

March 2006/11

**Special initiative**

**Allocation of funds**

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Institutions should return their submissions by Friday 16 June 2006

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This document provides details of the funding available to support institutions in enhancing the quality of their learning and teaching for academic years 2006-07 to 2008-09. The funds provided form part of a new Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund which brings together a number of existing funding streams.

# Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

## **Funding arrangements 2006-07 to 2008-09**

## Alternative formats

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# Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

## Funding arrangements 2006-07 to 2008-09

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>To</b>                                   | Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions<br>Heads of universities in Northern Ireland<br>Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges                     |
| <b>Of interest to those responsible for</b> | Learning and teaching, Widening participation, Links with business and the community, Academic and strategic planning, Staff development, Student and staff volunteering |
| <b>Reference</b>                            | 2006/11                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Publication date</b>                     | March 2006                                                                                                                                                               |
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### Executive summary

#### Purpose

1. This document provides details of the funding available to support institutions in enhancing the quality of their learning and teaching for academic years 2006-07 to 2008-09.

#### Key points

2. Over the next three years we will provide a total of £158.5 million for quality enhancement, bringing together a number of existing, complementary funds: funding for learning and teaching strategies; supporting professional standards; student and staff volunteering; and new funding to support teaching informed by research. Combining these funds will give institutions more flexibility to plan activities in line with their institutional missions, while taking account of the national priority areas we have identified.

3. The main strategic purpose of this funding is to embed and sustain learning and teaching strategies and activities that have been steadily developing over the last six years to encourage future institutional investment in continuous improvement. The funds provided form part of a new Teaching Quality

Enhancement Fund (TQEF) which supports developments at the following levels:

#### **Institutional**

- a. Quality enhancement allocations as detailed in this document.
- b. Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs).

#### **Sector-wide**

- c. The Higher Education Academy.

#### **Individual**

- d. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

4. To secure their quality enhancement allocation under the new TQEF, we invite institutions to set out their priority areas for investment across the three years of funding, together with an action plan for each year showing planned spend and commitments in specific areas. We will **not** ask institutions to submit their learning and teaching strategies at the same time. We will invite HEIs to report annually by exception on their planned activity through the annual monitoring statements to HEFCE.

5. We believe that widely embedding strategic support for learning and teaching development is most likely to be achieved if institutions identify their priorities and areas for future development. Later in the year we will publish guidance to help institutions self-assess their learning and teaching strategies.

6. Further education colleges that are providing higher education to 100 or more full-time equivalent students directly funded by HEFCE are included in the allocations. Students within indirect funding arrangements are also included in the allocations.

7. Funding for the third year of the three-year funding period, in 2008-09, is subject to the outcomes of the Government's forthcoming comprehensive spending review.

#### **Action required**

8. To release their funding allocation, institutions should return their submissions (as detailed in paragraphs 39-40) by e-mail to Mary Gazzard at HEFCE to arrive by **Friday 16 June 2006**. Funds will be released to each institution from August 2006, providing they have made a satisfactory submission to us.

## Introduction

9. Over the next three years we will provide £158.5 million for quality enhancement, bringing together a number of existing, complementary funding streams: funding for implementation of learning and teaching strategies; supporting professional standards; student and staff volunteering; together with new funding to support teaching informed by research. Combining these funding streams will reduce the burden on institutions in accessing and monitoring funds, and give institutions more flexibility to plan activities in line with their missions, while taking account of the national priority areas we have identified.

10. The main strategic purpose of this funding is to embed and sustain learning and teaching strategies and activities that have been steadily developing over the last six years.

