

## Higher Education Funding Council for England

Title	Teaching qualifications data for academic staff in higher education institutions 2014-15
To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions
Of interest to those responsible for	Learning and teaching, Human resources, Quality assessment
Reference	Circular letter 33/2016
Publication date	9 December 2016
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Dear Vice-Chancellor or Principal

### **Teaching qualifications data for academic staff in higher education institutions 2014-15**

1. This letter outlines our approach to the publication of the teaching qualifications held by academic staff in HEFCE-funded higher education institutions. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has collected this data since 2012 but it has not so far been published at a detailed level. This letter includes, for the first time, data at institutional level (from 2014-15).
2. This letter also outlines how we plan to work with the sector further to enhance the data and its use in the future.

#### **Background**

3. Following the 2012-13 higher education reforms, HEFCE was asked by the Government to support the publication of anonymised information for prospective and existing students about the teaching qualifications, fellowships and expertise of their teaching staff at all levels (see Annex A paragraph 8). The Competition and Markets Authority has also advised that institutions should provide information about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in course delivery to ensure compliance with consumer law (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>).
4. We have therefore been working with HESA and other sector bodies to improve the availability of this information in a low-burden way. HESA began collecting data on academic staff through its staff record from 2012-13, and in 2013 the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education issued guidance to institutions on publishing staff teaching qualifications ([www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=75#.WD\\_9z7KLSpo](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=75#.WD_9z7KLSpo)).
5. In 2015, having collected two years of data, we reviewed whether it was sufficiently robust for publication. Because there were gaps in the data we decided to publish it at sector level only and to commission research from HESA and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to improve its quality with a view to enabling publication at a more granular level. Their report is published at [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2016/tquals/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2016/tquals/).

#### **Improvement in data collection**

6. The teaching qualification data collected as part of HESA's staff record indicates whether or not individuals hold a credit-bearing higher education teaching qualification, or another

relevant teaching qualification, or have been recognised in other ways for their teaching expertise, including accreditation against the UK Professional Standards Framework (<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>).

7. Staff are only included in the population if their 'Academic Employment Function' is recorded as either 'Teaching Only' or 'Teaching and Research', and their 'Terms of Employment' are 'Open-ended/Permanent' or 'Fixed-term'. Further information about the collection, including a link to the institutional-level data and sector-level data summaries, is attached at Annex A.

8. In the first two years of collection, high proportions of staff were returned as 'not known' (50 per cent in 2013, dropping to 40 per cent in 2014). We therefore agreed with HESA that the data should not be published at institutional level. The latest data from 2014-15 shows an improvement with less than 30 per cent of staff now returned as 'not known'. In light of this, we are now publishing the 2014-15 data at sector and institutional level. Although there is scope for further reducing the proportion of staff with unknown qualification status, we believe that publishing the data may itself help drive this. We have given institutions a preview of their data in advance of publication and their feedback has informed its final presentation.

9. Within the data, there is wide variation across the sector in terms of both the overall number of staff with unknown qualification status and progress towards reducing this. This has been analysed by the HEA and HESA in their report, which seeks to explain these variations in the data quality and to recommend improvements, including changes to the HESA guidance and greater clarity on the purpose of collecting the data.

10. The HESA-HEA report provides information on the proportion of 'unknowns' broken down by a variety of factors including mode of employment, length of service, higher education provider type, nationality and discipline. The report uses 'full person equivalent (FPE)' to measure staff numbers as this is relevant for the report's detailed analysis relating to staff contracts. The data presented by HEFCE is based on headcount as the analysis is only concerned with whether or not teaching qualifications are held.

### **Next steps**

11. We aim to ensure that data which is collected and published provides useful information for students and institutions. We will work with institutions and other bodies to build on the findings of the HESA-HEA report, which provides useful recommendations for improving the data collection. Beyond this, we intend to review the approach and consider the scope for making any necessary changes to the data collection and presentation. As a first step, we are convening a sector workshop in December 2016 to explore the definitions used in this data collection and the options for enhancing the data and its use. The workshop will also consider whether information on initial and continuing professional development, and information on reward and recognition for teaching, might be captured in other ways.

