy for Wales together with the Wales International Consortium (WIC) and Welsh Higher Education Brussels (WHEB);
- A26 Promote the internationalising of curricula, and engagement with the European Higher Education Area, including through the recognition of qualifications and mobility;
- A27 Continue to encourage bodies such as the Higher Education Academy and UK HE International and Europe Unit (IEU) to support HEIs to internationalise more fully;
- A28 Monitor progress of the measure in our Corporate Strategy for the percentage growth in the number of overseas 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).

Ensure that higher education institutions contribute effectively to the Bologna process and linked European developments

- 39 WHEB and the UK HE Europe Unit, both co-funded by HEFCW, have produced sector position papers on future European Commission education and training, and international co-operation programmes (2014-2020) that will promote Bologna-related activity. The Europe Unit has also undertaken a *Survey of UK HE engagement with the Bologna Process*²⁴ which identified that Wales has performed very well compared to the UK average in a number of areas including the use of credit, staff and student mobility, and the adoption of international strategies.
- 40 At a ministerial summit in Budapest and Vienna in March 2010 ministers agreed that by 2020 at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)²⁵ should have had a study or training period abroad.
- 41 Seven HEIs in Wales produce diploma supplements (DS) which enable academic and professional recognition at international level. The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) has been developed and piloted to incorporate and build upon the DS²⁶.

We will:

- A29 Promote the production of the DS by Welsh institutions, either separately or through the use of the HEAR;
- A30 Support student exchange and placement through Erasmus;

²⁴http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/documents_and_publications/europe_note_archive/2010_europe_notes.cfm

²⁵<http://eha.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>

²⁶<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Newsroom/Media-Releases/Pages/MediaRelease-562.aspx>

- A31 Promote the internationalising of curricula and engagement with the EHEA (including recognition of qualifications and mobility)' through Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy supplementary guidance;
- A32 Through WHEB, support the sector to engage with EU funding opportunities which can enhance the student experience, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Work with providers to encourage innovation in programme design and modular approaches to improve the flexibility of provision, building on the existing advantages of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and our credit-based funding method

- 42 HEFCW uses a credit-based funding method which facilitates progression and supports institutions who are delivering learning flexibly. Our Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy initial guidance for 2011/12 to 2013/14²⁷ identified greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery as a priority.
- 43 In 2010 HEFCW published a Foundation Degree policy in response to a request from the Welsh Assembly Government and announced the allocation of One Wales funding for the development, promotion and delivery of new part-time foundation degree provision²⁸. This flexible provision is designed to meet the needs of employers and will be introduced from 2011/12.

We will:

- A33 Fund a foundation degree programme (via One Wales funding), with intended outcomes of addressing skills shortfalls, expanding higher education, bringing HEIs, FEIs and employers into partnership, and extending routes to lifelong learning;
- A34 Provide funding for the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI) to support new employer-focussed Foundation Degree provision in flexible modes to encourage access by non-traditional learners;
- A35 Increase the level of funding in 2011/12 to the Innovation & Engagement (formerly Third Mission) Fund, which drives engagement between HEIs and employers across the board;
- A36 Incorporate employer engagement activity in the context of part-time provision into the Innovation and Engagement Fund;
- A37 Work with Sector Skills Councils to ensure that the needs of employers are clearly articulated to HEIs in order to promote greater diversity and flexibility in programme design and delivery.

Continue to meet our statutory responsibilities for initial teacher training (ITT)

²⁷ Circular W10/41HE http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2010/W10%2041HE%20LT%20WA%20guidance.pdf

²⁸ Circular W10/29HE http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2010/W10%2029HE%20Foundation%20Degrees%20circ%20and%20Annex%20A.pdf

- 44 The Welsh Assembly Government reduced ITT intake targets in a planned way between 2006/07 and 2010/11 in response to an over-supply of teachers. In parallel with this, HEFCW worked with the sector to achieve a reconfiguration of the ITT sector, supported by transitional funding from the Assembly Government. This has included capital investments which support an improved student experience. Each of the three Centres of Teacher Education (South East Wales, South West Wales and North and Mid-Wales) has been launched. ITT is being phased out at Glyndŵr University which took its last new intake in 2009/10. The Open University offers a small flexible part-time secondary PGCE.
- 45 Estyn introduced its new inspection framework in 2010 and the first ITT inspection is scheduled to take place in 2011/12. The framework includes an expectation that providers take into account the student voice. The cycle will include follow-up activity as required.
- 46 We are providing funding for ITT strategies covering the period 2009/10 to 2011/12, which supports the relationship between the providers and partnership schools, and keeping curricula up to date with good practice and engaging with the new Estyn framework. Providers also include in their strategies enhancing their provision through the medium of Welsh and steps to improve student retention.