## Background

### Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

11. Our initial learning and teaching strategy in 1999 (HEFCE 99/26) established a single, integrated fund (the TQEF) to reward excellence and to support the development and enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (HE). Through our investment over the period 1999-2000 to 2005-06, TQEF has supported three strands of developmental work:

- a. **Institutional** – through the formula-based institutional learning and teaching strategies (ILTS) funding.
- b. **Academic subjects/disciplines** – through the Learning & Teaching Support Network (LTSN) subject centres and the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL). The subject centres have now been incorporated within the Higher Education Academy. They will continue to provide subject-specific support for academic

departments and individual practitioners, as well as embedding changing practice from the national initiatives. Since 1995 the FDTL has supported 164 projects aimed at stimulating developments in learning and teaching in higher education and to encourage the dissemination of good practice across the higher education sector.<sup>1</sup>

- c. **Individual** – through the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS), expanded in 2003 to 50 Fellows per year.

### Evaluation of TQEF and outcomes

12. In early 2005 we commissioned a summative evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the TQEF and the links between the three separate strands. ‘Summative evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF)’ includes a mapping of the outcomes against the original and revised aims of the funding, and an assessment of the extent to which learning and teaching strategies have become embedded in institutions’ corporate planning and practice. The key findings of the report are at Annex E. The full report can be viewed on the HEFCE web-site at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Publications/R&D reports 2005.<sup>2</sup>

### Teaching quality enhancement fund 2006-07 to 2008-09

13. Over the next three years we will provide a total of £158.5 million to higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs) to support quality enhancement of learning and teaching. The funds form part of a new Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, and increases our investment through TQEF over the next few years to £525 million, supporting the following initiatives:

#### Institutional

- a. Quality enhancement allocations as detailed in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> We have funded FDTL projects in all of the subject areas originally identified. The initiative is now coming to a close as final projects currently being funded are completed.

<sup>2</sup> The evaluation of the TQEF included a review of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme. The Higher Education Academy has incorporated outcomes of the TQEF evaluation and launched a revised scheme, inviting nominations for 2006 awards. See [www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk) under National Services and Programmes/NTFS for details.

- b. Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs).

#### **Sector-wide**

- c. The Higher Education Academy.

#### **Individual**

- d. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

14. By bringing together existing funding streams – institutions' learning and teaching strategies, the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF), and funding for Supporting Professional Standards – and with new funding for teaching informed by research, we are broadening the scope of funds allocated to all institutions through the new Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund. This will provide more flexibility for institutions to plan their activities, and make it easier to access and monitor funds against priorities.

#### **Funding and eligibility**

15. Allocations for each institution under the new TQEF are shown at Annex A.

16. Previously we have provided funds to FECs through the HE in FE development fund. From 2006-07, we have included directly funded FECs in the allocation to support learning and teaching activities. We do not intend to pay funds where provision is less than 100 full-time equivalent students. All franchised students and those taught by HEFCE-recognised consortia are included in the calculations. Each institution with indirect funding relationships should ensure that both its own students and HE students in its partner FECs receive a proportionate benefit from the funds.

17. Funding for the third year of the three-year funding period, in 2008-09, is subject to the outcomes of the Government's forthcoming comprehensive spending review.

#### **National strategic priorities for learning and teaching in HE**

18. This continued investment in learning and teaching has an overall strategic purpose: to strengthen institutions' own strategies for thoroughly embedding excellence, innovation and professional development throughout their learning and teaching activity. The broad strategic priorities

that we envisage for this investment over the next three years are:

- ensuring that teaching is informed and enriched by research
- supporting continuing professional development activity, enabling staff to meet agreed national teaching standards and building a record of attainment against these standards
- broadening the learning experience through support for student volunteering
- supporting success and progression for students with diverse needs.

19. We expect institutions to take account of these priorities in their submission to HEFCE as well as investing in other learning and teaching activities relevant to their institutional mission.

#### **Teaching informed and enriched by research**

20. In response to advice to Ministers from the HE Research Forum, the Government provided additional funds to support a research-informed teaching environment. In the letter of guidance and funding to HEFCE of December 2004, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, suggested funds be allocated in inverse proportion to research funding.