12. We look forward to continuing to work with you in this important area.

Yours sincerely

Professor Madeleine Atkins

Chief Executive

## Annex A: Commentary on institutional data

1. The full institutional dataset is available in the 'Data and statistics' section of the HEFCE website ([www.hefce.ac.uk/data/Year/2016/tqual/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/data/Year/2016/tqual/)).
2. Only HEFCE-funded higher education institutions (HEIs) are included in this publication. Staff are only included in the population if their 'Academic employment function' is recorded as either 'Teaching Only' or 'Teaching and Research', and their 'Terms of employment' are 'Open-ended/Permanent' or 'Fixed-term'.
3. We recognise that further education colleges and alternative providers of higher education also recruit staff with teaching qualifications and other forms of professional recognition and conduct professional development. There are also staff in HEIs with other employment functions or terms that may also be involved in teaching and supporting learning and who may hold teaching qualifications. The workshop in December 2016 will provide a starting point for discussion on how these institutions and staff can best be represented.

### Sector overview

4. Feedback received from institutions following the provision of the preview data has informed the final presentation of the sector and institutional-level data. In particular, the use of 'multiple qualifications' as a data field was found to be unhelpful at an institutional level and has been omitted from the publication.
5. Institutions also queried an apparent mismatch between the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data and information received from the Higher Education Academy (HEA). HESA data on HEA Fellowships and National Teaching Fellowships may not match that provided by the HEA to institutions. The reasons for this are fourfold:
  - the use of a 'multiple qualifications' category in the preview data (as noted in paragraph 3)
  - staff who are unaware that they hold an HEA Fellowship (for example, if they received it through an accredited PGCert)
  - a number of staff on non-academic contracts, not included in the HESA collection, who hold an HEA Fellowship or are National Teaching Fellows (or both)
  - inaccuracies in the HEA's database caused by staff not informing the HEA when they move institutions.
6. The following sector-level tables summarise the data in comparison with the 2013-14 return. It should be noted that, as the multiple qualification field has not been used, the figures for 2013-14 will be different from those published in August 2015.
7. Table 1 summarises the qualification status of staff in the population described in paragraph 2. The status is grouped into those who hold a teaching qualification, those who do not hold a teaching qualification and those for whom this information is not known<sup>1</sup>. Table 2 summarises the distribution of teaching qualification types across the sector.

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<sup>1</sup> A staff member is defined as holding a teaching qualification if in the HESA staff record return they are recorded with one or more of ACTCHQUAL = 01 to 10. A staff member is defined as holding no qualification if they are recorded with ACTCHQUAL = 99, and unknown if ACTCHQUAL = 90.

8. It is important to note that Table 1 is concerned with staff, while Table 2 is concerned with qualifications. The totals in both tables are therefore not comparable. In particular, for Table 1, a member of staff recorded with more than one academic teaching qualification is counted once only with the status 'Teaching qualification held'. However, each qualification is recorded separately in Table 2. Table 2 does not represent the total number of teaching staff at the organisation, it represents the total number of qualifications held.

**Table 1: Teaching qualification status of teaching staff at sector level, 2013-14 and 2014-15**

Year	Teaching qualification held	No teaching qualification held	Not known	Total staff
2013-14	38%	21%	41%	145,773
2014-15	44%	26%	30%	149,010

**Table 2: Distribution of teaching qualifications at sector level, 2013-14 and 2014-15**

Teaching qualifications (HESA field ACTCHQUAL)	Qualifications held 2013-14	Qualifications held 2014-15
Successfully completed an institutional provision in teaching in the higher education sector accredited against the UK Professional Standards Framework	21%	20%
Recognised by the HEA as an Associate Fellow	3%	4%
Recognised by the HEA as a Fellow	28%	28%
Recognised by the HEA as a Senior Fellow	1%	2%
Recognised by the HEA as a Principal Fellow	0%	0%
Holder of a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme Individual Award	1%	1%
Holder of a PGCE in higher education, secondary education, further education, lifelong learning or any other equivalent UK qualification	28%	27%
Accredited as a teacher of their subject by a professional UK body	7%	7%
Other UK accreditation or qualification in teaching in the higher education sector	6%	6%
Overseas accreditation or qualification for any level of teaching	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,718</b>	<b>91,464</b>

## **Further background information**

9. The 2011 Higher Education White Paper proposed to 'encourage higher education institutions to publish anonymised information for prospective and existing students about the teaching qualifications, fellowships and expertise of their teaching staff at all levels' and to ask HEFCE to work with the sector to advise on how best this can be delivered. The 2013-14 grant letter from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills<sup>2</sup> asked HEFCE to pursue the White Paper proposals by working on publication of the 'qualifications and expertise of teaching staff'. This was discharged in part through the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's guidance to institutions on publishing staff teaching qualifications in 2013, and in the publication of sector-level data in August 2015 ([www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/wider/atq/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/wider/atq/)). The 2014-15 grant letter asked HEFCE to work to 'maximise the impact' of this guidance.

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<sup>2</sup> All HEFCE's recent grant letters are available at [www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/govletter/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/govletter/).