We will:

A38 Continue to support the reconfiguration of ITT in Wales;

A39 Provide funding for ITT strategies from 2009/10 to 2011/12.

Equality and diversity

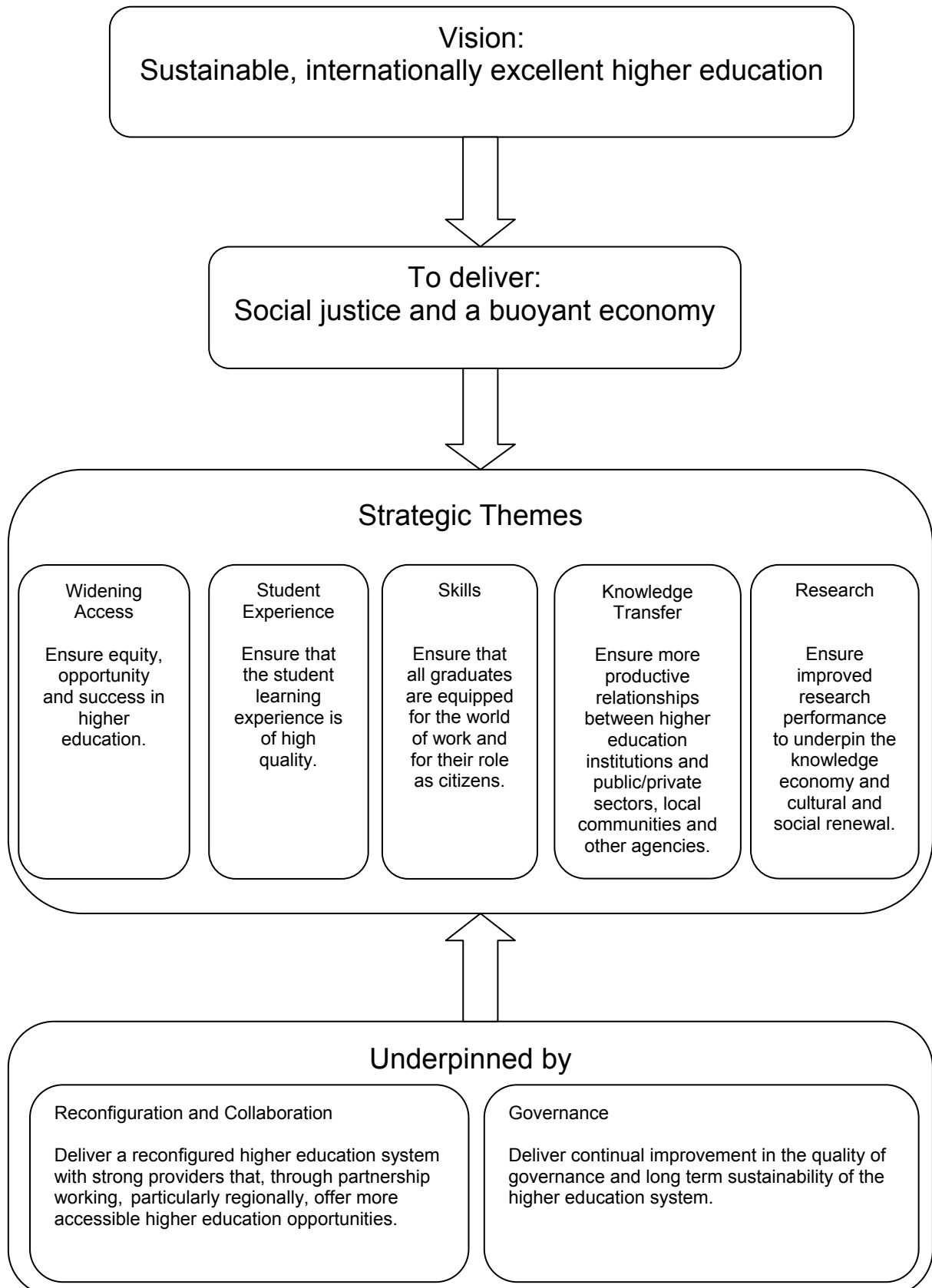
- 47 We are committed to contributing to advancing equality and diversity agendas. In addition to meeting our statutory responsibilities, our intention is to drive cultural change and proactive approaches to ensure that equity and diversity issues are fully integrated into our own and the sector's policies and practices and meet Welsh Assembly Government priorities.
- 48 Our Equality Scheme confirms our commitment and statutory responsibilities regarding the 2010 Equality Act. However, our strategic intentions extend beyond compliance. Each year as part of our commitment to equality and diversity, and in order to comply with equality legislation, we collect, analyse and publish on the HEFCW website statistical data pertaining to the sector's performance regarding equality and diversity. We also include a summary of our statistical analysis in our equality and diversity annual report. We use this information to help shape our equality and diversity activities within the sector.
- 49 Our Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy guidance 2011/12 to 2013/14 required institutions to ensure that strategies comply with legislation relating to equalities, reflect and consider the objectives and priorities of institutional equality schemes, and take account of institutional strategic equality action plans. In relation to learning and teaching, areas such as assessment outcomes, retention, degree performance, student satisfaction

