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Summative evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF)

**A report to HEFCE by The Higher
Education Consultancy Group and
CHEMS Consulting**

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report evaluates the overall effectiveness of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) and the linkages between its various strands, but was not asked to undertake a full evaluation of each element of the Fund. Through an investment of £181 million over the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05 TQEF has supported three strands of developmental work to enhance learning and teaching in higher education: institutional, academic subjects/disciplines, and individual.
- 1.2 The institutional strand involves funding higher education institutions (HEIs) to support enhancements in learning and teaching, subject to the production and implementation of learning and teaching strategies. These are required to be approved by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and action taken has to be reported in an annual monitoring statement.
- 1.3 The second strand (academic subjects) includes a network of 24 subject centres - initially undertaken through the Learning Teaching Subject Network (LTSN) and latterly becoming part of the Higher Education Academy, the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL), and the last phase of the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP). Funding for some elements of this strand was also provided by the other funding bodies.
- 1.4 The individual strand consists of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS), and was contracted initially to the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT) and subsequently to the HE Academy.
- 1.5 It is important to note that TQEF followed - not preceded - HEFCE decisions to support subject initiatives through the FDTL and initiate the ILT. Consultation with the sector (HEFCE 98/40 'Learning and teaching: strategy and funding proposals') revealed widespread support for HEFCE's plan to establish a single, integrated fund to reward excellence and to support the development and enhancement of learning and teaching at three levels: the institution, the subject, and the individual academic. Hence, the two key elements of TQEF were [i] providing additional support for institutions, and [ii] seeking to integrate this into existing subject and individual activities by creating three explicit strands, and then over time developing a structure to enable them to be managed.
- 1.6 HEFCE's initial learning and teaching strategy (HEFCE 99/26 'Learning and teaching: strategy and funding') identified five key priorities for TQEF to assist in delivering learning and teaching; providing encouragement and reward for learning and teaching; assisting coordination and collaboration; assisting dissemination and good practice; encouraging research and innovation in learning and teaching; and capacity building.
- 1.7 Subsequently, in view of the 50 per cent participation target (particularly the need to broaden the intake of students into higher education to meet this target), HEFCE issued new priorities which applied to the second phase of TQEF (from 2002-02 to 2004-05:

HEFCE 02/24 'Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund: Funding arrangements 2002-03 to 2004-05'). These new priorities were: widening participation; ensuring fair access to higher education; maintaining and improving retention rates; employability; and encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice.

- 1.8 The report describes the extent to which TQEF activities have supported developments in these areas, and broadly concludes that substantial progress has been made in some of the initial five areas, but that the new priorities indicated in 2002 caused confusion by revising priorities in the middle of the initiative.
- 1.9 The report considers changes in institutional learning and teaching strategies by reviewing a sample of strategies from 25 HEIs. The most significant changes in the last four years (since the last evaluation of TQEF) are:
 - a. A high proportion of HEIs plan to use the largest part of their TQEF funding on central support for learning and teaching - the contrast with 2001-02 is very marked – at that time only 10 per cent gave top priority to spending TQEF funds in this area.
 - b. The greater breadth of student-centred features compared with 2001-02.
 - c. Much less prominent in the 2005-06 plans is spending on staff development: in 2001-02 it featured in 80 per cent of strategies and was the top spending priority. The former ILT focus has almost completely disappeared and has not been replaced by references to the HE Academy (HEIs report funding staffing activities from different resources provided by HEFCE such as Rewarding and Developing Staff money).
- 1.10 In terms of meeting targets in the annual monitoring statements (AMS), detailed information is provided in Appendix F, which summarises the conclusions of HEFCE staff in reviewing the AMS. The latest evaluation reports available are all of performance reported against targets for 2003-04; 19 were marked as "satisfactory" and six as "good".
- 1.11 The formulaic approach to funding the institutional strand of TQEF is widely welcomed by the HEIs we surveyed for two main reasons: the requirement to submit a formal Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) stimulated the institution either to refocus an existing LTS or to prepare one where none existed; and the funding, although not large, was earmarked for learning and teaching rather than being swallowed up in the general funds of the HEI. Almost all institutions welcomed a formula funding approach over a reasonably long time frame, and contrasted this favourably with short-term bidding initiatives.
- 1.12 Case study visits to examine the effectiveness of TQEF were undertaken to 13 HEIs carefully sampled to take account of various key criteria. Each was asked for quantified evidence of the impact of the TQEF funding on the quality of learning and teaching, but it was very difficult to get any hard statistical evidence - certainly none which is comparable across the sample. However, some institutions collect statistics on some outputs of TQEF funded activity, for example the growth in the use of virtual learning environments. A

team from the University of Lancaster and the Open University that has been formatively evaluating the subject centres over several years has found similar difficulties.

- 1.13 Respondents generally believed that it was difficult to be precise about how far students' learning experience had improved during the lifetime of TQEF. Everyone hoped that progress had been made and quoted illustrative examples to support that hope. The difficult issues are causality and dimensions such as spread, level of impact and extent of embedding.
- 1.14 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. Indeed everyone we sought evidence from (and a wide range of data were collected) were united on the benefits of the institutional strand. A note of caution needs to be sounded in accepting the views of educational developers (although they were just one source) because it is in their interests that TQEF was successful - and that it continues. However, many of those interviewed hold senior institutional positions and have a sound understanding of the realities of both quality enhancement and institutional funding. In these circumstances such a united view of the benefits of a centrally funded initiative is rare.
- 1.15 The benefits of the subject strand vary according to which activities are examined. So far as the subject centres are concerned, most of our data came from separate studies by the Lancaster team edited for this review and our interviews with 18 professional bodies (see 1.19 below and Appendix C of the Technical Appendices.) In one of its most recent reports the Lancaster team concluded that: 'the degree to which the LTSN [subject centre network] has become embedded in the professional concerns of academics is clear from our data'.
- 1.16 The 2004 Lancaster survey data indicated that a substantial majority of respondents were aware of their subject centres, although 17 per cent of heads of departments were unaware of the LTSN and 25 per cent of their subject centre. Higher awareness levels were consistently found in post-1992 HEIs as compared with pre-1992 HEIs, and the authors concluded that 'the newer universities are showing higher levels of engagement with the LTSN which might be an indicator of the different positioning of research and teaching within the subject departments of the two sectors'.
- 1.17 Awareness is, of course, a very weak measure of impact, and therefore the Lancaster studies also assessed the contribution of subject centres to the work of sample departments and found that some impact was starting to take place on professional practice and the management of teaching. For example, 58 per cent of respondents in a survey conducted by Lancaster in 2004 claimed that 'a subject centre had made a contribution to their department's work' (the assessment was higher [63 per cent] for teaching staff than heads of department [53 per cent]). The survey also gave information on the importance of a subject centre's contribution to a department: a smaller proportion of respondents (38 per cent) thought that it was either 'very important' or 'important' (27 per cent of heads). More impact was expected over time, with 51 per cent of respondents

saying that it was still too early for full impact to have been achieved and 67 per cent believing that the subject network had the potential to affect teaching and learning.

- 1.18 In addition to survey data the Lancaster team have also undertaken a qualitative analysis of the impact of five sample subject centres, concluding that the centres appeared to be making rather more impact than the subject centres as a whole seemed to be in 2002. However, the team concluded that more work needed to be undertaken on enhancing impact within academic departments, where there was still a tendency to work with staff enthusiasts.
- 1.19 Despite the progress made by subject centres there remain real issues to be addressed, and it is a matter of judgement as to whether the subject centre network should have made more impact to date. For example, as we have noted, a minority of heads of departments in the Lancaster study were unaware of their relevant subject centre. That said, it is important to remember that the primary initial target for subject centres was discipline practitioners. The 2004 Burgess review of subject centres, moreover, recommended that 'the activities of subject centres should move beyond engagement with individuals towards changing departmental practices and evaluating their effects'. We understand that the subject centres are addressing this issue as part of their ongoing strategic development.
- 1.20 The evaluation reviewed the linkages between FDTL projects and subject centres (although it was not asked to undertake an evaluation of FDTL itself). Directors of projects in FDTL 3 and 4 were surveyed and asked about the closeness of their relationship with subject centres, and a clear difference of view emerged, with just over half identifying a close relationship and the others not. A note of caution related to timing needs to be sounded here however: FDTL 3 projects preceded the creation of subject centres, although FDTL 4 projects began in 2002, some two years after contracts were awarded for the subject centres.
- 1.21 A majority of FDTL projects reported significant help in the design of the early stages of their project, and over 80 per cent acknowledged a subject centre's help in publicising and disseminating their work. Most agreed that some of the take-up of their projects by HEIs other than their host institution was due to the work of the subject centre, although only two felt that centres contributed 'a lot' in this regard. However, almost none reported that their project outcomes were being sustained by a subject centre, now that FDTL funding had ceased (although it is worth noting here that sustaining FDTL project outcomes was never a specified role for the subject centres). This is disappointing since institutional visits showed that the number of institutions continuing to support the work started under their FDTL projects is also small.
- 1.22 FDTL project directors generally reported modest progress in terms of any widespread dissemination and adoption of FDTL project results in their own HEI beyond the host department (although inevitably limited by the subject focus). This was, in general, matched by views in the HEIs visited where the dissemination, adoption and potential transferability of project outcomes varied greatly. In some cases a strong fit was reported

between FDTL projects, subject centres, and institutional learning and teaching strategies, but in others FDTL projects were reported to be relatively isolated with little realistic chance of institutional or broader subject adoption - a serious reservation as the latter was key to their rationale.

- 1.23 FDTL project directors were also asked about their relationship with NTFS fellows, in the individual strand of the TQEF. In some cases FDTL project directors had gained fellowships or become subject centre managers so that forging linkages and collaboration were not an issue. In general, there was little close working, although this is not unexpected, since it would be an unusual coincidence for an institution to gain a fellowship in a discipline area covered by an FDTL project, unless the key players were identical. The relationship between subject centre managers and NTFS fellows was stronger, although far from consistently so.
- 1.24 In order to try and assess the impact of the subject centres outside higher education, a sample of professional bodies was surveyed. They were generally aware of subject developments, generally highly supportive of current work, and believed that they had raised the profile of learning and teaching within the professions concerned and provided a channel for information about higher education.
- 1.25 The diverse information sources available and the absence of evaluative data on FDTL inevitably mean that conclusions on the benefits and impact of the subject strand are difficult to make with any certainty. Generally those with subject-related perspectives tend to be broadly, even strongly, disposed towards the potential utility of the relevant subject centre, although there are exceptions. Where individuals have had positive experiences of working with a subject centre or using the outputs, that correlates with their view of the usefulness of this strand.
- 1.26 Information on the contribution of the individual strand of TQEF (the NTFS) was obtained by a separate parallel study commissioned by the Higher Education (HE) Academy. A summary of the resulting data was provided by the Academy and is included in Chapter 6. Amongst other things this concluded that although the NTFS has had an impact at the individual level (in terms of raising the status [as teachers] of the majority of academics who have won a fellowship), it has had substantially less impact at departmental and institutional levels, and its value for money is questionable.
- 1.27 The Academy study also noted difficulties relating to the nature and purpose of the scheme, for example whether it acts as a prize that recognises past performance or a grant that supports future excellence. Survey data obtained for the Academy suggest that there was a significant difference of view in this area between the award holders and pro vice-chancellors (PVCs) (academic) within institutions. The Academy study noted that 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion from the responses of all groups that revisions to the scheme aimed at maximising its future value for money should consider decoupling the individual award (as a prize for past performance) from the project grant (to improve quality at department or institutional level)'.

- 1.28 The main aim of HEFCE's learning and teaching strategy funded through the TQEF funding initiative has been to contribute to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. Overall, this evaluation concludes that partly through TQEF funding there is now evidence in the learning and teaching strategies that many HEIs have taken major steps to build capacity for enhancing learning and teaching in much more systematic ways than previously. This also applies to many - not all - research intensive universities. In most institutions surveyed, the data were clear that earmarked TQEF funding has generally been of real benefit. Such models of developing good practice in HEIs need more publicity via the HE Academy.
- 1.29 There is evidence of synergy between some - not all - of the various strands of TQEF. However, despite being an integrated strategy at the start TQEF was not explicitly managed to produce synergistic effects, although it was assumed that they would develop, partly through the publication of two early good practice documents and, latterly, the work of the TQEF national co-ordination team. Within HEIs visited there were considerable differences in the extent to which synergy has been achieved. In several cases where there is particularly strong institutional (and usually centralised) commitment to enhance learning and teaching, then outputs from the subject and individual strands have been brought together to enhance aspects of the learning and teaching, and substantial progress has been made. In such cases the value of TQEF funding has been high. Conversely, in other HEIs there has been much less synergy, and it only comes about at the departmental level through the work of enthusiasts.
- 1.30 This report considers the current drivers for change in enhancing learning and teaching, and also looks at the extent to which previous barriers have been removed. Considerable progress has been made, and generally most HEIs are now ensuring higher status for teaching, and changes in many institutions have been made to promotion and reward arrangements. However, several major barriers remain: the high status given to research in many HEIs; the impact of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which is thought in many research active universities to seriously threaten progress in TQEF-funded activities if earmarked funding were to be lost; and, more generally the need to ensure consistent support for enhancement activities at the level of middle managers: deans and heads of departments. In regard to this last point, our view is very close to that of the recent Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report on barriers to the implementation of good human resources practice¹ which drew a similar conclusion.
- 1.31 The report reviews a number of issues concerning the effectiveness of dissemination, transferability and sustainability in relation to TQEF activities, particularly those in the subject strand. It concludes that the policy and expectations of HEFCE in each of these areas could have been clearer, and that a number of long running issues associated with FDTL have not been addressed. Sustainability affects TQEF in a number of ways: in the ability of HEIs to sustain their learning and teaching strategies and the efforts supported by TQEF funds and to scale them up to increase the volume of activity; for subject centres in their ability to sustain the services they offer; for FDTL projects to sustain the

¹ For reference see Chapter 7

availability of materials and project outcomes; and for some NTFS fellows sustaining the outputs of their work.

- 1.32 So far as the institutional strand is concerned, the increasing seriousness with which HEIs are treating their learning and teaching strategies provides an environment whereby sustainability can be achieved and considerable good practice now exists. Overall, we 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 because of the developments noted in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, many felt that the progress made was still somewhat fragile, particularly in 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.
- 1.33 In collecting data we came across a number of respondents who felt that our concerns over dissemination, transferability and sustainability in TQEF were almost equally applicable to the new centres for excellence in teaching and learning (CETLs). In particular, it was felt that the new centres would need more explicit guidance than currently existed about their roles in relation to the dissemination and transferability of their work, and the extent to which it is supposed to be sustainable in the long term. We propose that HEFCE carefully review what lessons can be applied to the implementation of the CETLs from their experience of TQEF.
- 1.34 We were not asked to review the management of TQEF in detail, but rather make overall comments on issues which affected its effectiveness. Numerous changes in management have taken place in the life of TQEF. Although it was actively run via the TQEF management committee by HEFCE in its early days, since 2002 it has been operated with a 'light touch' by HEFCE and has essentially been running its course, largely through management arrangements with the national co-ordination team and the ILT.
- 1.35 We were specifically asked to comment on the reporting burden on HEIs. This is modest under current arrangements, and we detected little complaint from institutions about the work involved, which typically only runs to an average of three pages of reporting in the AMS. In our judgement the reporting requirement is reasonable, and compatible with the requirements of Higher Education Regulation Review Group (HERRG) as we understand them.
- 1.36 Because of an early decision not to collect baseline data, formative evaluation of the initiative has been generally weak and data which would have enabled HEFCE to have clear evidence of on-going impact have not been collected.
- 1.37 In summary, although some strands have been more effective than others and synergy between them has been limited, overall the results of TQEF have been greater than the sum of its parts. In particular the multi-stranded nature of the initiative has provided overall

encouragement for the enhancement of learning and teaching that entirely separate programmes in the three areas would have been unlikely to have achieved.