21. All students have a right to learn in an environment that provides the opportunity to fully develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. A learning environment informed by research provides learners with an understanding of knowledge creation (the research process and research methods) and its application (in economic, social, health and global contexts). It also stimulates key skills of critical analysis, respect for evidence and informed decision-making. We feel that a research-informed environment to stimulate the development of knowledge and skills is appropriate to all levels of student learning in higher education.

22. We have identified four areas where institutions could seek to invest funds:

- keeping the curriculum up-to-date and active, effectively supported by appropriate learning resources linked to recent research

- enabling staff to engage with developments in their field and link to developments in their teaching
- ensuring that courses are designed in ways that support the development of learning outcomes appropriate to the knowledge economy, including appropriate pedagogy – that is, students experiencing research, and developing research skills
- embedding research-informed teaching in institutional structures, including human resources strategies and quality assurance processes.

23. In determining funding allocations, we have used the quality-related research funding allocation to identify HEIs and FECs where research resources are relatively low and research capacity to strengthen the learning environment is limited. Institutions that have larger amounts of research funding relative to their teaching volume will not receive additional funds, but have significant research resources as a natural consequence of their mission. We would expect these institutions to manage the process of supporting teaching with research from existing levels of funding for quality enhancement.

#### **Supporting continuing professional development**

24. Following the commitment in the 2003 White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, to develop agreed national teaching standards for HE, and consultations with the sector in 2004-05, a framework of national teaching standards endorsed by Universities UK, the Standing Conference of Principals and the UK higher education funding bodies was published in February 2006 by the Higher Education Academy. The standards framework covers all staff involved in teaching and supporting student learning, and incorporates standards relating to initial qualification and to staff who assume leadership and mentoring roles for learning and teaching.

25. Funding from this investment over the next three years will support further expansion and development of initial qualifying programmes and a wide range of professional development activity involving new and experienced staff. It will enable

institutions and individuals to demonstrate active commitment to development and innovation in teaching and learning, informed and underpinned by agreed national standards, and will support career development and progression initiatives that recognise and reward evidence of professional excellence.

26. In their action plans for HEFCE, institutions should show how they intend to use the funding to address needs, provision and take-up of professional development for new and experienced staff that takes account of the published national teaching standards, and how they will enable all new staff to obtain a teaching qualification that meets these standards from 2006.

#### **Support for student and staff volunteering**

27. The Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) has generated substantial momentum in HEIs' commitment to supporting student volunteering and has resulted in a significant change in its profile within HEIs. The HEACF was initiated in 2001 as a joint HEFCE/DfES and Home Office fund as part of the Government's wider Active Community initiative. The purpose of HEACF is to enhance the key role played by higher education institutions in the local community. During the period from 2001, HEACF 1 (2001-02 to 2003-04) and HEACF 2 (2004-05 to 2005-06) will have generated and sustained at least 16,500 new volunteering opportunities. The activities undertaken contribute to the fulfilment of each participating HEI's mission, and are required to be consistent with its institutional widening participation, learning and teaching, and business and community strategies.

28. The funds provided will enable institutions to continue to support, maintain and develop both current and new volunteering opportunities. The opportunities developed should help staff and students to gain new perspectives, enable students to develop generic skills, and enhance the quality of life in disadvantaged sections of the community.

29. We will continue to support the annual awards ceremony for staff and students who have shown significant commitment to volunteering activities created from our funding.

30. Institutions should refer to HEFCE 2004/19 for guidance on HEACF for criteria on use of funds, which is relevant to the funding being provided over the next three years.

### **Supporting success and progression for students with diverse needs**

31. Institutions already devote significant activity to engaging with their communities to raise aspirations and recruit students from under-represented communities, for example through Aimhigher. This increasingly diverse student community creates challenges to institutions in supporting and fully meeting their learning needs.

32. One of the current key performance targets in our strategic plan relates to student progression. We provide widening participation resources to institutions to support a range of activity to enable all students to succeed in their courses.