and student representation are among the aspects of the student experience which should be considered in relation to equality and diversity.

- 50 In addition, as part of our policy development process, we have undertaken an internal equality impact assessment screening to consider the impact of this approach on learners with protected characteristics and groups under-represented in higher education. The outcomes of this screening are available upon request.

Appendix A

Corporate Strategy Strategic Themes diagram



Appendix B

HEFCW's Corporate Strategy 2010/11 to 2012/13

Key strategic theme: Student Experience

Ensure that the student learning experience is of high quality.

Welsh higher education already delivers an excellent student experience. National Student Survey results for Wales indicate high levels of satisfaction²⁹. Similarly high levels of satisfaction have been found in surveys of the international student experience in Wales. These results demonstrate the priority placed in Wales on the quality of the student experience. They also reflect close working with students as partners in their learning experience *For our Future* puts a particular emphasis on the student voice. We will continue our partnership working with the National Union of Students Wales, and others, through the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) and supporting the 'Have Your Say' campaign. Through our approach to quality enhancement, we will encourage institutions to continuously enhance the student experience for the diverse student population, including through the National Student Survey and our support for sector agencies which are able to provide UK wide approaches to working with the Welsh higher education system. To achieve this, we will implement our recently published mechanisms for supporting the enhancement of learning opportunities³⁰. We will also evaluate our Technology-Enhanced Learning strategy³¹ to reflect new and innovative forms of learning and we will continue to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through sector networks.

During the period of the strategy we will work to establish the Coleg Ffederal to extend the range of Welsh medium provision. We will support the Welsh Assembly Government's international strategy and ensure that higher education institutions contribute effectively to the Bologna process and linked European developments, including through Wales Higher Education Brussels. We will also work with providers to encourage innovation in programme design and modular approaches to improve the flexibility of provision, building on the existing advantages of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and our credit-based funding method. We will continue to meet our statutory responsibilities for initial teacher training

In terms of the Student Experience, we will work particularly towards the following *For our Future* expectations:

- Continuing efforts are made 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.

²⁹ <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>

³⁰ http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2010/W10%2002HE%20Mechanisms%20for%20Supporting%20the%20Enhancement%20of%20Learning%20Opportunities.pdf

³¹ www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2008/W08%2012HE%20circ.pdf

Outcomes:

To measure 'continuing efforts are made to deliver an excellent student experience' and ensuring that 'the student voice strengthens higher education':

- 1. 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.**

To measure 'study through the medium of Welsh to take place in a wider range of programmes and locations in Wales':

- 2. The number of Welsh domiciled students at Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh will rise from 4,667 in 2008/09 to 5600 in 2012/13.**

To measure the internationalisation of higher education in Wales, by continuing to see Wales outperform UK-wide movement in the recruitment of overseas students

- 3. The percentage growth in the number of overseas 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).**

We will also monitor institutional performance in other ways, including through the National Student Survey results; and Quality Assurance Agency Institutional Review outcomes.