- 1.38 Although our conclusions about TQEF are generally positive, with reservations about FDTL and the individual strand, the issue of additionality needs to be raised: was the TQEF simply funding something that would have happened anyway? This is clearly not the case in relation to the subject and individual strands. Had the funding bodies not provided support the LTSN and subsequently the HE Academy would not have existed in its current form and nor would the NTFS. The key test of additionality lies in the institutional strand, and presents a real policy dilemma: by definition any initiative which involves providing additional funding on the basis of activities prioritised in institutional strategies risks failing the additionality test, in that it is to be expected that a serious strategy will identify those funding priorities that an HEI would have wanted to do anyway. In this sense the value for money tests of sustainability and additionality point in opposite directions: the former requires commitment and the setting of priorities, whilst the latter argues that funding should not be provided for activities that would be done anyway - that is precisely those things that might have low potential sustainability!
- 1.39 For most HEIs the way around this dilemma has been twofold. First, TQEF funding has accelerated what institutions wanted to do. The development of learning and teaching strategies clarified priorities and the funding required (whether centralised or devolved). TQEF support helped to make more things possible in a quicker timescale. Second, 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 university resources to this kind of activity. This would not, of course, have been possible unless a receptive environment existed within most HEIs to take advantage of the earmarking.
- 1.40 Overall, we therefore conclude that - with the possible exception of the individual strand - value for money (VFM) has been at the very least acceptable across the higher education system, and in some institutions has been reported to be high. The VFM of FDTL cannot be assessed as no data on the performance and outcomes of the projects exist at present.
- 1.41 So far as future funding is concerned, resources for the subject strand of TQEF are part of the overall support of the funding bodies for the Academy, and therefore secure in the medium term. However, funding for the institutional strand has only been extended for one year from 2005, and therefore expires in 2006. At current levels of provision this is approximately £17 million. There are arguments both for and against continuing funding the institutional strand of TQEF against approved strategies.
- 1.42 However, if funding is to continue, we do not think that it should be at a reduced rate. Indeed current funding for small institutions is very modest and to reduce it further would not be viable. Therefore the issue is essentially whether to continue to earmark funding

or (as for Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative) to roll it up into the recurrent grant. The issue is not new for HEFCE, and from the beginning of TQEF the question of how long earmarking would be required has been an acknowledged policy issue.

- 1.43 Chapter 10 of the report considers the factors both in favour of and against continuing to earmark funding for the institutional strand, and on balance, concludes that a move to wrap up TQEF into recurrent funding from 2006-07 would run a significant risk. First, in many - not all - HEIs much of the work funded by TQEF might be set back, especially because of the very particular circumstances associated with pressures of the 2008 RAE. Interestingly, without exception all the PVCs in the case study institutions we visited also shared this view - uniquely (in our experience) arguing for continued earmarking. Second, the work of the HE Academy will provide a substantial amount of good practice and associated information which institutions will need to integrate into their own learning and teaching strategies in the next three years. To remove earmarked funding just at the time that this information starts to be generated in significant quantity could be considered perverse. Additional material on good practice will, of course, also be provided by the CETLs.
- 1.44 One priority associated with the continuation of earmarked funding for a further three years, should be the need to ensure consistent support for enhancement activities at the level of middle managers: deans and heads of departments. The report notes that particularly in highly devolved institutions and research intensive HEIs, such support is not always consistent and can act as a barrier to further enhancement of learning and teaching.
- 1.45 In making this proposal for a continuation of earmarking there is, of course, a seeming paradox: this report describes how most institutions have made generally good progress in embedding, but if this were really the case, then it could be argued that earmarked funding would not be needed to protect the work in place. Although there is some truth in this argument, the reality is that circumstances differ within institutions: some have sufficiently robust systems in place to ensure that the work that TQEF has supported would not be set back if funded through the block grant; whereas in others the various pressures to be faced in the next few years mean that there is a much greater degree of risk. This is often the case in research intensive HEIs where the 2008 RAE is a particular distraction to the continued development of learning and teaching strategies.
- 1.46 Finally, the report identifies a number of areas where further work could usefully be undertaken to guide enhancement in the next few years, including the publication of good practice information on the progress made by some HEIs in integrating their learning and teaching strategies with other TQEF and Academy activities.

2 Introduction, Terms of Reference and Methodology

- 2.1 In December 2004 HEFCE commissioned The Higher Education Consultancy Group and CHEMS Consulting to undertake a summative evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF). The detailed terms of reference are attached in Appendix A, but in summary the overall intention of the evaluation was to 'provide information on the major benefits to the field of learning and teaching in higher education derived from the allocation of funding under the TQEF since 1999, within the context of a changing policy environment. This should include a mapping of outcomes against the original and revised aims of the funding, and where possible, an assessment of the extent to which learning and teaching strategies have become embedded in institutions' corporate planning and practice'.
- 2.2 The terms of reference also included a requirement to: assess the effectiveness and sustainability of activities funded by TQEF; review the extent to which they have taken account of national priorities for higher education; identify the remaining barriers to change; assess any additional burdens falling on HEIs as a result of reporting requirements; consider the future need for any continuation of elements of TQEF funding; and identify the types of evidence that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may wish to collect in future related to the long-term impact on the student learning experience and further embedding good practice within HEIs. In addition, it was subsequently agreed to add a note on comparative international developments and this is provided in Appendix E.
- 2.3 It is important to note that HEFCE did not require the evaluation to review in detail either the historical development of TQEF (which is known), or the specific elements of TQEF. Rather the focus was on the overall effectiveness of TQEF, the synergies and integration between different aspects; the overall benefits resulting; and related issues.
- 2.4 The evaluation was undertaken by a team of four, all of whom had previous experience of various aspects of TQEF: Allan Schofield, Head of The Higher Education Consultancy Group who acted as Project Director; John Fielden, Director of CHEMS Consulting; Professor George Gordon, Director of the Centre for Academic Practice at the University of Strathclyde; and John Webb, an independent consultant formerly with PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The Structure of the Report

- 2.5 Chapter 3 provides a very brief contextual overview of TQEF and description of its main elements. Although the policy context has changed significantly since 1999, a major test of the effectiveness of TQEF is to explore the extent to which a subject based approach has had an impact in enhancing learning and teaching, and to do this it is necessary to review some of the planning assumptions of HEFCE at the time.

- 2.6 Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then consider, in turn, the three main strands of TQEF: the institutional, subject, and individual. The analysis is then integrated in Chapter 7 which draws overall conclusions about the impact and benefits of TQEF. Chapter 8 follows with a short analysis of the dissemination, transferability and sustainability of TQEF outcomes. The management and reporting of TQEF is considered briefly in Chapter 9, and the future of TQEF-funded activities in Chapter 10. The report does not make formal recommendations, but does summarise in Chapter 10 a number of issues that HEFCE and the Higher Education (HE) Academy may wish to consider. These are repeated in the Executive Summary.
- 2.7 In order to make the main report of a readable length, all the main technical issues and data summaries have been placed in the Technical Appendices. Appendix A provides the full terms of reference for the evaluation. Appendix B presents short anonymised summaries of the institutional case studies which provide valuable accounts of the approaches of higher education institutions (HEIs) to using TQEF funds and the resulting impact. Appendix C provides detailed summaries of some of the other data sources used, and D provides data of surveys of directors of projects in FDTL 3 and 4 and directors of relevant subject centres. A short note on comparative developments is appended at E, and Appendix F is an Excel spreadsheet summarising some of the key aspects of the learning and teaching strategies reviewed (see immediately below).

The Work Programme and Methodology

- 2.8 The work programme was extensive and involved:
- a. A documentary analysis of all previous studies and evaluation reports concerned with TQEF.
 - b. An analysis of a sample of 25 institutional learning and teaching strategies with associated annual monitoring statements on the claimed impact of TQEF funding and the extent to which activities were felt to be embedded.
 - c. Collecting stakeholder opinion through an extensive programme of interviews.
 - d. Case study visits to a carefully selected sample of 13 HEIs using criteria agreed with HEFCE.² Although the programme for such visits varied it typically included meetings with the pro vice-chancellor (PVC) academic (or equivalent), the head of educational development, meetings with any Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) project or subject centre staff, and with a sample of heads of departments.
 - e. An e-mail survey of Phase 3 and 4 FDTL project holders and HE Academy subject centres on aspects of the effectiveness of TQEF.
 - f. A telephone survey of a sample of 18 of the main professional associations/bodies on the effectiveness of the subject strand of TQEF.
 - g. A telephone survey of a sample of 20 educational development officers in HEIs on the overall effectiveness of TQEF.

² Fifteen HEIs were originally selected but one visit was cancelled at the last minute due to a bereavement, and one other HEI felt unable to host a visit within the time available. Criteria for selection of institutions included: location; mission; size; sector (Universities UK and Standing Conference of Principals); retention rates; hosting FDTL projects and subject centres; and size of TQEF funding.

- 2.9 In two major areas of TQEF, work either had been or was being done which it was inappropriate to duplicate. The first involved an evaluation of the subject centre network funded under TQEF and now run by the HE Academy. The team that undertook that study (from the University of Lancaster and the Open University) was commissioned by HEFCE to summarise its data for this report, and extracts are included in Chapter 5 in the review of the subject strand. The second was a separate evaluation of the individual strand of TQEF (the National Teaching Fellows Scheme) which had been commissioned by the HE Academy, and was undertaken in parallel with this study. The Academy has provided a summary of that report which forms Chapter 6. Its conclusions are consistent with relevant data that we collected from our own sources.
- 2.10 The methodology underpinning the evaluation has been primarily qualitative, supported by quantitative data from the other two studies mentioned immediately above. The main conclusions arising from the qualitative data have been triangulated through the use of different sources, including: institutional action on TQEF as reported in learning and teaching strategies and annual monitoring statements; expert opinion through the qualitative surveys of educational developers and FDTL projects/subject centres; and user communities as represented by the telephone survey of key professional bodies. The data presented in the report show considerable uniformity of views from each area.
- 2.11 In an effort to supplement the limited quantitative data, statistics on relevant indicators were sought from the case study institutions visited, but in almost all cases available data (whilst useful for the HEIs concerned) were not of a kind that enabled any quantifiable assessment to be made of the value of TQEF funding, nor of comparative impact across the sector. For example, statistics on the increased use of virtual learning environments after investment of TQEF funds are useful data for the institution concerned, but are of no use in assessing value for money from the perspective of HEFCE. Where relevant, the experiences of students were sought, but direct evidence of the impact of many TQEF-funded activities on student learning generally does not exist, and causality cannot be determined. For example, using TQEF funds to establish a central learning and teaching support unit may help to create the conditions for enhancing learning, but actual improvements depend on numerous factors not involving TQEF.
- 2.12 All the institutions surveyed monitor the effectiveness of their learning and teaching strategies in ways that have meaning to them, and return data to HEFCE through the annual monitoring statement. Many also evaluate particular initiatives and projects. However, since there is no agreed common sector-wide set of indicators it was not surprising that the available data ranged in coverage and specificity. The sector is cautious, in general, over the use and appropriateness of broad indicators to assess complex processes and outcomes.
- 2.13 Consequently, overall the methodology used in the study sought information on trends and processes, and evidence of connectivity of activities to strategic aims and objectives, whether institutional, sector, or HEFCE determined. In no sense were the visits to institutions formal audits of performance or challenges to institutional claims of activity

undertaken. Indeed such an approach would have been incompatible with HEFCE 'light touch' approach to monitoring.

3 An Overview of TQEF

- 3.1 In order to provide a context for the rest of the report, this short Chapter briefly sets out the background to TQEF and the contextual issues in which any analysis of its effectiveness - and therefore the evaluation - must be set. No attempt is made to be comprehensive³.
- 3.2 Through an investment of over £180 million over the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05, TQEF has supported three strands of developmental work to enhance learning and teaching in higher education: institutional, academic subjects/disciplines, and individual. The institutional strand has centred on funding HEIs to support enhancements in learning and teaching subject to the production and implementation of institutional learning and teaching strategies. These are required to be approved by HEFCE and action taken has to be reported in an annual monitoring statement. Initially HEFCE wanted TQEF funding for HEIs to be based on competitive bidding, but after a consultation process it was agreed to provide funds on a formulaic entitlement basis.
- 3.3 The second strand (academic subjects) includes a network of 24 subject centres initially undertaken through the Learning Teaching Subject Network (LTSN) and latterly becoming part of the HE Academy, the FDTL and the last phase of the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP).
- 3.4 Finally, the individual strand consists of the National Teaching Fellows Scheme (NTFS), and was contracted initially to the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT) and subsequently to the HE Academy.
- 3.5 The TQEF was created in 1998 after Dearing Committee recommendations which led to the creation of the ILT. The proposals of Dearing as subsequently implemented by the funding bodies were intended to raise the status of learning and teaching in higher education, and this became a key element in the adoption of HEFCE's own learning and teaching strategy.
- 3.6 Other important influences on the development of TQEF were:
 - a. Concerns about the effectiveness and dissemination of the first rounds of the TLTP and FDTL which led to increasing recognition of the difficulties of getting central initiatives adopted without strong institutional and subject level commitment.
 - b. A review of the Computers in Teaching Initiative (CTI) and the Teaching and Learning Technology Support Network (TLTSN), which recommended that both

³ A fuller account of the history and establishment of TQEF is set out in Chapter 2 of the *Formative Evaluation of TQEF*, HEFCE, 2001 available on request.

should be wound up and replaced by a network of subject centres supported by a generic centre and managed via a central unit. The adoption by HEFCE of these recommendations led to the formation of the LTSN, which was subsequently integrated into the TQEF.

- c. Around the same time Professor Graham Gibbs was commissioned to produce a paper for HEFCE (building on his earlier writings) which argued that a subject based approach should be the central plank in HEFCE-funded enhancement initiatives. This was broadly accepted by HEFCE. The discussion of the effectiveness of the subject strand (Chapter 5) tests the validity of this original conception: to encourage change and develop good practice in learning and teaching in the specific context of higher education.
 - d. HEFCE had already adopted a subject based approach to encouraging innovation in learning and teaching through the project-based FDTL Programme. Indeed at the time FDTL was the only funding for teaching that rewarded excellence, in that only departments with high scores for teaching quality were eligible. Accordingly, subsequent phases of FDTL were integrated into the subject strand of TQEF.
- 3.7 In this chronology, it is important to note that TQEF followed - not preceded - HEFCE decisions to support subject initiatives and initiate the ILT. Rather, the two key elements of TQEF were providing additional support for institutions and seeking to integrate this into the existing subject and individual activities by creating three explicit strands, and then over time developing a structure to enable them to be managed.
- 3.8 The initial learning and teaching strategy of HEFCE identified five key priorities for TQEF to assist in delivering: providing encouragement and reward for learning and teaching; assisting coordination and collaboration; assisting dissemination and good practice; encouraging research and innovation in learning and teaching; and capacity building. A formative evaluation of TQEF in 2001 concluded that in its early stages TQEF was assisting progress in some of these areas but not in others.
- 3.9 Subsequently, in view of the 50 per cent target (particularly the need to broaden the intake of students into HE to meet this target), HEFCE issued new priorities in its revised learning and teaching strategy, which were to apply to the second phase of TQEF (from 2002-02 to 2004-05): widening participation; ensuring fair access to HE; maintaining and improving retention rates; employability; and encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice. These new national priorities now feature so prominently in funding body guidance to HEIs that the most recent monitoring of institutional strategies uses these, rather than HEFCE's original five guiding purposes, as key analytical criteria. In Chapters 4 and 7 the report reviews the extent to which institutional learning and teaching strategies and TQEF more generally have taken these on board.
- 3.10 Since the establishment of TQEF, a number of other initiatives has been developed by HEFCE. These include earmarked funding relating to widening participation, professional development, rewarding and developing staff, and retention. These activities did not exist

when TQEF was framed, but have been made to accommodate them, especially through the institutional strand.

- 3.12 However, perhaps the most important developments have been the creation of the HE Academy and the forthcoming introduction of Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). The Academy has become the focus for providing integrated support on learning and teaching and the student experience, and the future of the subject and individual strands of TQEF (which it runs) will be part of a broader debate about the funding and role of the Academy, and the priorities associated with its numerous activities. However, the future of the institutional strand after 2006 is uncertain (a one-year extension was given from 2005), and this issue is considered in Chapter 10. We consider briefly in Chapter 10 some of the implications for CETLs of issues arising out of TQEF.

4 The Main Benefits and Impact of the Institutional Strand of TQEF

- 4.1 This Chapter reviews the benefits and impact of the institutional strand of TQEF, and draws on four main sources: a review of 25 learning and teaching strategies (LTS) for 2005-06 submitted to HEFCE by the 15 institutions which we approached to conduct visits and a further 10 HEIs which were not visited; comparisons with a similar review of strategies carried out as part of the formative evaluation of TQEF for HEFCE in 2001; discussions with senior staff during the institutional case study visits; and the telephone survey of educational developers which sought to gain information on the extent to which the benefits in case study HEIs were replicated more broadly across the sector.