Developments in learning and teaching make an important contribution to this, and institutions can use their learning and teaching funds to maximise student achievement where progression has been identified as a key priority.

### **Equality and diversity**

33. Institutions should ensure that their activities are as open as possible to everyone, regardless of their race, gender, disability status, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

34. Under current equality and diversity legislation, both HEFCE and institutions have positive duties to promote race equality. Forthcoming changes in legislation extend this to include positive duties to promote equality for people with disabilities and equality on the basis of gender. Through the submission requirements for accessing the learning and teaching funding, we ask institutions to show how they will actively meet the positive duties.

### **Good practice and dissemination**

35. The establishment of the Higher Education Academy and CETLs will provide valuable knowledge, expertise and resources to help institutions enhance their learning and teaching over the next three years.

### **Higher Education Academy**

36. The academy aims to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to enhance the learning experience for their students. The academy and its network of 24 subject centres provide services to the sector at multiple levels and have significant resources available to support developments in learning and teaching. For further details, see the Higher Education Academy web-site ([www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)).

### **Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

37. CETLs represent a wide range of expertise and excellence that covers subject-based and thematic areas related to excellence in teaching and learning. They are committed to developing a wide range of dissemination activities that reflect their particular objectives, and all are working closely with the Higher Education Academy to ensure that their work is widely disseminated across the sector. Further information about CETLs, including summaries of their activity and contact details, are on the HEFCE web-site under Learning & teaching/CETL.

### **Quality assurance**

38. To complement our investment in quality enhancement, we are refining quality assurance arrangements to make a greater contribution to enhancement:

- a. The recent review of the Quality Assurance Framework (HEFCE 2005/35) recommended a revised QAA institutional audit process that provides a greater contribution to quality enhancement. This will focus on the strategies used by institutions to enhance the quality of their provision, including actions at institution level to improve the quality of the student learning experience.
- b. We will also work with the Higher Education Academy to identify how the National Student Survey can support improvements to the student learning experience, as well as provide useful public information.
- c. We also intend to revise the quality assurance method for HE in FECs, with an increased focus on enhancement.

## **Applying for funds and monitoring**

39. We have carefully considered the need to ensure the funding achieves the desired impact, and yet is balanced with the need to reduce burden on institutions. In line with the forthcoming new accountability arrangements described in HEFCE 2005/31, we will invite HEIs to report annually by exception on their planned activity through the annual monitoring statements to HEFCE. For FECs we will co-ordinate with other HEFCE funding arrangements (for example, capital) to invite colleges to complete a single monitoring return.

40. To access the funds, each institution should submit:

- a. A cover sheet, as shown at Annex B.
- b. A summary document, of no more than two sides of A4, summarising the institution's priority activity areas for the three years of funding, including the intended impact on students. The document should provide context to the information in the action plans but is intended to minimise the information contained within the action plan tables.
- c. An action plan showing planned activities in each year with an associated budget. A template for the action plan is shown at Annex C.

41. Please e-mail submissions to Mary Gazzard at HEFCE (m.gazzard@hefce.ac.uk) by **Friday 16 June 2006**. We intend to assess submissions and confirm funding to institutions by 31 July 2006. Funds will be released to each institution from August 2006, providing they have made a satisfactory submission to us.

42. We do not ask institutions to submit their learning and teaching strategies. We recognise that these will be updated as a consequence of the further investment and action plans, and that institutions' learning and teaching strategies are now available on the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) web-site.

43. More detailed information, showing how the total allocation for each institution is calculated, is on the HEFCE web-site under Learning & teaching/Quality enhancement. We do not require

institutions to plan activity spend in the national priority areas that mirror these calculations, but institutions may find the information useful as a guide.

