

Annex C Representative Bodies in the Higher Education System

Committee of University Chairmen

C.1 The Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) provides a forum for discussion for university chairmen to enable them – by sharing their knowledge, experience and problems – to act more efficiently in helping their councils and boards to discharge their responsibilities, and to contribute their own knowledge, experience and perspective to the consideration of matters of concern.

C.2 The Committee has taken a particular interest in questions of corporate governance and to this end produces this Guide (in association with Universities UK, AHUA, HEFCE, HEFCW and DHFETE), and other material on governance issues. It runs a governor development programme which includes an induction course for new governors and seminars on selected topics, and issues a Newsletter to members of governing bodies three times a year. It also maintains a database on vice-chancellors' salaries and emoluments.

C.3 In addition, the Committee makes representations to Government and maintains a dialogue with other bodies such as the HEFCE on matters within the remit of governing bodies. Where appropriate, it operates in conjunction with Universities UK, for example in its membership of the UCEA, and in respect to representations on particular issues to Government.

Universities UK

C.4 Universities UK was founded as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) in 1918 and comprised the executive heads of universities in the UK. It was incorporated as a private company limited by guarantee and with charitable status in June 1990. It is funded by annual contributions from its member institutions in proportion to their size. Its governing structure consists of a UK Board and three autonomous national bodies: the English/Northern Ireland Council, Universities Scotland and Higher Education Wales. There are regular plenary meetings of all its members.

C.5 Universities UK, in its recently published corporate plan, sets out its vision of a UK system of higher education that is properly funded from a diversity of sources, accessible to all, at the leading edge of world research, and delivering high quality teaching and learning.

C.6 Its declared mission is to be the essential voice of UK universities by promoting and supporting their work, in pursuit of which it will:

- speak out for a thriving and diverse higher education sector which creates benefits for all
- provide and disseminate essential information
- bring people together to share knowledge and good practice.

Higher Education Wales

C.7 Higher Education Wales (HEW) was established in 1996 and is a committee consisting of the executive heads of all Welsh institutions of higher education. It provides a forum for executive heads of institutions to identify and discuss issues which are of common interest to the whole of the Welsh higher education sector and, if applicable, to develop collaborative action. Where appropriate, it also provides a channel for the formulation of joint responses to HEFCW, the National Assembly for Wales and other external organisations.

Standing Conference of Principals

C.8 The Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) consists of the principals and directors of the colleges and institutions of higher education in England and Northern Ireland. It is financed by annual contributions from its member institutions.

C.9 SCOP performs a similar role for the college sector in England and Northern Ireland to that performed by Universities UK for the universities. It provides a forum for the colleges to discuss and address the educational issues of the day; it represents colleges' views to the Government, the Funding and Research Councils and other educational interests; and it supports the work of its members. SCOP works independently, and at times collaboratively with Universities UK and other bodies, to ensure that the views of the higher education sector are understood.

Association of Heads of University Administration

C.10 The Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) consists of the officer in each UK university, immediately below the level of the head of the institution, who has managerial and legal responsibilities across a wide span of the institution's affairs. This officer will normally be the secretary to the governing body of the institution.

C.11 The AHUA acts as the principal focus for the discussion and dissemination of information, and for comment on administrative and management policy, and works closely with other UK bodies concerned with higher education. Specifically it:

- considers and seeks to influence matters of national policy regarding higher education, in so far as they affect the management of universities
- provides a forum concerned with the development of effective management in universities
- encourages good practice
- supports Universities UK in the development and implementation of policy on issues relating to university management
- supports and encourages appropriate training for managerial and administrative staff.

Agencies of Universities UK and SCOP

C.12 Universities UK and SCOP have established the following agencies, the governing boards of which include representatives of one or more of the following: Universities UK, SCOP, Universities Scotland, HEW and the CUC.

- Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA, the national training organisation for higher education) – Universities UK and SCOP
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) – Universities UK and SCOP
- Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) – Universities UK, SCOP and the CUC
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) – Universities UK, SCOP, Universities Scotland and HEW
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), in conjunction with the higher education funding bodies – Universities UK, Universities Scotland, HEW and SCOP
- Higher Education Careers Services Unit – Universities UK, SCOP and Universities Scotland

Staff Unions

C.13 In the pre-1992 universities, academic staff and academic-related staff (such as administrative staff, computer officers and librarians) are represented by the Association of University Teachers (AUT). Most clerical staff are represented by UNISON or by Manufacturing, Science and Finance (MSF).

C.14 In the institutions previously funded by the PCFC and the Welsh LEAs, there are two unions for academic staff:

- the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) which represents staff in the further education colleges as well as the post-1992 universities and colleges
- the AUT, which became a recognised union for academic staff in institutions formerly funded by the PCFC and the Welsh LEAs in 1997, following its merger with the former Association of University and College Lecturers.

C.15 In the institutions previously funded by the PCFC and Welsh LEAs, however, the AUT is not a recognised union for non-teaching staff (the equivalent of academic-related staff in the pre-1992 universities). NATFHE does not make provision for membership by non-teaching staff either. The majority of these staff are represented by UNISON which, in the institutions formerly funded by the PCFC and the Welsh LEAs, thus caters not only for clerical staff but also for administrative staff, including those in senior management positions.

C.16 Many higher education institutions have also recognised other unions, particularly in relation to manual staff, such as the General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU) and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU).

National Union of Students

C.17 Students' unions in individual institutions have the opportunity of affiliating with the National Union of Students (NUS). In Northern Ireland membership is jointly administered by NUS and USI (Union of Students in Ireland).

C.18 The role of the NUS includes:

- undertaking research into issues of relevance to students and co-ordinating national campaigns
- representing student views at national level, for example through contact with Universities UK, MPs etc
- providing training for local students' union officers
- via its commercial arm NUSSL, the NUS is engaged in collective purchasing of goods for sale in students' union shops and bars.

C.19 NUS policy is determined at an annual National Conference to which all affiliated unions may send delegates and submit nominations. The NUS has a National Executive Committee which is elected annually, and is also supported by a salaried staff.