Learning and Teaching Strategy Documents

- 4.2 The key features of the 2005-06 LTS documents are summarised in Table 1 on the following page. Since these reflect HEIs' intentions for 2005-06 they do not always address the same priorities as described in the case studies (see Appendix B) which are based on current activities. The table records stated intentions of HEIs (such as a commitment to spend TQEF money on dissemination) and does not interpret LTS. Therefore the fact that a particular type of spending is not indicated in the table does not mean that the HEI is not undertaking it, but only that no specific mention is made in the LTS.
- 4.3 Table 1 identifies only those activities within the LTS on which the HEI intends to spend TQEF funds. Generally an institution's LTS is drawn more widely than this, and the evidence of the case studies indicates that TQEF funds now generally represent somewhere between quarter and half of the total spent by most HEIs on implementing their strategies. This means that caution is needed in concluding that any particular aspect of TQEF has or has not met the requirement to address the key priority areas identified by HEFCE. For example, one priority area was employability, and measures to address employability feature in most LTS documents. However, in many cases such activities are reported as being funded from other sources, and TQEF resources are

being used to support them directly in only a few HEIs. In such cases it would clearly be a mistake to assume that employability was not an institutional priority because it was not generally listed in TQEF spending.

- 4.4 The most striking feature of the table is the proportion (58 per cent; 14/24) of HEIs which plan to use the largest part of their TQEF funding on central support for learning and teaching – usually a teaching development or learning support unit. The contrast with 2001-02 is very marked: at that time only 10 per cent (5/50) of HEIs gave top priority to spending TQEF funds on integrated central support and only 18 per cent (9/50) planned any expenditure at all in that area. This appears to reflect a shift away from distributed developments towards a more strategic institution-wide approach, and we return to this below.

- 4.5 A second strong pattern to emerge from Table 1 is the greater breadth of student-centred features compared with 2001-02. At that time, enhancement projects designed around student needs were primarily curriculum-centred, with some attention given to advice and developing key skills. By contrast, in the 2005-06 plans, projects reflect a broader focus on students' needs, such as developing more flexible modes of delivery in order to reduce barriers of time and place to gaining access to learning opportunities; giving attention to the creation of personal portfolios, and actively gathering feedback from students on their learning experiences.
- 4.6 It seems reasonable to assume that this broadening of the agenda has been stimulated by national priorities such as widening participation and retention of the resulting broadening cohort of recruits (such as flexibility of learning and learning support activities), employability (both in terms of delivering knowledge and skills likely to be deemed relevant by employers and in relation to support for personal development plans (PDP) and the creation of personal portfolios), and increased attention given to the student experience (such as feedback activities and research on student satisfaction).
- 4.7 Much less prominent in the 2005-06 plans is spending on staff development: in 2001-02 it featured in 84 per cent (42/50) of LTS documents and was the top spending priority in 80 per cent (40/50) of these. The former ILT focus has almost completely disappeared (now 4 per cent (1/25) compared with 62 per cent (31/50)) and has not been replaced by references to the HE Academy. These former priorities appear to have been absorbed by the human resources funding stream - and more recently professional development funding. They continue to appear in the overall LTS but are not generally areas for spending TQEF funds.
- 4.8 We looked specifically at the extent to which widening participation was reflected in the LTS. It is mentioned in all 25 strategies reviewed, in some cases as part of an overall institutional commitment within which the LTS was being implemented, and in others as a major element of the LTS itself. However, TQEF funds are used for the activities relating to widening participation in 2005-06 in only five HEIs, within all other cases the planned activity being funded from different sources.
- 4.9 In the case of dissemination, the table reflects the stated intention of seven HEIs to spend TQEF funds specifically on that process in 2005-06, although once again the absence of TQEF spending does not mean it is absent from a strategy. What does not show up is the extent to which dissemination is a natural function of the central support units which occur in the majority of cases.
- 4.10 In terms of meeting targets in the annual monitoring statements, detailed information is provided in Appendix F, which summarises the conclusions of HEFCE staff in reviewing the annual monitoring statement (AMS). The latest evaluation reports available are all of performance reported in the AMS against targets for 2003-04. Performance in 19 was marked as 'satisfactory' and in six as 'good' (although the framework used by HEFCE offers no stated criteria for evaluators to use when applying these terms). Where there

were deviations from planned activity these were in all cases accepted as minor or appropriate in changing circumstances. Targets and activities for 2004-05 were all reported as acceptable, and no HEFCE evaluator took the opportunity given by the monitoring framework to draw attention to any major matters of concern. This rating generally accords with our experience in the HEIs visited.

- 4.11 At first sight a reduced proportion of institutions plan to spend funds on innovation awards. This may be explained to some extent by the much higher proportion supporting central provision, which often includes a discretionary innovations fund. Nevertheless, this pattern again supports an apparent shift away from stimulating distributed innovation projects towards more centrally prioritised development or scaling-up successful local innovations.

Evidence from the Case Studies

- 4.12 An anonymous report on each of the case study visits is included in Appendix B. During these visits we reviewed the impact of all three strands of the TQEF with a range of staff involved, and in this section we concentrate on the institutional strand of funding and its impact.
- 4.13 HEIs were required to submit an LTS of acceptable standard to HEFCE to qualify to receive their share of the institutional strand of TQEF funding, allocated formulaically according to size. After several resubmissions all HEIs received funding and have continued to do so through successive iterations of the process; evaluation of the submissions and 'light touch' monitoring is carried out by HEFCE's regional teams.
- 4.14 In retrospect, this process has been widely welcomed by the HEIs surveyed for two main reasons:
- a. The requirement to submit a formal LTS stimulated the institution either to refocus an existing LTS or to prepare one where none existed - a process described by one respondent as 'shifting our LTS from platitudes to performance indicators and monitorable outcomes'. This process of reflection and sharpening has been repeated with successive iterations and extensions.
 - b. The funding, though not large, was earmarked for learning and teaching and therefore provided both leverage and lubrication for the implementation of LTS, rather than being swallowed up in the general funds of the HEI. Such funding is reported to be of both practical and symbolic value, and in the words of another respondent: 'the value of the TQEF funding has far exceeded its monetary worth'.
- 4.15 HEIs are required to report on progress in the implementation of their LTS through a section in the annual monitoring statement submitted to HEFCE. The HEIs consulted found this requirement to be appropriate and not unduly onerous (see Chapter 9). Indeed a few would have welcomed clearer guidance on what kinds of performance measures would be judged by HEFCE to be appropriate. Almost all institutions welcomed a formula

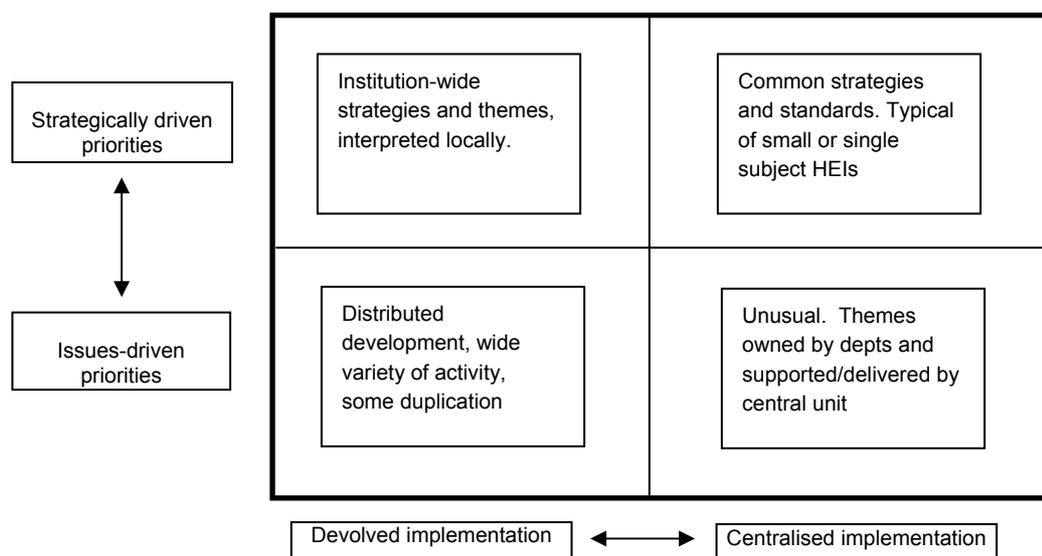
funding approach over a reasonably long time frame, and contrasted this favourably with short-term bidding initiatives.

4.16 The ways in which TQEF funding has been applied and the LTS implemented is very varied, even within the sample of case study institutions, and it is dangerous to over-generalise about the implementation mechanisms. Nevertheless we were able to identify two major differentiators which help to characterise the range of practices. These are:

- the extent to which the priorities and resource allocation are primarily determined either *strategically* (through over-arching strategies and plans) or *by issues* (in response to learning and teaching issues and needs and opportunities to innovate)
- the extent to which implementation is *devolved* or alternatively *centralised*.

4.17 Using these two axes, four type segments can be broadly distinguished:

Diagram A: Spectrum of Practices in the Application of TQEF Funding



4.18 With the exception of the lower right-hand type (only one example), the case studies were remarkably evenly distributed across the other three. Strikingly, almost all the institutions had initially opted to enable a significant degree of devolved change and implementation (the two left-hand types), for example through innovation or development funds, or encouraging local projects to bid for resources. The difference between the upper and lower types reflects broadly the length and breadth of the perspectives used when identifying objectives, setting development priorities and selecting projects for support. The implications of this model for sustainability are considered in Chapter 8.

4.19 Many of the case studies reported that a devolved approach has been successful in generating ideas and initiatives, and in engaging staff and departments, or building their confidence. However, they also reported that, on reviewing progress, such an approach may give rise to fragmented development and duplication of effort (in one extreme case,

a university has three different virtual learning environments operating on the same campus in different faculties). As a consequence, the majority report that they have now changed - or are considering changing - their approach so as to better align development with institution-wide priorities, and to enable the scaling-up of successful initiatives. Of course, the logic of HEFCE requiring strategies is to encourage HEIs to move to the upper two quadrants of the diagram.

- 4.20 This pronounced common trend of initial experimentation followed by consolidation should not (in our view) be regarded as a waste of TQEF resources: the ground gained in terms of staff enthusiasm and confidence on enhancement issues would have been difficult to achieve in any other way, and the specific ideas generated and lessons learned are valuable. Together with the current process of reflection and refocusing, this seems to be a positive development within the HEIs concerned.
- 4.21 We asked each HEI for quantified evidence of the impact of the TQEF funding on the quality of learning and teaching, but it was very difficult to get any hard statistical evidence - certainly none which is comparable across the sample. However, some institutions collect statistics on some outputs of TQEF funded activity, for example the growth in use of virtual learning environments. The Lancaster team has found similar difficulties in assessing the impact of the LTSN subject centres. There are several reasons for this lack of quantified evidence of impact:
- a. First, HEIs were not asked to provide impact data in any consistent form. Rather the whole approach was to develop individual strategies with any impact data related to the specific items in that strategy. We note in Chapter 9 that HEFCE explicitly declined to collect system-wide data that might allow overall impact to be assessed.
 - b. Second, as noted above, developments in most of the institutions visited were initially largely distributed, and while there are some very good examples of measuring the impact of individual projects against projected output and outcome targets, institution-wide measures of achievement against the LTS were not put in place.
 - c. Third, there are major differences of view about how the quality of learning and teaching can be measured, and therefore how the impact of TQEF can be defined. There are, of course, models of pedagogical excellence, but these can generate as much heat as light: for example a standards-based approach to quality (as audited by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education); fit-for-purpose notions; and so on.
 - d. Fourth, even where it might have been possible to collect data of a very simple quantitative kind (for example, the number of academic staff attending staff development courses) there was no institutional need to do so - and any case it would be impossible to identify whether the key driver for such activity was TQEF or any other source.
- 4.22 Progression and retention rates may appear to offer another relevant measure of quality, but these are subject to so many other variables that those we interviewed did not think

that the impact on progression and retention of changes in learning and teaching could be reliably isolated.

- 4.23 We are therefore left with the largely subjective views of the staff interviewed, coupled with the data in the annual monitoring statements. Here we can report a low level of ambiguity and generally high degree of correlation in the views expressed which reflected largely positive impacts in the institutions visited. Overall, some HEIs have made rapid progress in implementing their LTS and others less so, but in all cases progress had been made. The main features observed are listed following, grouped under five broad headings: infrastructure, processes, culture, technology and student experience. Not all features occur in every HEI, though all show some of them, and in no institution are all the features funded by TQEF: many are funded from the recurrent grant. Nevertheless, they all fall within the scope of the institutional LTS as strengthened by the TQEF initiative and can therefore legitimately be regarded as a consequence of it.

Infrastructure

- 4.24 In case study HEIs changes to institutional structure to enhance learning and teaching and funded as a result of TQEF included the following, all of which can come together under a PVC Academic, or Learning and Teaching:
- a. Establishing an institutional learning and teaching committee (two-thirds of the case study institutions drew attention to this). This was sometimes a new body, sometimes an earlier body strengthened by the availability of TQEF funds.
 - b. A central support unit acting as a motor for change and providing guidance and assistance on learning and teaching matters. This was the case in more than 75 per cent of the institutions visited.
 - c. Increasing integration (under the control of a relevant PVC and usually a central learning and teaching support unit as above) of financial and other resources allocated to learning and teaching developments.
 - d. School and/or departmental learning and teaching champions and committees or groups, acting as a channel for communications and dissemination. In some HEIs these are regarded as increasingly effective networks for identifying and sharing good practice across departmental boundaries. Again this was found in more than three-quarters of the institutions visited.

Processes

- 4.25 Changes to institutional processes for enhancing learning and teaching in case study HEIs and funded as a result of TQEF included:
- a. Major increases in staff development to support learning and teaching improvement. In many institutions it has been mandatory for new academic staff to follow a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) or equivalent as part of their probation. Even where the requirement is no longer mandatory, staff have continued to enrol on courses. Overall, there seem to be significant increases in the number of staff days spent on staff development for learning and teaching, although specific data are

weak. Increase in attention to staff development for learning and teaching is very widespread – specifically mentioned by 85 per cent of LTS reviewed.

- b.** Vital growth in active innovation and development projects of all kinds, many of which are local initiatives funded through TQEF supported development awards, bid for and led by individuals and small teams, with support and guidance from central units. Increasing emphasis on replicable projects and scaling-up successful ones. Over 60 per cent of the case study institutions now fund learning and teaching innovation awards of one kind or another.
- c.** A variety of mechanisms in place for dissemination of good practice. These include: the activities of networks of departmental learning and teaching champions (see above); the requirement for development projects to make reports and presentations of their outputs; cross-institution development days; and learning and teaching fairs, websites and publications. Some institutions are beginning to encourage pedagogical research and external publication and more than half drew specific attention to this as part of their LTS.
- d.** Increases in efficiency in the use of staff contact hours, principally through increased use of technology. In some subject areas such as medicine, where there is exceptionally strong pressure on staff time, this is a particularly marked response and several innovation projects have been designed primarily with efficiency in mind. (This is not generally an institution-wide development, but is an area being developed by individual schools and faculties.)

Culture

4.26 Changes to institutional culture described in learning and teaching strategies and funded as a result of TQEF included:

- a.** Increased individual and institutional confidence in learning and teaching matters and in undertaking change and development projects. Evidence here is largely anecdotal but it reflects recognition of a significant area of cultural change.
- b.** More reflection on teaching experience and practices and awareness of a growing body of scholarship of learning and teaching. Our attention was drawn specifically to this activity in 54 per cent of the HEIs visited.
- c.** Greater acceptance of peer review of teaching – again anecdotal but a material level of change was noted.
- d.** A shift in focus of attention from teaching to learning to more student-centred approaches. The evidence for this is largely attitudinal as reported by members of staff and is reflected in the greater attention and number of projects given over to student support and enhancing the student experience (see ‘The Student Experience’ following).
- e.** Identification of teaching pathways within the new single spine pay scale as career options with clear criteria for achieving professorial level salaries at the apex of the pathway.
- f.** Performance review processes and promotion criteria giving increased value to learning and teaching performance. Promotion to more senior posts accessible through high performance in learning and teaching. These last two areas together

reflect a very marked development, with over 80 per cent of HEIs reporting positive changes to career pathways and promotions criteria relating to learning and teaching performance.

- g.** Use of ICT in learning and teaching is no longer the province of enthusiasts and is rapidly becoming mainstream behaviour for academic staff. Much of this builds on the widespread adoption of virtual learning environments. Other funding sources (the Joint Information Systems Committee, JISC, human resources strategy) have contributed to this development. At more than half of the HEIs our attention was drawn to the increased embedding of ICT in support of learning and teaching as mainstream behaviour.
- h.** Some more integrated working between academic, human resources and information technology staff to ensure that change and development projects are effectively supported in all their dimensions from the early stages. This is usually a feature of the central learning and teaching support units described above.

