

# The publication of HESA data on academic teaching qualifications

## Policy aims

1. This statement confirms to higher education institutions that HEFCE will publish data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)'s staff record on academic teaching qualifications. It complements the notification issued through HESA<sup>1</sup>.
2. In the Government's 2013-14 Grant letter, HEFCE was asked to pursue 'White Paper proposals around the publication of student evaluations of teaching and the qualifications and expertise of teaching staff'<sup>2</sup>.
3. HEFCE wishes to promote enhancement in learning and teaching practice. Gaining an academic qualification in teaching at higher education level, and a commitment to continuing professional development, can support enhancement in teaching practice and the learner's experience<sup>3</sup>. Although they are not a direct proxy, academic teaching qualifications have been identified as an indicator of individual and institutional commitment to the quality of teaching<sup>4</sup>.
4. Recognition of excellence in teaching as well as research is important in academic careers. The structure of the HESA staff record enables us to gather information on teaching qualifications and continuing professional development. This helps us track changing attitudes towards qualifications as an indicator of commitment to teaching quality.

## Publication of teaching qualification data in 2015

5. HESA first collected institutional data through its staff record in 2012-13. While a low return is expected for the first year of a new collection, 51 per cent of relevant staff returned as 'not known' is a particularly high figure. HESA also discovered through a post-collection survey that some institutions experienced challenges in collecting this information. HEFCE and HESA agreed that the data in this first year are insufficient to publish a robust summary at institutional level.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/component/studrec/show\\_file/13025/ACTCHQUAL\\_HEFCE\\_statement.html](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/component/studrec/show_file/13025/ACTCHQUAL_HEFCE_statement.html)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2014/news85409.html](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2014/news85409.html)

<sup>3</sup> The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's analysis of student submissions from 2012-13 has found that students are concerned with value for money, and that having qualified teachers is seen as an important part of this. The National Union of Students' 2012 Teaching and Learning survey (available online at [www.nus.org.uk/en/news/research-publications/](http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/research-publications/)) found that 8.2 per cent of respondents felt that lecturers with better academic qualifications would improve the quality of their learning and teaching experiences. The HEA/HEPI 2014 Student Academic Experience Survey (available online at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/HEPI\\_HEA\\_SAE\\_Survey\\_2014](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/HEPI_HEA_SAE_Survey_2014)) also showed 34% of respondents thought that institutions should focus on providing better training for lecturers as one of their top three spending priorities.

<sup>4</sup> See Gibbs, G. 2010 Dimensions of Quality, York: Higher Education Academy, available online at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/evidence\\_informed\\_practice/Dimensions\\_of\\_Quality](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/evidence_informed_practice/Dimensions_of_Quality)

6. We intend to publish 2013-14 HESA data on academic teaching qualifications at an institutional level in 2015. We are working closely with HESA, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to support institutions in submitting robust information.

### **QAA Code and support**

7. Prospective and current students are entitled to clear and transparent information explaining who they will come into contact with during the course of their studies, for what purpose, and how these staff are appropriately qualified. This should be easy to access and understand.

8. Part C of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) sets out the information that higher education providers are required to supply. The information about the learning opportunities that providers offer should be fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. This includes any information about the teaching, supervisory and learning support staff on a course.

9. Publishing the data collected by HESA on staff teaching qualifications will encourage an open and transparent approach to providing information.

10. In addition to the definitive reference point represented by Part C of the Quality Code, QAA publishes additional guidance for providers and students about providing information on higher education<sup>5</sup>. Providers should consult 'Explaining staff teaching qualifications: Guidance about providing information for students' for additional support<sup>6</sup>.

### **HEA Support**

11. To aid the preparation of HESA submissions the HEA is making data on fellowships available to subscribing institutions.

12. In May 2014, the HEA's MyAcademy portal launched a new 'institutional data' service, which enables nominated contacts at subscribing institutions to obtain data on individuals recognised by the HEA<sup>7</sup>. The service provides the details of associate fellows, fellows, senior fellows, and principal fellows who are recorded as employed at the relevant institution.

13. From Friday 1 August 2014, HEA will also enable institutions to download a .csv export list of individuals recognised by the HEA at each level of fellowship, and whether they hold a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme Individual Award. The file format will be suitable for HESA submissions.

14. While individual fellows should inform the HEA of changes to their employment status, institutions can now use the institutional data service to identify any individuals they do not employ, and to add new staff.

15. We recommend that institutions make use of the institutional data service in reporting accurate fellowship data for future HESA submissions. HESA is also aware of the service, and refers to it in guidance.

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<sup>5</sup> See [www.qaa.ac.uk/improving-higher-education](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/improving-higher-education)

<sup>6</sup> See [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=75](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=75)

<sup>7</sup> See <https://my.heacademy.ac.uk/>

## **Next steps for institutions**

16. Institutions should make every effort to ensure that the data they submit to HESA accurately represent the academic teaching qualifications of their staff. HEFCE, the QAA, the HEA and HESA will continue to support the sector in improving these data, which will be used to explore the relationship between academic teaching qualifications and the development of learning and teaching quality.