## **Self-assessment for embedding learning and teaching strategies**

44. From 2009-10, we intend to incorporate the funding into mainstream teaching funding through a mechanism that supports continuous improvement by institutions. We wish to ensure that learning and teaching strategies and activities become fully embedded in all institutions over the next three years. This is most likely to be achieved if institutions themselves identify their strengths and areas for future development and investment. We have appointed consultants to develop and pilot a self-assessment tool that institutions can tailor to meet their own needs, and we will publish this as guidance later in the year.

# Annex D

## HEFCE regional consultants

| <b>Region</b>        | <b>Consultant</b> | <b>Telephone</b> | <b>E-mail</b>           |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| South East           | Richard Blackwell | 0117 931 7094    | r.blackwell@hefce.ac.uk |
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# Annex E

## A summative evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF): Key findings

Below is an excerpt from the report we commissioned in early 2005: 'Summative evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF)'. It lists the key findings for the institutional strand. The full report can be viewed on the HEFCE web-site at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Publications/R&D reports 2005.

1. Overall the institutional strand of TQEF was widely welcomed and, in many of the institutions surveyed, has been found to be valuable in supporting a range of activities to enhance learning and teaching.
2. Considerable progress has been made: generally most HEIs are now ensuring higher status for teaching, many institutions have changed their promotion and reward arrangements.
3. The formulaic approach to funding the institutional strand of TQEF is widely welcomed by the HEIs surveyed, for two main reasons:
  - the requirement to submit a formal learning and teaching strategy stimulated the institution either to refocus an existing learning and teaching strategy or to prepare one where none existed
  - the funding, although not large, was earmarked for learning and teaching rather than being swallowed up in the general funds of the HEI.
4. Partly through TQEF funding there is now evidence in their learning and teaching strategies that most, though not all, HEIs have taken major steps to build capacity for enhancing learning and teaching in much more systematic ways than previously.
5. The report found that TQEF funding has accelerated what institutions wanted to do: the development of learning and teaching strategies clarified priorities and the funding required. TQEF support helped to make more things possible in a quicker timescale.
6. By earmarking money for learning and teaching, TQEF funding sent important messages to HEIs which would not have been the case if the funds had simply been added to the formula allocation.

In some research-intensive institutions the TQEF funds were particularly valuable in flagging the importance of enhancing teaching, and signalling that it was acceptable to devote central HEI resources to this kind of activity.

7. The consultants conclude that, overall, value for money for the institutional strand has been, at the very least, acceptable across the higher education system, and in some institutions has been reported to be high.
8. The increasing seriousness with which HEIs are treating their learning and teaching strategies has resulted in an environment where considerable good practice now exists and sustainability can be achieved.
9. The consultants found that almost all senior staff consulted were much more confident than previously that the conditions for sustainability existed; in particular that enhancement no longer depended only on enthusiasts but was now more firmly embedded.
10. Nonetheless many felt that the progress made was still somewhat fragile, particularly for some HEIs where highly devolved approaches to TQEF spending were pursued, and where the 2008 RAE was the main institutional priority in the next three years.
11. The evaluation report concludes that several major barriers to effecting change in enhancing learning and teaching remain, including:
  - a. The need to ensure consistent support for enhancement activities at the level of middle managers: deans and heads of departments.
  - b. The high status given to research in many HEIs, and the impact of the 2008 RAE which is thought in many research-active HEIs to seriously threaten progress in TQEF funded activities if earmarked funding were to be lost.

# List of abbreviations

|              |                                                |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CETL</b>  | Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning |
| <b>DfES</b>  | Department for Education and Skills            |
| <b>FE</b>    | Further education                              |
| <b>FEC</b>   | Further education college                      |
| <b>HE</b>    | Higher education                               |
| <b>HEFCE</b> | Higher Education Funding Council for England   |
| <b>HEI</b>   | Higher education institution                   |
| <b>NTFS</b>  | National Teaching Fellowship Scheme            |
| <b>TQEF</b>  | Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund              |



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