Technology

4.27 Changes to the adoption of technology in case study HEIs for enhancing learning and teaching and funded as a result of TQEF included:

- a.** Steadily increasing adoption of information and communications technology for a variety of purposes: institution-wide (to increase flexibility of learning); supporting wider participation; enriching and enhancing learning opportunities; and more locally to give access to specialised resources and otherwise inaccessible experience, and to increase efficiency in use of staff time.
- b.** The growth in the use of virtual learning environments, both proprietary and in-house developments. Some institutions are now migrating to second-generation implementations, having learned from the first wave of experience.
- c.** The use of virtual learning environments varying widely from being primarily a means of communication with tutorial groups and of posting conventional lecture notes, presentations and assignments, to richly populated repositories of resources, flexible and innovative learning and assessment materials, video demonstrations, web portals, and even support environments for remote fieldwork projects.
- d.** Seventy-seven per cent of HEIs drew attention to the use of a virtual learning environment as a key element in the implementation of their LTS.

The Student Experience

4.28 Overall, enhanced student support was a specific feature of the LTS in 77 per cent of the institutions visited. Changes to the student experience identified in learning and teaching strategies and funded as a result of TQEF included:

- a.** Emphasis on greater flexibility of delivery of learning and teaching to students, to remove barriers of time and place and support wider participation objectives – this appears in more than half of the LTS. It is largely implemented through increased use of technology.

- b. Wider range of learning opportunities for students, including e-learning, hands-on and work-based experience, problem-based learning and the use of group work.
- c. Increased attention given to assessment and self-assessment, including peer and group work-based assessment.
- d. Increase in student support and reduction in the number of students identified as high risk. More than 75 per cent of HEIs drew attention to this.
- e. Work in progress on the development of electronic personal development plans for students. Thirty-eight per cent specifically mentioned this feature.
- f. Some involvement of students in the design and evaluation of learning and teaching development projects. (In one case, the students union had successfully applied for development funding to lead three internal learning and teaching projects.)
- g. Some HEIs extending the scope of their LTS by giving attention to the quality of further education in HE (31 per cent drew attention to this area).
- h. There is some evidence of rising student expectations of variety of delivery, and increasing discrimination about the quality of the learning experience reinforced by increased attention given to measuring student satisfaction. Forty-six per cent of HEIs report giving attention to student satisfaction as a significant feature of their LTS.

The Perspective of Education Developers

- 4.29 In order to triangulate the data provided in the reviews of LTS and case study visits, a telephone interview was conducted with a sample of heads of educational development in HEIs. In all 20 were approached: one declined and two did not respond, so structured telephone interviews were held with 17 (85 per cent response rate). In addition, educational developers were also seen in the institutional visit and a small number also featured in the stakeholder interviews. In total therefore 35 heads of educational development were surveyed in some way, representing approximately 30 per cent of English HEIs.
- 4.30 Overwhelmingly respondents believed that the approach of producing an institutional LTS has worked, and from all those interviewed there was support for the HEFCE approach for approving and monitoring institutional LTS. Respondents welcomed the degree of trust implicit in the approach and the fact that it enabled and empowered institutional setting and ownership of priorities. Almost without exception respondents viewed the institutional strand as the most beneficial for their institution. Most believed that it had achieved a great deal and that it had developed and matured over time. It was generally perceived as enabling, legitimising, supporting, rewarding and recognising quality enhancement.
- 4.31 Each respondent cited examples of valuable activity, and noted that the implementation of strategy needed to be seen in the context of the culture and management style of the institution. Whilst every HEI was reported to have made progress in implementing its own strategy there were differences in the rate and nature of change, however. The level and degree of engagement within institutions with the LTS is affected by factors such as the longevity of an institutional strategic approach to learning and teaching and the favoured

means of progressing it. As noted above in our comments on the implementation of LTS, many institutions have put in place a widespread network of champions - enthusiastic individuals who play a key role in shaping and progressing the institutional strategy at various levels within the HEI. Almost invariably these individuals hold designated posts or learning and teaching awards.

- 4.32 Educational developers confirm a marked trend both towards strengthening central support and also ensuring greater integration across institutions in pursuit of the key objectives of the LTS. Some educational developers believed that institutions should already have had support mechanisms such as a learning and teaching unit in place as a core activity (ie not funded from TQEF), and therefore that all of the resource should have been applied more directly toward enhancement of the student learning experience. Units established relatively recently are probably at an earlier stage of development than their longer established counterparts. Whilst they are not necessarily less effective, developmental work by its nature requires time to mature so that impact in these HEIs is likely to be less well advanced.
- 4.33 Respondents generally believed that it was difficult to be precise about how far students' learning experience had improved during the lifetime of TQEF. Everyone hoped that progress had been made and quoted illustrative examples to support that hope. The difficult issues are causality and dimensions such as spread, level of impact and extent of embedding.
- 4.34 A note of caution needs to be sounded in accepting the views of educational developers because it is in their interests that TQEF is successful - and continues. However, many of those interviewed hold senior institutional positions and have a sound understanding of the realities of both quality enhancement and institutional funding. In these circumstances such a united view of the benefits of a centrally funded initiative is rare.

Conclusions

- 4.35 Generalisations about institutional benefits and impact are, of course, difficult to substantiate on the basis of qualitative data alone, even where multiple sources have been used. Nonetheless with this caveat the data obtained give, overall, a clear picture of positive change in enhancing learning and teaching, and an associated increase in embedding strategies. In most institutions at senior levels LTS appear to be accepted, valued, and are being used to guide major developments in enhancement. Of course, there is still much that remains to be done to implement strategies fully and consistently across HEIs, and in Chapter 7 remaining barriers to change are noted. These include - but are not restricted to - the difficulty in some HEIs in sustaining an argument for further enhancement when teaching is already highly regarded as measured by public league tables, and in many of the case study institutions there remains the counter-pull of the 2008 RAE on the attention and time of staff.
- 4.36 Nevertheless, in the institutions surveyed some changes are unlikely now to be reversed - for example the creation of learning and teaching committees (or equivalent), major

investments and developments in ICT and virtual learning environments, and many of the underlying cultural changes. In some cases, the central learning and teaching support unit is now fully funded from the institution. More vulnerable are central units that remain dependent on TQEF funding and activities funded through a highly devolved and distributed approach.

- 4.37 In the 2001-02 formative assessment of the TQEF initiative, the impact of the institutional strand was described as 'positive but shallow rooted'. Now it can reasonably be said that in many institutions the roots have developed vigorously, but that given the forecast cold blasts of the RAE and increasing pressure on institutional resources, there remains concern as to whether they are capable of sustaining the enhancement of learning and teaching without some continued direct irrigation!

5 The Main Benefits and Impact of the Subject Strand

- 5.1 The subject strand of TQEF now consists of two main elements: the network of subject centres (previously part of the LTSN and now part of the HE Academy), and the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning - now in its final phase. (The final phase of TLTP was also part of TQEF when it started, but this is not considered below.) In order to assess the benefits and impact of both elements, this Chapter brings together data from various sources noted in Chapter 2 and then integrates it into an overall concluding section.

a) The Conclusions of the Team from the University of Lancaster and the Open University

- 5.2 A team from the University of Lancaster and the Open University has undertaken substantial work for the LTSN and the HE Academy by undertaking both a formative evaluation of the LTSN subject network since 2001, and also an analysis of the role and configuration of the subject centre network for a review group chaired by Professor Burgess. The following short section summarises its conclusions on the impact, value and benefits of the subject strand based on the data it has collected.
- 5.3 The main work of assessing impact, begun in 2002, involved a survey of 270 heads and staff of academic departments. A similar survey was undertaken in 2004 (249 respondents) which allows some trend data to be identified. In the final report on the second phase of LTSN (July 2004), the authors conclude that 'the degree to which the LTSN has become embedded in the professional concerns of academics is clear from our data. The survey of heads of departments and other staff showed very high levels of basic awareness, with in total 86 per cent of those responding having heard of the LTSN, and 80 per cent of the subject centre for their discipline'.
- 5.4 Nonetheless although overall awareness is now well established, a minority of respondents still appear unaware: in the 2004 survey 17 per cent of heads of departments reported lack of awareness of the LTSN and 25 per cent of their subject

centre. Higher awareness levels in post-1992 universities are consistently found in these data, and the authors conclude that 'the newer universities are showing higher levels of engagement with the LTSN which might be an indicator of the different positioning of research and teaching within the subject departments of the two sectors'.

- 5.5 The Lancaster group acknowledges that awareness by itself is a weak measure of impact, and has used a seven stage model of change to try and assess growth in the influence of the LTSN (level 1 is awareness and level 7 direct impact on change). Using this model there is evidence that the work of subject centres is starting to have an impact on changing aspects of professional practice and the management of teaching (mid points of the Lancaster impact model). For example, 58 per cent of respondents in 2004 claimed that 'a subject centre had made a contribution to the department's work' (the assessment was higher [63 per cent] for teaching staff than heads of department [53 per cent]). The survey also gave information on the importance of a subject centre's contribution to a department: a smaller proportion of respondents (38 per cent) thought that it was either 'very important' or 'important' (27 per cent of heads). More impact was expected over time, with 51 per cent of respondents saying that it was still too early for full impact to have been achieved and 67 per cent believing that the subject network had the potential to affect teaching and learning.
- 5.6 Such data suggest that while the value to academic departments of a subject centre's work is much less developed than awareness of it, there is potential for the value to increase. There are, however, real constraints: as the Burgess Review points out, the staffing of most subject centres is small and frequently not secure; some centres have been more effective and productive than others; and the management of, and co-ordination between, centres could have been strengthened. In general the Review concludes that 'the subject centre network is working well', and recommended the re-contracting of one subject centre, and the move to a federal structure for two others.
- 5.7 The Lancaster team sought evidence of direct impact of centres on the student experience within HEIs, but found this difficult to discern. However, they cited 'reported improvements, improved sensitivities, a wider repertoire and knowledge of student learning, a more serious approach to learning designs etc, that we can say is indicative evidence of a better "learning environment" for students that can be traced directly to the work of subject centres'.
- 5.8 In addition to survey data the Lancaster team has also undertaken a qualitative analysis of the impact of five sample subject centres, concluding that 'the centres appear to be making rather more impact than was our impression of subject centres as a whole in 2002'. Data from these five were cross referenced with survey information to give the following indications of positive impact: greater activity than might have been expected on the basis of the TQEF funding provided; centres creating identities and brands; providing opportunities for exchange and discussion and examples of good or interesting practice; continuous professional development; and providing a counterweight to the domination of the RAE.

- 5.9 However, the authors conclude that more work needs to be undertaken on enhancing impact within departments: 'at present, it seems as if subject centres are having considerable influences on heads of departments and course leaders, but it is not clear that this is translated into whole department change. In other words, we suspect that for subject centres to make significantly more impact they – and the HE Academy as a whole – need to develop better ideas about how change might be fostered in departments and programme teams. At the moment, there are suggestions that the centres are following a well-trodden staff development approach by appealing to individuals willing to be interested by their work. The appointment of departmental representatives by some centres helps to break from this path, but it is possible that more and more serious thinking needs to be done about ways of promoting departmental and programme changes in higher education'.
- 5.10 They also conclude that centres need to work more together on shared issues, a particular issue for the Academy with the restructuring of the generic centre: 'we have seen hints that general themes, especially general policy (employability, widening participation and e-learning), are not regarded with quite the suspicion that attached to them in the early days of the LTSN. Yet..... there is little to indicate that subject centres see themselves to be strongly in the business of working with their colleagues in a subject area to address ways of responding to shared policy problems. On the other hand, evidence from elsewhere shows how much centres have put into employability-related activities. We raise, then, a question we have raised before about the balance between attending to general policy themes and attending to the wants of the subject community. With this go questions about the ways in which subject centres work with each other. Although there are not as many collaborations as some hoped for in early 2002, there is evidence of a few, active networks'.
- 5.11 The authors also conclude that there have been some unexpected consequences of the work of centres 'which have arisen from the continuation of the initiative and its burgeoning success. In particular, the success of the initiative over and above the level expected by the host universities has led to a desire to see longer term planning leading to a more financially secure basis for the subject strand to operate as a permanent part of the HE sector'. Second, 'staff of the subject strands who may initially have seen this as a shorter term initiative, now see a longer term involvement which has implications for academic professional development'.
- 5.12 Overall the Lancaster team concluded that there is 'a high level of awareness of the LTSN, there is a growing participation in activities sponsored or co-ordinated by the LTSN, and there is now a small, but growing, evidential base that suggests that teaching and learning is being influenced by LTSN activity. This is a remarkable achievement in a sector so jealous of its autonomy, so strident in its desire to direct itself and so confident in its own capacity to produce solutions. It is also indicative of a sea change in the culture of higher education, with the emergence of teaching and learning as a legitimate core professional concern for the academic community amid a series of systemic pressures on the quality of teaching and learning that should be taken seriously'.

- 5.13 Our own view is to be more cautious in that we think more might have reasonably been expected of the subject centre network. We also think that the conclusions of the Lancaster team are somewhat generous, although we accept this is a matter of interpretation and judgement.
- 5.14 However, the conclusions of the Lancaster team now broadly represent the view of the HE Academy about subject centre effectiveness in that they were echoed in the report of the Burgess Review of the subject centre network which concluded that ‘the subject centres have become highly valued by academic communities and are now recognised by many as key agencies of support across the higher education sector. On the basis of the evaluations of subject centres and the evidence collected we can reaffirm the important role which subject centres perform. They need to evolve, developing their role as new opportunities arise within the changing environment of learning and teaching in higher education. As this evolution occurs we see the subject centres as a crucial element in the Academy’s first five years’.

b) Data from Subject Centres and FDTL Projects

- 5.15 It needs to be reiterated at the outset that this evaluation was not asked to review FDTL, but rather to consider the linkages between FDTL and other parts of TQEF. We do, however, make some brief comments on FDTL in the conclusion to this Chapter.
- 5.16 Since the subject strand itself contains two elements (the subject centres and the FDTL projects), the first issue is to review how well these have integrated with each other. In this section we also ask whether FDTL projects have had any impact on the institutional strategies for learning and teaching. The answers to these questions need to be set in the historical context of each. The subject centres were created from early 2000 onwards in response to HEFCE’s call for tenders and most were operational by the end of that year. In contrast the programme of FDTL projects began in 1996, as the following table shows:

Table 2: Roll-out of FDTL Projects

	Timing of the projects	Number of projects	Subjects covered
FDTL 1	1996-	44	15
FDTL 2	1997-	19	8
FDTL 3	2000-	33	16
FDTL 4	2002-	38	13
FDTL 5	2004-	33	11

- 5.17 The FDTL programme was designed to reward excellence in teaching as measured by the outcomes of teaching quality assessment. Those institutions where the relevant subject assessments were ranked as ‘excellent’ were invited to bid for project funding to develop their work in improving learning and teaching and to disseminate it to wider audiences⁴. The FDTL projects predated HEFCE’s learning and teaching strategy which

⁴ See HEFCE 1998/68 ‘Evaluation of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning’ for a description of the origins of FDTL and an evaluation of Phases 1 and 2.

was announced in November 1997, but they were brought within its scope and under the ambit of the Learning and Teaching Committee as soon as it was established. As a result, after 2000 all tenders for FDTL projects were required to be prepared in collaboration with the appropriate subject centres and departmental bidders were also expected to give more attention to collaboration with other institutions and dissemination of project outcomes. Thus, it should be expected that there would be much greater evidence of cooperation between the two subject strands in FDTL 4 and 5 than in the three earlier phases.

- 5.18 There are two general points to be made about the FDTL legacy which the TQEF inherited: first, it is very long lasting since the fifth round will not be completed until the academic year 2007-08 at least, making a 12-year cycle for the whole programme. Some of the fifth round projects are only just getting underway. Second, its incidence of subjects means that for any one phase only certain subject centres are involved. Both Phases 3 and 4 each affected seven different subject centres. For this reason one can expect there to be interaction between subject centres and FDTL projects at certain points in the 12-year cycle.

Subject Centres and FDTL Projects

- 5.19 The evaluation surveyed project directors of projects in FDTL 3 and 4 and asked about their relationship with subject centres (for details see Appendix D). Of those who responded (35 per cent; 24/68) there was a clear difference of view about whether there was a close working relationship, with just over half saying yes and the others no. A majority (61 per cent; 11/18 of FDTL 4 respondents only) reported significant help in the design of the early stages of their project, and over 80 per cent acknowledged the subject centre's help in publicising and disseminating their work. Most agreed that some of the take-up of their projects by HEIs other than their host institution was due to the work of the subject centre, although only 2/24 felt that the centres contributed 'a lot' in this regard. However, almost none reported that their project outcomes were being sustained by a subject centre, now that FDTL funding had ceased (although it is worth noting here that sustaining FDTL project outcomes was never a specified role for the subject centres). This is disappointing since institutional visits showed that the number of institutions continuing to support the work started under their FDTL projects is also small.
- 5.20 In parallel we surveyed the relevant subject centres for FDTL 3 and 4 projects and found a perception of good collaboration. Subject centre managers reported that in 40 of the relevant 58 FDTL projects there was either regular or very close working together. In general, the survey data suggest that subject centres felt that collaboration was slightly more effective than project directors. The main barrier was that subject centre staff had limited time to support FDTL projects, in view of their small staff numbers and multiple demands on their time. In general however subject centre managers felt that the FDTL projects had had a positive impact on their subject communities in terms of enhancement of learning and teaching.

- 5.21 One of the tasks of the national co-ordination team at the Open University and subsequently of the senior advisers at the HE Academy has been to promote links between the various strands of the TQEF and the FDTL projects. An example of this is the creation of thematic networks which link together those FDTL projects and NTFS fellows working in common areas. The Academy's web-site for the FDTL 4 projects illustrates the coverage and scale of these networks.⁵ Despite the efforts of the national co-ordination team, the evidence is that the relationship between FDTL projects and subject centres was shallow in some cases, although satisfactory in most. A scrutiny of FDTL project files confirmed that there were some examples of little or no collaboration being sought or reported. There could be several reasons for this, for example, that the topic was not readily transferable to other institutions or that little emphasis was given to this kind of collaboration.
- 5.22 Responses from the survey of project directors suggests a significant difference of view about all aspects of the integration of FDTL with other aspects of TQEF, and cited views ranged from 'the TQEF initiative allowed projects on an astonishingly large range of topics and helped to foreground teaching to a degree which was very welcome' to 'we do have some deep concerns about the amounts of public money used to support developments whose impact remains unclear despite substantial interest and effort by individuals'.

The Impact of FDTL Projects on Institutions

- 5.23 The first (and only) evaluation of Phases 1 and 2 of FDTL in 1998 covered the activities which predated the establishment of the subject centres. It concluded that as regards institutional strategies they had had very little impact. We sought to update this in the light of HEFCE's renewed emphasis on dissemination of project outcomes and collaborative working.
- 5.24 Most FDTL projects were wholly subject based, although some covered generic topics and involved a range of academic departments. This meant that their natural audience was outside their own institution and, unless their project director was influential within the institution (as for example a member of the Learning and Teaching Committee), the opportunities for influencing institutional strategy were limited.
- 5.25 Another potential mechanism for internal transfer of any generic good practice emerging from FDTL projects is through the work of the institutional educational development unit, as disseminator and local change agent. Strengthening this link was one of the recommendations in the 1998 evaluation of FDTL, and in this recent survey we asked FDTL project directors about this and found that 70 per cent had received such help from educational developers. Several cited examples of the influence their project had had internally such as:
- they had given presentations at their university's learning and teaching conference
 - they supported the institutional team in preparing a successful CETL bid

⁵ See a typical theme site at www.heacademy.ac.uk/706.htm

- the project's outcomes had been adopted in the university's strategies
- three other departments were using the tools developed by the project
- project team members were now on central committees.

5.26 FDTL project directors generally reported modest progress in terms of any widespread internal dissemination and adoption of FDTL project results. This was, in general, matched by views in the HEIs visited where the dissemination, adoption and potential transferability of project outcomes varied greatly. In some cases a strong fit was reported between FDTL projects, subject centres, and institutional learning and teaching strategies, but in others FDTL projects were reported to be relatively isolated with little realistic chance of institutional or broader subject adoption - a serious reservation as the latter was key to their rationale.

5.27 Indeed, the difficulties of dissemination and adoption appear to be reflected in the tone of the summative comments from FDTL project directors when asked about the impact of their work, and the following are typical (see Appendix D for a full list):

- 'it has brought together five HEIs who would normally be in competition to communicate and work together'
- 'the availability of external funding for learning and teaching has gone some way towards raising the profile of academics who have been teaching-focussed'
- 'it provides some counterweight to the all-pervasive RAE in influencing activities of academic staff'
- 'it has had a positive impact primarily by providing funding for learning and teaching projects'
- 'it has helped to foreground teaching to a degree which was very welcome'
- 'having a direct link to the Academy (via a senior adviser) has helped to embed educational development as a credible activity (ie. it enhances career development)'.

FDTL Projects and National Teaching Fellows

5.28 Our survey asked FDTL project directors about their relationship with NTFS fellows, from the individual strand of the TQEF. In some cases FDTL project directors had gained fellowships or become subject centre managers so that forging linkages and collaboration were not an issue. In general, there was little close working. However, the absence of such collaboration is not unexpected, since it would be an unusual coincidence for an institution to gain a fellowship in a discipline area covered by an FDTL project, unless the key players were identical.

5.29 The relationship between subject centre managers and NTFS holders was stronger, although far from universally close. Three subject centres admitted to having no contact with the fellows and one wished that the Academy could make the subject backgrounds of the winners more public at an early stage. The general view seemed to be that there is room for improving the links and for establishing at an early stage whether the individual fellow wants the help of the subject centre in his or her project. The uncertain status of the project work that the fellow undertakes with the grant funding did not make it clear (at

least in FDTL 2 and 3) whether the subject centre is expected to play a role in dissemination.

c) Data from Professional Bodies and Associations

5.30 An important element in assessing the effectiveness of TQEF overall is its impact on key groups outside higher education. Professional bodies and associations are the most relevant of these, and many made helpful comments particularly in relation to the subject strand they are most closely involved with. We therefore sought to sample their awareness of the subject strand and their views on benefits it had delivered. In all 35 bodies were approached, based on sampling from those with whom the HE Academy had been in contact and adding some obvious omissions. In all, relevant officers in 18 of these bodies were interviewed; the results are summarised below and presented in more detail in Appendix C.

5.31 The content of each interview included:

- awareness of the relevant subject centre(s)
- interactions between the professional body and the subject centre, and their importance
- benefits delivered and overall impact of the subject centre
- suggestions for the future
- awareness of the NTFS and any interaction with it
- overall views on the quality of learning and teaching in higher education in the subject area over the past five years, and reasons for improvement or deterioration.

5.32 There was a generally high level of awareness. All except one of the bodies was aware of the relevant subject centre, and only two were unaware that the subject centre network is now part of the HE Academy, although the name LTSN still sprang regularly to interviewees' lips. All but two of those interviewed were able to describe interaction between their organisation and a subject centre. Of these, 14 described this as significant or important, and in five cases as very/highly significant, others including terms such as extensive, productive, active and helpful. The remaining two indicated it was marginal but nevertheless considered it potentially important.

5.33 Interactions were of varying types, including:

- representation on each other's boards and committees (approximately half of discipline bodies mentioned this)
- joint events – workshops, conferences, special interest groups (seven mentions - in one case the subject centre having taken over from the professional body the role of providing workshops for new lecturers)
- joint studies, publications and newsletters (eight mentions)
- Co-ordinated activity such as in responding to government consultation exercises affecting the discipline (three mentions)
- networking in various forms (five mentions)

- prizes and awards (two mentions).

5.34 In terms of benefits to the organisations and their members, the most common responses related to communications and especially the information received by the organisation (for example keeping them abreast of developments in learning and teaching in their discipline and raising awareness of educational issues relating to the profession, subject or career paths). Others mentioned regularly were:

- the ability to reach a wider audience (five mentions)
- shared costs of events and publications (four mentions)
- sharing and dissemination of good practice (five mentions)
- the ability to look across the boundary of related disciplines, where a subject centre often has a wider remit than an association (three mentions)
- help in setting standards and benchmarking (four mentions)
- the avoidance of overlap in activities (three mentions)
- availability of speakers (two mentions).

Asked about the overall impact of centres in areas relevant to the organisation, the commonest response was that it had raised the profile of learning and teaching and provided a channel for information about higher education. However, this is clearly a weak indicator of impact.

5.35 Several respondents made constructive suggestions for the future, building on a sense of progress to date. The suggestions tended to be quite specific to the needs of a given area: for example, two (Royal Society of Chemistry and the General Dental Council) would like to see development towards a separate subject centre for their own subject, because of fundamental differences in content, skills and technology between Chemistry and Physics/Astronomy in one case, and Dentistry and Medical/Veterinary education in the other. By contrast, several respondents welcomed the interaction with allied subjects through subject centres and looked forward to further opportunities to broaden their understanding of, and learn from, learning and teaching developments in related disciplines.

5.36 So far as the overall quality of learning and teaching in their subject area is concerned, all but three described a noticeable improvement over the past five years. Of these three, one said that standards had been maintained, and the two others that on-going change in the structure of qualifications and accreditation made it difficult to take a view. Improvement was ascribed about equally to the Quality Assurance Agency process and aspects of the TQEF initiative, mention also being given to increasing competition for students, increased contact with industry, FDTL, and pressure from the National Health Service.

5.37 Several respondents took the opportunity to express strongly the view that such improvements in the quality of learning and teaching were being undermined by the erosion of the unit of resource (and the consequent reduction in teaching contact hours)

and deterioration of physical resources, especially at a time of increasing student numbers and wider participation.

- 5.38 Although the overall sample of professional bodies is relatively small (and possibly self-selecting in terms of awareness of the TQEF initiative, since the interviewees responded to an invitation), the organisations interviewed nonetheless represent very significant areas of learning and professional occupations in both the public and private sectors. Their overall response to the subject strand, as represented by the subject centre network, is positive and appreciative, recognising that it is a channel for growing collaborative activity providing benefits to students, lecturers and members of the professional bodies. The fact that it is subject-based enables the organisations, their membership and officers concerned with education and professional development to engage directly with the relevant centres, knowing that their contacts and influence extend across the higher education community.

d) Data from Educational Developers

- 5.39 The educational development community is heavily involved with the subject strand, particularly the subject centres. In general it is highly supportive of the centres, and all those interviewed sought to promote contacts with them. All respondents surveyed also hoped that, more generally, the HE Academy would be a valuable resource both for the sector and their institution.
- 5.40 The approach of educational developers to engagement with subject centres is reported to vary primarily on the general role that educational development plays within an HEI, and whether implementation of TQEF is broadly centralised or devolved. In the former case, we came across several HEIs where the central educational development function (or equivalent) proactively encouraged the integration of subject centre and faculty/school activities by various dissemination activities. Conversely in more devolved institutions educational developers assumed that contact would be made with centres at a subject level and were not involved at all.
- 5.41 In general, engagement with subject centres appears to be most successful when the centre has high credibility for the relevant community and the local engagement is reasonably broadly based, both numerically and academically. Common strategies for engagement with the Academy and centres included involvement in the institutional learning and teaching conference, use of institutional champions and the direct involvement of new staff undertaking a teaching certificate, for example, by getting participants to use or review the resources of the relevant centre. Some respondents were personally involved in Academy or centre activities.
- 5.42 Some educational developers interviewed were concerned about the demise of the LTSN generic centre, and felt that it was important that the Academy ensured the continuation of the function in some form.

- 5.43 Responses to the survey of educational developers were much more mixed about FDTL, the value of projects, and the extent to which effective dissemination and sustainability existed. Not surprisingly, those who had been actively engaged in a successful FDTL project tended to view that strand positively, and echoed the benefits claimed by project directors (see Appendix D). Others were more cautious or critical, and some respondents reported that FDTL projects have presented them with testing challenges in terms of promoting dissemination and transferability. Whilst efforts have been made by HEFCE to raise the profile and importance of these matters, many respondents concluded that many projects have left, at best, a modest legacy. We comment on this in more detail in the conclusion to this Chapter.

e) Conclusions on the Benefits and Impact of the Subject Strand

- 5.44 The diverse information sources cited above, and the absence of evaluative data on FDTL, inevitably mean that conclusions on the benefits and impact of the subject strand are difficult to make with any certainty. Although some elements of the strand are viewed consistently across the sector, for others opinions range widely depending upon experiences, expectations and perspectives.
- 5.45 Generally those with subject-related perspectives tend to be broadly, even strongly, disposed towards the potential utility of the relevant subject centre, although there are significant exceptions. Where individuals, at various levels both within the academic community and in associated professional bodies, have had positive experiences of working with a subject centre or using the outputs, that correlates with their view of the usefulness of this strand.
- 5.46 Understandably senior managers in institutions hope to benefit from the work of the subject centres since they offer the opportunity for the institution to access, adopt and adapt a raft of non-local discipline-based innovations and advances in practice. Encouraging innovation and disseminating best practice are almost universal goals of institutional learning and teaching strategies. Thus there is a powerful incentive for senior managers to maximise the potential benefits of the subject strand. However, in most HEIs this a complex task since ultimately it rests with the preferences and decisions of individual members of staff. Thus even where centralised processes are in place, actual action and uptake is highly devolved and, to a large degree, subject to personal decisions of teaching staff.
- 5.47 Of course both subject centres and institutions try to address that challenge using a range of means of dissemination to promote engagement and utilisation. The degree to which that has, as yet, moved significantly beyond the enthusiasts (the normal cohort of early adopters), is difficult to measure accurately but the balance of evidence suggests that much remains to be done to go beyond awareness and to achieve widespread usage and adoption. The Lancaster data and the views of both educational developers and professional bodies suggest that a useful start has been made, but concerns over the impact of FDTL projects confirm the difficulties of transferability (see below).

- 5.48 Responsiveness to distinctive disciplinary priorities or perspectives are widely recognised as being important, and were one of the main rationales for the creation of a subject-based approach in the first place. However, although a devolved subject centre approach fits neatly with academic traditions (and has been effective in developing momentum for innovation amongst subject enthusiasts) it presents other challenges, for example integration with institutional strategies, and the important operational question of how enhancement in a subject-based approach goes beyond individual staff with an interest in teaching to the wider academic community.
- 5.49 For senior institutional managers and educational developers there are two related challenges: the difficulty of knowing exactly what is happening on the ground within the institution in terms of levels of usage and adoption (particularly where devolved strategies are in place), and promoting broader sharing and reflection across disciplines. Here inter-subject centre initiatives being developed by the Academy are welcomed as a helpful step. Whilst views varied on the usefulness of the LTSN generic centre, the balance of opinion regretted its apparent demise. There could be additional benefits to institutions if subject centres worked within clearer overarching common priorities and objectives, as a way of aiding integration.
- 5.50 In one area - the benefits and impact of FDTL - substantial reservations need to be raised. Because of the absence of evaluative data it is difficult to offer evidence-based conclusions in this area, but serious questions about effectiveness and value for money may exist. As noted above, although the data sources used felt that some projects had been beneficial beyond those immediately involved, this was frequently felt not to be the case. The evaluation of first phases of FDTL in 1998 raised a number of important questions concerning the future effectiveness of FDTL, and although HEFCE took some action a large number of the issues in that report still remain.

6 The Main Benefits and Impact of the Individual Strand

- 6.1 As noted in Chapter 1, at the same time as this evaluation of TQEF was being undertaken, a parallel review was taking place of the National Teaching Fellows Scheme (NTFS), commissioned by the HE Academy. This scheme constitutes the individual strand of TQEF. In order to avoid duplication, it was agreed with HEFCE that the results of the Academy study would constitute the main data source for this part of the TQEF evaluation. Accordingly the Academy has provided the following commentary on the NTFS, all of which has been placed in quotation marks so that it is clear which views are being cited. In general, the data collected for the overall TQEF evaluation support the findings and conclusions of the Academy study.
- 6.2 'The aim of the review undertaken by the Academy was to inquire into the impact of the NTFS at individual, departmental and institutional levels on the quality of teaching and learning and the status of teaching. This was the first systematic review to include the expanded scheme.

- 6.3 'The NTFS is funded by HEFCE and managed under contract by the Academy. The scheme was launched in 2000 as the individual strand of the TQEF within the HEFCE teaching and learning strategy. It was originally established to reward 20 experienced staff on the basis of individual evidence of excellence in learning and teaching with substantial prize money of £50,000 for professional development, research and other project-related activity.
- 6.4 'In 2003 the White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education' proposed a substantial increase for the academic year 2004-05 from 20 to 50 awards with the additional awards allocated across two new categories of staff; rising stars (six years' experience at the most) and learner support.
- 6.5 'The scheme has now produced 130 NTFS winners in England and Northern Ireland. Statistics concerning gender, discipline and institutional-type amongst the holders at the time of winning an award are as follows:

Table 3: Breakdown of NTFS winners

- a) 73 (56 per cent) male, 57 (43 per cent) female, total 130.
- b) At the time of winning an award, holders were located in: 8 (10 per cent) specialist colleges; 72 (52 per cent) from post-1992 HEIs; 50 (38 per cent) from pre-1992 HEIs.
- c) At the time of winning an award, holders were predominantly working within the following cognate areas:

<i>Discipline area</i>	<i>No of winners</i>	<i>%</i>
Arts and Humanities	46	35
Business	13	10
Education	13	10
Health, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary	23	18
Physical Sciences	14	11
Student Support	16	12
Social Sciences	6	4

A learner support category was introduced in 2004 and 9 awards were made.

Methodology

- 6.6 'Data were collected by electronic questionnaire to all NTFS holders and to the Academy's network of pro vice-chancellors with responsibility for learning and teaching, regardless of whether they had any NTFS holders in their institution. A total of 62 NTFS holders completed the questionnaire representing a 48 per cent return, and a total of 29 PVCs (a 26 per cent return).
- 6.7 'These data were supplemented by face-to-face interviews, focus groups and telephone interviews with: 27 NTFS holders; past and present chairs of the National Advisory Panel (NAP); 7 NAP members (past and present); 31 heads of centres for educational

development; 19 pro vice-chancellors (with responsibility for learning and teaching): and information from an NTFS symposium session on the NTFS review. NTFS holders were asked:

- how being a winner had impacted on their own professional and personal development
- how the award outcomes had enabled them to disseminate successful learning and teaching practice within and outside their own institutions.

6.8 'All other participants were asked about:

- the impact of the scheme (both positive and negative)
- selection processes
- how to increase participation in the scheme
- how the scheme might be improved.'

Benefits and Impact

6.9 'The major outcomes identified related to:

- the recognition of excellence in teaching of the award holder, their department and their institution
- the increased visibility and status of the award holders nationally
- the impact of the scheme on institutional schemes for the recognition of excellence in teaching.

6.10 'Survey responses and focus group discussions with NTFS holders confirmed that becoming a fellow had increased their confidence and status amongst their peers. The survey showed that 83 per cent thought the award had increased their status in their institution. Focus group comments echo the most common themes:

"For the first time in over 25 years, I feel someone somewhere really appreciates what I do. Since receiving my award, colleagues who never consulted me before come up and initiate discussions about learning and teaching and seem to value my opinion." (NTFS fellow in post-1992 HEI)

"When I entered the room after the announcement that I was successful [having failed first time] I received a standing ovation from my colleagues." (NTFS fellow in pre-1992 HEI)

6.11 'On the other hand, only 35 per cent of respondents reported that the award had had a considerable impact on the department, compared with 46 per cent who reported some impact and 19 per cent no impact. At the institutional level, only 21 per cent reported a considerable impact, 56 per cent some impact, and 23 per cent no impact. Less than a third had had in-depth discussions with their pro vice-chancellor and 36 per cent felt that their experience was taken into account in their institutional learning and teaching plan. Survey comments included: "I was closely involved in institutional learning and teaching

before the award and my involvement has, if anything, reduced since”, and “My institution has used my fellowship as publicity on its website but my school has not even sent an email around the school announcing it”. (Free text quotes from web-based survey – cannot be attributed to type of HEI.)

6.12 ‘In the focus groups, current holders reported some positive impact in terms of ability to become involved with national projects and conferences, institutional initiatives, and work with the Academy and its subject centres. The most frequently reported mode for dissemination of their work was through staff development sessions in their own institution, or collaborative activities through the Academy. Many stated that they saw the award as recognition for their department and/or the teams in which they worked. However, most respondents could not assign to the award a positive influence upon their department’s or institutional policies for learning and teaching.

6.13 ‘Focus group discussions with NTFS holders reported references in HEI publicity to having an NTFS award holder. Two holders commented:
“Since receiving my award I am quite often ‘wheeled out’ for public speaking both in my own institution and I get requests to speak at other external events.” (NTFS fellow in post 1992 HEI)
“When our vice-chancellor addresses gatherings of staff and visiting colleagues he usually makes reference to how proud we are to have a national teaching fellow.” (NTFS holder in pre 1992 HEI)

The pro vice-chancellors endorsed the views of NTFS holders that the awards provided excellent public relations opportunities. Many referred to the awards ceremony in the following terms:

“The awards ceremony is a great occasion and it is a chance to publicly recognise excellent teachers.” (pro vice-chancellor in post-1992 HEI)

6.14 ‘Focus group discussions with heads of educational development provided evidence that the national scheme had led to an increase in the number of local schemes to recognise learning and teaching. One respondent stated:
“We see the national scheme as the pinnacle and have introduced some smaller internal awards which are based on similar criteria.” (Head of academic development unit post-1992 institution)

6.15 ‘Overall, it would appear that the scheme has had a positive impact at individual level, but that the impact at departmental and institutional level has been much more modest than might have been expected from the resources invested.’

Issues Identified in the Review

6.16 ‘The major issues identified in the review were:

- the nature and purpose of the award

- the relationship of the award to institutional and departmental teaching and learning strategies
 - the lack of evidence of value for money
 - problems in the selection process.
- 6.17 'The prime concern identified was with the nature and purpose of the award. The review revealed clear concerns from current NTFS holders about the award money and accountability. Holders reported perceptions of conflicting advice in terms of the use of the award. When asked whether the grant had made a positive impact on their teaching and learning practice, only 35 per cent of survey respondents reported a positive impact.
- 6.18 'When asked what the focus of the scheme in future should be, 96 per cent of holders responding to the survey wanted it to be a financial reward to recognise good teaching. Sixty per cent did not want it to be a project grant. Focus group discussions confirmed that the majority of holders would prefer a financial reward. Comments from the NTFS Symposium included:
- the National Teaching Fellowship should be treated as a reward and not a grant
 - there is some ambiguity between the notion of reward and award. Would it be better for the individual to get a smaller amount of money as a reward and then get additional funding for a project?
 - the National Teaching Fellowship should be a reward and not a punishment which would result from being made to do all sorts of other things which are not directly related to the fellowship funded activity.
- 6.19 'The pro vice-chancellors expressed a different view of the nature and purpose of the scheme. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents wanted it to be a reward, while 92 per cent wanted it to be a grant. This is consistent with their concern in focus group discussions that projects were not linked to HEI, or even departmental, strategies and objectives. Tensions were reported when an NTFS project appeared to 'get in the way' of other departmental and institutional priorities. Many supported the view that the financial award should be for the HEI, or department, to spend on pedagogic research and/or development work to improve provision for student learning. The focus group was uncomfortable that no consultation was held with the HE community when (a) the scheme was first established and (b) when the additional categories were introduced.
- 6.20 'While the pro vice-chancellors expressed some concern about how the money was spent, heads of academic development reported on the lack of clear evidence of the outputs of the £50,000 prize money, suggesting that there was no transparent evidence that the resource invested had provided value for the sector.
- 6.21 'Issues related to the selection process were raised by members of past and current advisory panels and chairs. They reported that citations from HEIs were now becoming more difficult to differentiate from each other and that the current scheme had simply promoted a certain way to write up evidence of excellence (and not always by the nominee). They reported that they had frequently raised concerns over the years

regarding the inclusiveness of the scheme, and in particular, where the criteria were potentially discriminating against part-time staff (and with the majority being female), HE practitioners within FE, and staff within small and/or specialist colleges.

- 6.22 'Overall, the major concern was with the nature and purpose of the scheme. Rosie, Fame and Johnson (2004)⁶ raised the issue of whether the scheme was reward or award. In this review the NTFS holders raised the same issue, while pro vice-chancellors questioned the impact of the financial reward on the quality of student learning and heads of educational development raised the issue of whether the outputs justified a £50,000 award.'

Conclusions

- 6.23 'In summary, the NTFS has had an impact at the individual level - in terms of raising the status (as teachers) of the majority of academics who have won a fellowship among their peers. It has had substantially less impact at the departmental and institutional level and its value for money in this respect may be questioned. It is also open to discussion whether the impact on individual status could not have been achieved more effectively through smaller amounts distributed to a larger number of winners.
- 6.24 'The principal difficulty relates to the nature and purpose of the scheme. Its ambivalent status as a prize that recognises past performance or a project grant that supports future excellence underlies many of the respondents' concerns. The scheme's ambiguous standing as a reward for individual excellence or a means of improving the quality of teaching and learning at department or HEI level has also led to confusion and, it must be said, to a degree of scepticism among respondents. There is no incentive for HEIs to provide assistance to NTFS holders and many reported that they felt unsupported and isolated.
- 6.25 'On some of these key issues there was an understandable difference between the award holders and the pro vice-chancellors. As might be expected, the award holders wanted recognition for previous achievements. The pro vice-chancellors preferred resources to be allocated for future activities. A related issue is the relationship between the award and institutional and departmental missions and strategic plans. The pro vice-chancellors were concerned that there was little or no relationship between the scheme and HEI priorities.
- 6.26 'It is difficult to escape the conclusion from the responses of all groups that revisions to the scheme aimed at maximising its future VFM should consider decoupling the individual award (as a prize for past performance) from the project grant (to improve quality at department or institutional level).'

⁶ Rosie A., Fame P., and Johnson M. (2004) 'Reward or award?: reflections on the initial experiences of winners of a national teaching fellowship'. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* accepted for publication on 26.06.04.

7 TQEF Overall and System Wide Benefits and Impact

7.1 In this Chapter we answer some of the main questions about the overall effectiveness of TQEF posed in the terms of reference. In particular:

- the mapping of outcomes against original and revised aims
- the extent of synergy between the three strands
- the main drivers for change that have helped the implementation of TQEF
- the main remaining barriers to change in enhancing learning and teaching.

At the end of the Chapter we briefly review the linkages between TQEF and CETL funding, and try to assess how far one measure of impact might be success in CETL awards.

7.2 However, the first issue that needs to be clarified is whether it is possible to make generalisations about TQEF overall? The answer to this depends on how the initiative is interpreted, and whether it was intended that there should be any synergy between the three strands. As noted in Chapter 3, these strands arose separately, and HEFCE created TQEF as a programme and funding 'envelope' to contain them. Thus from the outset a key question was how far there should be any attempt to create synergy between the strands (particularly through the national co-ordination team) or whether each strand should be considered as separate with any cross-fertilisation a matter for HEIs.

7.3 Within the Council and the TQEF management committee there were clearly different views on this, with the NCT encouraging synergy between FDTL projects, subject centres and NTFS fellows. The notes of the TQEF management committee (3 October 2001) record that there was no intention that the LTSN would interact with institutional learning and teaching strategies, and that any synergy was expected to occur naturally. Similarly, within the Council, draft guidance to HEIs (in the announcement of TQEF funding for 2002-2005) on how strategies might incorporate cross-strand outcomes and other national funding priorities was removed by senior officers as too interventionist, in consultation with the chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee. Formally, therefore, the position appears to be that HEFCE expected the benefits and impact of TQEF to be achieved independently within the three strands and any synergy to occur naturally. We comment on the implications of this position in relation to value for money in Chapter 9.

7.4 This clearly makes any detailed quantitative assessment of the system wide benefits difficult, but in all aspects of our data collection for this study we sought qualitative information on the extent to which each strand has influenced the others.

a) Mapping Outcomes Against Original and Revised Aims

- 7.5 As noted in Chapter 3 (and set out in detail in HEFCE 99/48), the original aim of TQEF was that of a single fund to deliver the learning and teaching strategy of HEFCE with five main purposes: encouragement and reward; coordination and collaboration; dissemination and good practice; research and innovation; and building capacity for change. Subsequently (in HEFCE 2002/24), in using TQEF funds, HEIs had to address one or more of the following national priority areas: widening participation; ensuring fair access; maintaining and improving retention rates; enhancing employability; and encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice in support of high quality learning and teaching. We summarise below on the extent to which these were achieved.
- 7.6 When it comes to answering the question 'have the five original purposes been achieved?' there is no simple way of identifying progress through the overt achievement of institutional objectives in the HEIs' strategies. We therefore have to interpret what we have observed in institutions, in order to build up a picture of progress across the sector towards the aims of the Council. This also helps explain why there is evidence of more progress towards the three of the five HEFCE aims with which HEIs can clearly identify themselves (that is encouragement and reward, research and innovation, and building capacity for change), and less where the aims are a lower priority for institutions (co-ordination and collaboration, and disseminating and embedding good practice at a system-wide level).
- 7.7 Encouragement and Reward: There are two separate issues here: the explicit contribution of TQEF; and other measures taken by HEIs during the period of TQEF that might be unrelated to the initiative. Overall, on the available evidence, significant progress has been made in meeting some of the key institutional elements of this aim. So far as TQEF funding is concerned, most of the HEIs visited felt that it had assisted in this area, and our analysis of 25 sample learning and teaching strategies shows that more than half include explicit commitments, mostly concerning support for ILT accreditation, encouraging participation in the NTFS, and providing internal teaching fellowships. The survey of educational developers also revealed that other HEIs have introduced new promoted posts, such as pro-deans or faculty-based principal lecturers, to support quality enhancement. However, most of these measures are implicitly directed towards staff who are already enthusiastic, and there is often little in strategies about measures to encourage other staff.
- 7.8 More generally, most HEIs (including some of the research intensives) now report revised promotion criteria with increased emphasis on excellent teaching, although at professorial level research is still the dominant criterion for further advancement in the majority – though not all - of HEIs. As noted in Chapter 6, the strand explicitly designed to provide individual reward (the NTFS) continues to have a mixed reception from institutions: some are enthusiastic (and see individual recognition from awards as helpful in marketing to potential applicants) but many others are not. Four of the case study institutions had decided not to make further applications for awards, in one case because of the demotivating effects of failure, in another two because of the work involved in making a proposal, and in the fourth because of disagreements over the professional standing of a

fellow in a specific discipline area which was felt to devalue the concept of teaching excellence.

- 7.9 Overall, raising the quality of learning and teaching seems firmly on the management agenda in most HEIs, and this is beginning to be reflected in human resources policies, rewards and incentives - although there is also a recognition that more needs to be done. In a recent report the Higher Education Policy Institute⁷ noted that despite considerable progress in modernising corporate human resources practice within HEIs, much of this activity had still to touch middle managers at the level of heads of departments. We suspect that this is also likely to apply to the human resources aspects of enhancing teaching, where heads try to balance competing demands. Our survey of educational developers confirmed this: a majority of respondents indicated that many academic staff take the view that although new policies are in place, little change has occurred in applying them to the established structure of promotion at school or faculty level.
- 7.10 Co-ordination and Collaboration: The extent to which this aim has been achieved depends upon what is meant by these two terms. Clearly TQEF has sparked a great deal of activity which has involved joint working, mainly in the subject strand. Partly as a result there have also been collaborative proposals for CETLs. However, this is nothing new: HEIs have always been prepared to collaborate in pursuit of new money, particularly when substantial sums are involved. All this has led to various relatively temporary forms of joint activity in the subject strand, which (in a non-pejorative sense) we call 'short-term collaboration'. By contrast 'deep collaboration' involves clear and lasting commitments, often at an institutional level (such as developing lifelong learning networks, joint programmes, shared teaching resources, and so on).
- 7.11 Judged by this criterion, although effective in establishing 'short-term collaboration' TQEF has not supported much 'deep collaboration' and was never really in a position to do so, although there are several examples in FDTL project reports of commitments by the project partners to continue collaborative activity after funding ceased. It follows that much of this collaboration is vulnerable once funding is withdrawn. Overall, there remain few incentives for HEIs to collaborate across institutional boundaries, and several institutions were critical of HEFCE for on the one hand encouraging collaboration in teaching whilst at the same time pursuing an approach to research excellence which is explicitly competitive.
- 7.12 Dissemination and Good Practice: The picture here is mixed and is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 8. Within HEIs, enhancing institutional approaches to dissemination and supporting good practice featured in 17 of the 25 sample learning and teaching strategies. Approaches included: the establishment of a learning and teaching enhancement officer reporting direct to a pro vice-chancellor to integrate work on e-learning, the role of the quality support office and the staff development function; the creation of a network of departmental enhancement staff to provide a direct link between school and central practice; and developing explicit mechanisms for disseminating information about project work around a large comprehensive university. To this end

⁷ 'Mission Critical? Modernising Human Resource Management in Higher Education', HEPI, 2005, www.hepi.ac.uk

there is substantial evidence of TQEF funding enhancing dissemination and good practice within HEIs.

7.13 So far as external dissemination is concerned, on the one hand substantial progress has been made through the establishment of the Academy in creating an internationally unique structure to support coordinated dissemination and good practice. On the other hand, available data suggest that dissemination of some of the specific activities funded by TQEF has been at best patchy: for example some FDTL projects and the work of NTFS fellows. In part this is a problem endemic to short-term project work in a culture which understands dissemination to be providing information rather than assisting adoption, but in the next Chapter we ask whether HEFCE should have done more to address the issue.

7.14 Research and Innovation: This is the aim to which TQEF has contributed most, and as a result of funding substantial new work has been undertaken. Across the sector as a whole simply listing the volume of activity provides an indication of scale:

- 167 FDTL projects in five phases
- 130 NTFS fellows each undertaking a defined programme of work
- the work of the 24 subject centres and generic centre as part of the LTSN
- 31TLTP projects undertaken in the last phase of that programme as part of TQEF.

Together these activities represent a scale of research, development and innovation in learning and teaching almost without parallel in any higher education system in the world. The consequent issue is, of course, how the resulting outcomes influence practice, and this is considered in Chapter 8.

7.15 Within HEIs, a considerable proportion of TQEF funding has been used to support or launch internal projects, and the development and application of e-learning technologies is a major strand of such work. However, many of the activities might be more properly regarded as development than research, and are 'innovative' only in the sense of being new to the institution or department concerned.

7.16 Building Capacity for Change: This is a more strategic and policy orientated aim, and there is an almost united view from all sources surveyed that overall TQEF has made a useful impact in this area. Taken together, the conclusions from Chapters 4 and 5 represent the creation of significant potential for capacity building at both institutional and subject levels. In our experience, such a united view from those involved in learning and teaching is rare - institutional managers (pro vice-chancellor academic), professional developers, and subject specialists frequently have different perceptions on such issues. In this case, however, the unanimity is striking. In Chapter 10 we consider the extent to which this capacity for change is completely embedded or whether it is still fragile.

7.17 Leaving aside the impact of the 2008 RAE, there is evidence in the learning and teaching strategies that some research intensive HEIs have now also taken major steps to build capacity for enhancing learning and teaching in much more systematic ways than

previously. In those institutions surveyed the data were clear that earmarked TQEF funding has generally been of real benefit, for example in one the overall effect of TQEF was described as shifting the earlier learning and teaching strategy (which dates back to 1997-98 - before TQEF) from 'platitudes to performance measures and monitorable outcomes'. Thus in this university TQEF has accelerated institutional action from good intentions to implementation by providing a focus on outcomes and the resources to achieve them. Such models of developing good practice in research intensive HEIs need more publicity via the HE Academy.

- 7.18 So far as the additional requirements identified by HEFCE in 2002 are concerned, in a review of learning and teaching strategies resubmitted for approval for 2002-2005 the majority mentioned the revised priorities of widening participation, access, employability and retention. However, as noted in Table 1 TQEF funding was not necessarily used to support such purposes. Indeed, despite the obvious need for HEFCE to recognise government policy it is unlikely that any of these criteria needed to be specified in that all were referred to frequently in existing institutional strategies. Widening participation and access were in any case dealt with as part of separate widening participation strategies that HEFCE had already stressed needed to be 'joined up' to institutional learning and teaching activities. Similarly the emphasis on retention was doing little more than reflecting the imperatives of the HEFCE funding methodology, and it was in the self-interest of HEIs that TQEF funds would be used to address retention where it was an issue.
- 7.19 Employability had been a significant feature of many learning and teaching strategies from the submission of the first round of strategies, when the national co-ordination team found that 24 per cent of institutions gave priority to employability, work experience, and key skills. At the time, that placed employability as one of the top three priorities in learning and teaching strategies along with staff development and developments in Communications and Information Technology (C&IT). Thus the fact that Table 1 records only six of the 25 sampled learning and teaching strategies as devoting TQEF funds to employability concerns, should be interpreted not as a lack of interest by HEIs but rather that being a long-term priority, further activity funded by TQEF was not required.
- 7.20 On balance, we found little evidence that the new priorities indicated in 2002 contributed much to institutional thinking in that work on them was already largely in place. Conversely there is some anecdotal evidence that confusion was caused by revising priorities in the middle of an initiative.

b) The Extent of Synergy between the Three Strands

- 7.21 As noted above, despite being an integrated strategy TQEF was not explicitly managed to produce synergistic effects. However, it was assumed that they would develop, and in this section we comment on the extent to which this has happened.
- 7.22 Although the three strands were separate, resources have been targeted in different but connected ways, enabling them to be directed to different kinds of activity. So if an

individual finds that an institution's learning and teaching strategy is becoming clearer, that support and funding for learning and teaching development work are more readily available, that individual awards provide the potential for more recognition, and that a greater range of advice and materials is accessible through a subject network, then potential synergy is strong. The absence of one or more of these - a clear strategy without resources, resources without recognition of effort, encouragement without practical support - will significantly reduce the impact of the others, and it is the uniqueness of TQEF that has potentially put all these factors into place.

- 7.23 Within HEIs visited there are considerable differences in the extent to which synergy has been achieved. In several cases where there is particularly strong institutional (and usually centralised) commitment to enhance learning and teaching, then outputs from the subject and individual strands have been brought together to implement aspects of the learning and teaching strategy, and substantial progress has been made. In such cases the value of TQEF funding has been high. An example of this is a post-1992 case study HEI, where there is a remarkable degree of integration of work across the TQEF strands and where the learning and teaching strategy is now firmly embedded. In addition, an FDTL project on group work assessment (which built on work originally funded as an internal learning and teaching development initiative) has delivered well-received group work assessment tools. This has now been disseminated gratis internally and externally, and has led to the FDTL project manager (a newly appointed lecturer in 2001) achieving a 'rising star' NTFS fellowship. At the same time, this strand of work has been central to the success of the HEI's CETL bid. Similarly, the work of an earlier NTFS fellow at the HEI has been widely used across disciplines internally, and has been effectively disseminated externally through the relevant subject centre.
- 7.24 Conversely, in other HEIs there has been much less synergy (often but not necessarily where high levels of devolvement exists in the use of TQEF funds), and it only comes about at the departmental level through the work of enthusiasts. For example, although another case study HEI has hosted an FDTL project, one NTFS fellow and two subject centres, there has not been much interaction between them and the learning and teaching strategy and they have had little local impact. However, a new deputy vice-chancellor (academic) wants to improve connections with the subject centres so that the institution as a whole can benefit. Here although the learning and teaching strategy has the support of relevant key staff, its full implementation is still at a relatively early stage because of competing priorities and complex organisational structures which mean that there is a long lead time before centrally determined innovations are implemented.
- 7.25 In all institutions visited, the issue of potential synergy needs to be seen in a broader context than TQEF, and involves the linkages of a broad range of national programmes which might potentially inform learning and teaching strategies (for example, not only HEFCE initiatives such as human resource but also relevant JISC programmes - including 5/99 their own learning and teaching initiative - the Economic and Social Research Council research programme on learning and teaching, and so on). From an institutional perspective the fact that some of these resources might come from a programme labelled TQEF is largely an irrelevance (and usually unknown at

departmental level). Put simply, some institutions are better at integrating available resources into the enhancement process than others irrespective of their source. The key factors influencing success here are those identified in Chapter 4.

- 7.26 Overall, in more than half of the institutions visited, there was evidence of significant use by them of the outputs of other activities funded by TQEF although the nature of these inevitably varied depending upon the extent to which projects and subject centres were hosted. This compares favourably with the position in 2001 when the CHEMS evaluation concluded that 'we found little evidence of synergy in terms of direct linkages or influences between the three strands'. This change is not to imply a mechanistic approach to achieving synergy, and in practice many of the linkages made occur through a small number of key individuals who are the 'champions' of learning and teaching within their institutions and are also the enthusiasts who inhabit and support the subject centres and FDTL projects.
- 7.27 It is also clear both from our data and that collected by the Lancaster studies that there is typically (although not inevitably) stronger synergy at the institutional level where an HEI has hosted projects and subject centres. Whilst this influence is to be expected, for HEFCE it is an unintended consequence in that the focus of these activities was planned to be sector wide and no institutional benefit was initially assumed or planned.
- 7.28 Irrespective of the original decision of HEFCE that there was to be no planned synergy between strands, and notwithstanding the activity and strategic goals of the TQEF national co-ordination team, achieving additional linkages is now clearly central to the work of the HE Academy which are taking it forward in a number of ways, for example through themed networks. From an institutional perspective, the possibility of achieving this has been greatly strengthened by initiatives such as the development of a pro vice-chancellor (academic) network which will enable easier communication about a wide range of outcomes. The fact that institutional subscriptions are now paid for Academy services raises an interesting issue in relation to the value of TQEF (and other) synergies with learning and teaching strategies. There is already anecdotal evidence (which we expect to see confirmed) that the payment of fees for service will make some HEIs pay closer attention to the outcomes of the subject strand than previously, and therefore act as a stimulus for its greater adoption into strategies.
- 7.29 So far as the synergy between the subject and individual strands is concerned, the data reported in Chapter 5 suggest that this has been limited, except where NTFS fellows have a specific centre involvement, and that few centres have sought to distribute information about the work of fellows except where it has directly involved them.
- 7.30 The issues raise a number of matters for the Council in implementing the new CETLs, and key factors are summarised in Chapter 10.
- 7.31 In summary, although some strands have been more effective than others and synergy between them has been limited, the results of TQEF taken as a whole have been greater than the sum of its parts. In particular the multi-stranded nature of the initiative has

provided overall encouragement for the enhancement of learning and teaching that entirely separate programmes in the three areas would have been unlikely to have achieved.

c) Drivers for Change

- 7.32 In the face of the many barriers to change in enhancing learning and teaching frequently reported by other studies in the past, a question that needs to be answered is: what have been the effective drivers for change that have brought about the generally positive institutional outcomes of TQEF? A number of drivers have been identified, although the impact has obviously varied depending upon the institution concerned. They include:
- a. Both the approach and the volume of funding of TQEF have sent important signals to HEIs that enhancement is important, here to stay, and that institutions will be expected to demonstrate commitment. In international terms TQEF is by far the largest and most ambitious structured approach to enhancement (see Appendix E).
 - b. The multiplicity of initiatives on widening participation, retention, human resources and professional development, have created a climate where the majority of institutions have realised that it was necessary to respond positively at least at the level of senior management. To this extent the experience of TQEF mirrors the HEPI report on human resources cited above, in that the major challenge is no longer getting acceptance of the need for change at senior levels in HEIs, but implementing that change at middle manager level (heads of department) and beyond.
 - c. The subject centre network has provided the opportunity for substantial participation by enthusiastic subject specialists, thus 'legitimising' innovative disciplinary based activity.
 - d. The cumulative role of the Quality Assurance Agency over time should not be underestimated, and we came across several HEIs where senior managers had found its visits a helpful way of stimulating enhancement activity and an important driver for change.
 - e. Finally, since the early work funded by HEFCE on enhancing teaching more than a decade has elapsed and a new generation of senior staff has come into post. Although we know of no data to prove this assertion, several respondents observed that the new group of pro vice-chancellors (academic) that had come into post were, in general, more responsive to the enhancement agenda.
- 7.33 Within institutions it is the interplay between these factors that is likely to stimulate change. For example, in one small HEI significant progress on quality enhancement was identified as brought about by a combination of a new senior manager; substantial physical changes to buildings providing an opportunity to rethink the requirements for teaching; a Quality Assurance Agency audit; and TQEF funding which lubricated the change process.

- 7.34 Nationally, these drivers represent an interesting combination of 'top-down', 'bottom-up', and disciplinary and professional elements which exert leverage on different parts of the higher education system.

d) The Main Barriers to Change That Remain in Enhancing Learning and Teaching

- 7.35 The 2001 evaluation of TQEF noted a number of barriers that were inhibiting the implementation of TQEF and more generally the enhancement of learning and teaching. In this section we review the progress that has been made in dealing with some of the issues raised, and note the remaining barriers.
- 7.36 In doing so we make a basic - and perhaps over-simple - distinction between research active (including all the research intensive universities and those with pockets of research excellence) and non-research active HEIs. So far as the former group is concerned, there is unanimous agreement - among our case study HEIs - that for the next three years the forthcoming 2008 RAE will be the overwhelming priority, and in some cases this may threaten the continuation of recent enhancement activities in learning and teaching. Several respondents talked of almost institutional 'hysteria' in relation to the 2008 RAE, and we came across several examples of staff active in TQEF related activities (including an NTFS fellow) who had been instructed by their departments to abandon work associated with teaching enhancement until after 2008.
- 7.37 Interestingly, in all cases these actions were being taken at departmental level by heads of department, squeezed by the conflicting priorities of the learning and teaching strategy and the need to maintain research income. In some of the institutions concerned this represents a serious threat to the sustainability of the real progress that has been made through TQEF. This situation does not just apply to research intensive universities, but also to those HEIs with pockets of research excellence. In Chapter 10 we consider this issue in relation to the future funding of the institutional strand.
- 7.38 Nonetheless, within the research intensive universities many of the most important structural barriers to enhancing the status of teaching have been eliminated, a process assisted by other HEFCE initiatives such as Rewarding and Developing Staff. In particular, most now recognise excellence in teaching as a requirement for promotion to some (not usually all) senior posts, and participation in professional development programmes for all new staff is widespread (although not always popular). However, although such measures have increased the status of teaching in such institutions, its relative status is still unfavourable compared with research and is likely to remain so, and a change of culture to give teaching parity with research is widely felt to be an unrealistic dream. For example, we found research intensive HEIs that were prepared to reward staff promoted primarily for teaching at a level similar to professorial pay, but not to award the title. Many senior academics have chosen their profession because of a predisposition towards research, and their professional identity, self-esteem and international reputation are closely bound up with their research and publications. For

them it is a simple choice between spending scarce time on research rather than the seemingly less rewarding teaching.

- 7.39 More generally, the various sources of data collected for this study suggest that for some - but not all - institutions the most significant barrier remaining is to ensure *consistent* support for enhancement activities at the level of middle managers: deans and heads of departments. With institutional learning and teaching strategies broadly in place in all HEIs surveyed, attention inevitably falls to middle managers for successful implementation and indicators that this is not consistently achieved include:
- the data of the Lancaster team (see Chapter 5) on inconsistent levels of awareness of subject centres (for example approximately one quarter of heads of departments in pre-1992 universities were unaware of the existence of relevant centres)
 - the survey data of the study of NTFS fellows (see Chapter 6) which reports generally weak application to host departments
 - the telephone survey of educational developers which report that consistent engagement with heads of departments is difficult to achieve.
- 7.40 In some ways this conclusion is not surprising, as the engagement of middle managers is always a major element in any successful organisation-wide change initiative, challenged as they are by the demands of ensuring day-to-day service delivery. However, there are two different - but related - issues here: first, the pressures and conflicting priorities facing middle managers; and second, the extent to which an HEI decides to provide support to heads. Nonetheless, it was regularly reported to us that the priorities of academic departments were not necessarily those of senior HEI staff concerned with enhancement. Indeed the Lancaster team specifically noted that that 'there are some hints that in mid-2004 teaching is less of a priority for heads of department and programme leaders than it was in December 2002'. Although data for this conclusion are weak, what is important is that there is little evidence to the contrary, that is that teaching was a significantly higher priority than previously, indeed in the research intensive HEIs this would be surprising in the light of the challenges of the 2008 RAE.
- 7.41 It is, of course, in recognition of this difficulty that - as noted in Chapter 4 - many HEIs have moved from an initial distributed approach to using TQEF funds to more centralised approaches. However, in most large HEIs implementation cannot be managed centrally, and what is required is clearer devolution of management responsibility for enhancement with established lines of accountability as opposed to previous distributed and more open-ended approaches. This raises fundamental issues of management style and structure.
- 7.42 There is another potential barrier concerning some research intensive HEIs that we found in several case study institutions: the difficulty of persuading staff to be committed to further enhancement when all indicators already demonstrated excellence in learning and teaching. Thus in several such universities surveyed almost all indicators showed a position near the top of any relevant league table concerning the quality of teaching, all achieved (they point out) over a long period of time and without TQEF funding. In such

circumstances the case for doing still more is hard to make, even if a head of department is personally convinced of the need for further enhancement.

- 7.43 Other barriers to enhancement of TQEF-sponsored activities are concerned include:
- a. The workload, time, and other resource pressures on staff noted in the 2001 evaluation study remain, and in some HEIs are reported to have got worse. Although human resource generally in HEIs is reported to have improved because of the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative, this has not changed the basic workload facing most academic staff. Several respondents to our various forms of data collection noted that when faced with competing demands the only sensible action by individual staff was to spend less time on teaching.
 - b. In some HEIs there are high levels of dependency for successful learning and teaching enhancement on a few key individuals who may be highly marketable. In this context several institutions reported that the departure of FDTL project holders had essentially ended any further dissemination of project outcomes.
 - c. Whilst the requirement of HEFCE and the other funding bodies that HEIs move towards a full economic costing approach to both teaching and research is desirable in terms of financial management, there are signs that knowing the full cost of enhancement activities might act as a deterrent to further activity rather than an encouragement. For example, we came across one HEI that, faced with such cost information, is attempting to reduce its teaching budget by 10 per cent and to eliminate anything other than essential enhancement activities.
 - d. That internal resource allocation systems are generally slow to adjust to new nationally identified requirements as internal top-slicing is often as unpopular as external top-slicing.
- 7.44 In one area a barrier noted by the 2001 evaluation has largely been removed. That study noted the dangers at the time of 'initiative fatigue', and the associated view that there was some staff reluctance to change practice as a result of being bombarded with initiatives. The evidence of the Lancaster team, confirmed by our own data, is that at least so far as the subject centres are concerned this is now no longer the case. Indeed one of the successes of the centres is that they are regarded as independent of funding body influence and that there is a high degree of 'ownership' within the subject communities. Maintaining this will be a challenge for the Academy.

8 Dissemination, Transferability and Sustainability of TQEF Outcomes

- 8.1 The themes of this brief Chapter are core to any consideration of the effectiveness of TQEF and have been recognised by HEFCE for some time. For example, in a paper for HEFCE as early as 1998 the national co-ordination team noted that dissemination was a 'primary purpose of the FDTL programme' and that it had been achieved 'when educational practice had changed in response to the disseminated excellent practice'. This was a demanding definition and has been carried on in subsequent HEFCE initiatives.

8.2 In this context, this Chapter reviews three key and related issues:

- the extent to which appropriate forms of dissemination of practice and outcomes have taken place across TQEF-funded activities to enhance synergy and value
- whether the broader issue of the transferability of practice and outcomes has been sufficiently recognised
- the extent to which the activities funded by TQEF are sustainable.

Clearly the absence of impact data in relation to either the subject or individual strands makes a detailed analysis of these three factors impossible, and therefore more general issues are highlighted.

Dissemination and Transferability

8.3 Although there are numerous issues which could be explored (including effective internal dissemination within HEIs to support learning and teaching strategies) the key issues in relation to TQEF overall concern the subject strand. So far as the subject centres are concerned the issues raised in Chapter 5 need not be repeated. Clearly the future effectiveness of the centres is closely tied up with the overall future of the HE Academy, and we recognise that ensuring effective dissemination is an important issue for them.

8.4 From the point of view of this evaluation more difficult questions concern the part played by FDTL in the overall effectiveness of TQEF. Although no robust data exist, there are grounds for concern, including that many of the HEIs visited and educational developers interviewed generally thought that the effectiveness of FDTL projects was patchy at best. Whilst HEFCE, the national co-ordination team and latterly the Academy have sought to support FDTL projects in this area in numerous ways (including by a separate small transferability stream), significant questions have existed from the outset about the Fund, which do not appear to have been satisfactorily addressed.

8.5 The evaluation of the first two phases of FDTL published in 1998 noted that ‘the dissemination, embedding, transfer, and implementation at other institutions of FDTL projects presents the most substantial challenge to the activities of the Fund’.⁸ Since then, although more detailed guidelines have been produced on dissemination, we think that the fundamental question posed in the 1998 evaluation ‘What does HEFCE want from FDTL?’ has remained largely unanswered. That question was initially posed in the context of the initial phases of FDTL where little was stated by HEFCE about the objectives of the Fund. The 1998 evaluation recommended that a policy paper be produced and widely circulated, and amongst other things the paper should clarify the assumptions of the Council in relation to dissemination and transferability. As far as we are aware such a paper was never produced, and partly as a result opinions were regularly presented to us of confusion about what FDTL was seeking to do and why. On the other hand, the HEFCE circular for FDTL4 and HEFCE publication 2002/24 do set out what the Council was seeking to do at the time, and why.

⁸ Paragraph 6.1, HEFCE 98/68 ‘Evaluation of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning’

- 8.6 Major issues underpin such questions because by definition educational practice can only be changed where the outputs of FDTL projects are suitable for transfer and adoption. Effective dissemination can therefore only take place where products and services are wanted by potential end users, and are in a form that is appropriate for them. Transferability therefore has to be built-in from the outset rather than being an afterthought. In this context the decision of HEFCE to set up a small transferability fund for FDTL, although well intentioned (in that it sought to respond to the needs of successful projects for additional money for dissemination), looks odd in that the real question is why were other projects that would not qualify being funded in the first place?
- 8.7 Many of these issues were also raised in the 2001 formative evaluation of TQEF. In particular this noted that:
- a. 'Despite progress by HEFCE in establishing a structure to enhance dissemination of learning and teaching activities, we are not convinced that comprehensive strategies are yet in place for maximising the potential of TQEF.'
 - b. 'There remains general conceptual confusion about what the dissemination of outcomes of centrally funded initiatives involves, and early indications are that TQEF is no exception to this.'
 - c. The three stranded structure of TQEF whilst 'a considerable step forward in a system-wide approach to successfully disseminating learning and teaching practice....only removes some of the barriers to dissemination' .

That evaluation also repeated the earlier recommendation of the FDTL review 'that a paper offering guidance on dissemination, adoption and transfer be commissioned, published and then widely discussed'.

- 8.8 As far as we are aware no action was taken in addressing these issues, and the position remains substantially as it was then: that despite the work of the national co-ordination team and the Academy there is considerable conceptual confusion about the nature of dissemination and embedding, what these processes involve, within and across HEIs, and accordingly how good practice can be developed across the sector. One view would see this process in relatively mechanistic terms and be critical of HEIs who fail to develop strategies for ensuring that good practice in one area can rapidly be transferred to another. Conversely, a dominant view in cultural terms would see the whole conception of good practice as being relative, and would question the idea of embedding subject-based innovation across different kinds of institutions and multiple disciplines as being highly problematic.

Sustainability

- 8.9 Sustainability affects TQEF in a number of ways: in the ability of HEIs to sustain their learning and teaching strategies and the activities supported by TQEF funds; for subject centres in their ability to sustain the services they offer; for FDTL projects to sustain the

availability of materials and project outcomes; and for some NTFS fellows sustaining the outputs of their work.

- 8.10 These are all addressed in various chapters, but to summarise: so far as the institutional strand is concerned, the increasing seriousness with which HEIs are treating their learning and teaching strategies (and providing funds from internal sources towards them) provides an environment whereby sustainability can be achieved and considerable good practice now exists. Overall, we 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 much more firmly embedded because of the developments noted in Chapter 4. Nonetheless many felt that the progress made was still somewhat fragile, particularly in HEIs where highly devolved approaches to TQEF spending were pursued. The threat to institutional sustainability from the 2008 RAE was widely noted.
- 8.11 Nonetheless sustainability in institutional terms looks promising as characterised by the following three examples:
- a. A large research intensive Russell Group university where the view of senior staff is that changed practices are becoming embedded and e-learning in particular has been transformed. Within the particular focus on flexible learning supported by technology, the university has substantially changed its internal processes with the aim of more effectively encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice in support of high quality learning and teaching.
 - b. A medium-sized post-1992 university where there is a remarkable degree of integration of work across the TQEF strands. For example, an FDTL 3 project (which built on work originally funded as an internal initiative) has delivered well-received learning tools, now disseminated gratis internally and externally. This has led to the FDTL project manager achieving a 'rising star' NTFS fellowship. At the same time, this strand of work is central to the success of the university's CETL bid. Overall the development of learning and teaching in this institution is now well-rooted: as one head of school put it 'the DNA is now established and will be replicated'.
 - c. A large college of the University of London where the director of the educational development service believes that TQEF has helped to transform teaching and learning; without it the changes would not have happened, as the research-dominant culture was very strongly embedded. The activities of TQEF have raised the profile of learning and teaching and introduced e-learning to a growing audience. It is now quite likely that the institution will absorb the salaries of three TQEF-funded staff although finding their related consumable costs may be harder.
- 8.12 In Chapter 4 a two dimensional matrix was presented of different forms of institutional organisation in using TQEF funds. Sustainability can also be linked to that diagram, in

that its nature tends to vary depending upon whether TQEF activities are organised in a centralised or devolved way, and whether funds are spent on strategic priorities or on more consensually agreed key issues.

- 8.13 The sustainability of FDTL project outcomes is related to the issues considered in the section above on dissemination, and overall data were not available to ascertain the extent to which projects outputs for Phase 1 and 2 projects are still in use. (A further recommendation in the 1998 evaluation of FDTL that this should be done has not been adopted.)

CETLs

- 8.14 In collecting data on TQEF we came across a number of respondents who felt that the issues briefly outlined above in this Chapter also applied to the new centres for excellence in teaching and learning, the CETLs. In particular, the new centres would need more explicit guidance than currently exists about their roles in relation to dissemination and transferability of their work, and the extent to which it is supposed to be sustainable in the long term. As such, some respondents felt that there was a parallel to the establishment of the subject centres which were originally relatively loosely set up and managed, only to become more focussed some years later as part of the work of the Academy and the Burgess Review.
- 8.15 It lies outside the terms of reference for this study to comment on this point in detail, but the ambiguity about aspects of the work and role of the CETLs (not least the relationship with subject centres) does raise some issues for the future sustainability of TQEF-funded activities. Accordingly, we propose that HEFCE carefully review what lessons can be applied to the implementation of the CETLs from their experience of TQEF.

9 Management, Reporting and Evaluation

9.1 In this Chapter various aspects of the management of TQEF are reviewed under the following four headings:

the overall management of TQEF
the reporting burden on HEIs
the evaluation of TQEF
value for money.

The investment of £181 million to date is a substantial public investment in enhancing learning and teaching, and therefore these four issues are particularly important.

9.2 We have not been asked to report in detail on the management of the programme, and therefore have concentrated on the general issues which have influenced the effectiveness and value of TQEF overall.

a) The Overall Management of TQEF

9.3 The management of the TQEF programme has undergone a number of changes in the six years of its existence, of which the main elements have been:

- a. Formally within HEFCE initial responsibility was with the Learning and Teaching Committee and a special sub-committee responsible for TQEF. In 2002 responsibility was given to the Quality Assessment Learning and Teaching Committee (QALT) which replaced the Learning and Teaching Committee, and the sub-committee was disbanded.
- b. The management of the LTSN was undertaken separately by its own steering group, one of whose roles was 'to advise the funding bodies on funding proposals related to the LTSN'. This provided some independence from the UK funding bodies, and it was the LTSN steering group that commissioned the evaluation of elements of the subject strand. The relative independence of this strand has been continued under the arrangements for the establishment of the Academy.
- c. Responsibility for the operation of the individual strand was contracted to ILT.
- d. Within TQEF support for FDTL projects was provided by the national co-ordination Team based at the Open University, who also assisted the Council by initially reviewing institutional strategies and subsequently providing HEIs with good practice advice on these. The role of the team was largely advisory, but it was supposed to alert HEFCE officers to any major problems identified.
- e. Within HEFCE specific officers are responsible for TQEF, although there have been significant changes in personnel and no one now involved was in post at the start of the initiative.

- f. Whilst some of the strands only apply to England, the HE Academy serves the rest of the UK, thus complicating both management and the possibility of any planned approach to achieving synergy.
- 9.4 Up to autumn 2001 TQEF had been relatively actively managed by HEFCE officers; indeed the existence of a special sub-committee emphasised the importance that HEFCE gave to it. This phase of TQEF essentially ended with the HEFCE Board agreeing in January 2002 to extend funding for three more years. Since that time TQEF has been operated with a 'light touch' by HEFCE and has essentially been running its course, largely through management arrangements with the national co-ordination team and the ILT.
- 9.5 Several factors have now contributed to the need to examine the current arrangements, and also to make funding decisions about the continuation of some elements of TQEF. These are:
- a. The decision to establish the HE Academy put in place a structure to deal with many of the issues considered in the 2001 formative evaluation of TQEF (see below). There was therefore, arguably, less need for HEFCE officers to intervene in TQEF arrangements than previously. This was reinforced by the commitment to 'light touch' monitoring of the institutional strand through annual monitoring statements.
 - b. Personnel changes within HEFCE meant that those staff who had been strong advocates of TQEF had left. The national co-ordination team (whose work had been highly regarded in the 2001 evaluation) also underwent personnel changes in its last years at the Open University, which led to some difficulties in relationships with HEFCE. However, it was transferred to the Academy and two of its staff now form the core of a four-person team of senior advisers for nationally funded programmes such as the FDTL projects, National Teaching Fellows Scheme and the CETLs. The support offered by the service has been well regarded by most FDTL projects according to the survey we undertook. It follows from this that the work of the Academy's advisers is central to future efforts to integrate the different strands of the TQEF.
 - c. A decision by the (then) TQEF evaluation committee in 2001 (see below) to pursue a relatively minimal evaluation strategy which used 'as far as possible existing data sources' meant that officers (at the time against their wishes) had no way of collecting a range of possible data that would have enabled them to consider the effectiveness of the various elements of the programme in more detail.
 - d. It would still have been possible for HEFCE to have encouraged greater integration between the three strands of TQEF, but as noted in Chapter 7 it effectively decided not to do so.

b) The Reporting Burden on HEIs

- 9.6 The reporting burden on HEIs has been examined in two ways: through discussions with PVCs academic (or equivalent) during case study visits, and through an examination of 25 learning and teaching strategies and annual monitoring statements. The issue is acknowledged to be important in the light of the work of Higher Education Regulation Review Group (HERRG) which is attempting to reduce the reporting and accountability burden on HEIs.
- 9.7 The nature of the reporting burden has gone through several stages within TQEF. Initially institutional learning and teaching strategies were subject to an assessment process which required them to be approved before TQEF funding was released, and strategies were subsequently required to go through several reiterations in order to comply with good practice guidance produced by HEFCE. Although this was considered irksome at the time by many HEIs, during our institutional visits we found some retrospective support for this process, particularly from educational developers who felt that active monitoring from HEFCE ensured that some HEIs took the strategy development process more seriously than might otherwise have been the case.
- 9.8 More recently, approval by regional teams of AMS is acknowledged by HEFCE to be relatively 'light touch'. However, since the process only examines the extent to which HEIs have met their own commitments in relation to the institutional strand of TQEF funding it does not provide any way of getting systematic data on the overall impact of the strand. We note below that evaluation of TQEF has not been well developed, and the decision by HEFCE to review the institutional strand almost entirely on the basis of AMS monitoring effectively meant that it would not be in the position of having consistent sector-wide data on impact to guide future decisions about the continuation of funding.
- 9.9 One reason why HEFCE has been able to offer 'light touch' annual monitoring is the view that, in general, HEIs are now taking the implementation and achievement of their learning and teaching strategies seriously. Whereas the formative evaluation of TQEF in 2001 was able to state that 'we found little evidence of strategic monitoring within institutions of their progress against their learning and teaching strategies', in our current study - as noted above - the position is different. In most of the case study institutions, the learning and teaching strategy was central to enhancement work and as such was subject to effective monitoring, although the nature and rigour of this varied.
- 9.10 So far as the burden on HEIs is concerned, this is modest under current arrangements, and we detected little complaint from institutions about the work involved, which typically only runs to an average of three pages of reporting in the AMS. Indeed, some staff in HEIs felt that the reporting requirement was valuable in that it made the manager responsible take stock on an annual basis. Those who found the process to be a burden generally took the view that all such AMS monitoring was burdensome, and did not single out TQEF in this regard. In our judgement the reporting requirement is reasonable, and compatible with the requirements of HERRG as we understand them.

c) The Evaluation of TQEF

- 9.11 Mainly because of the issues noted above in the management of TQEF, formative evaluation of the initiative has been generally weak and data which would have enabled the Council to have clear evidence of on-going impact have not been collected.
- 9.12 The reasons for this are largely historical. In 2000 a scoping study was commissioned to define the requirements for the on-going evaluation of TQEF, the terms of reference for which encouraged a comprehensive approach to a planned evaluation. The subsequent study identified and costed numerous possible evaluative activities, including: specific forms of evaluation for all three main strands of TQEF (institutional, subject, individual); a baseline study to provide initial data against which the subsequent impact of TQEF could be measured; long-term studies on the value and impact of FDTL and TLTP; and a survey of academic staff on the impact of TQEF on learning and teaching, including student learning.
- 9.13 Despite the advice of officers, the relevant TQEF evaluation committee decided not to implement the recommendations of the scoping study, and instead chose to pursue a relatively minimal strategy which used 'as far as possible existing data sources to inform the evaluation'.⁹ However, since the TQEF was new it was unlikely that existing data sources could have adequately provided the appropriate information required. In examining all the documents supplied, a subsequent report for HEFCE concluded that this decision of the committee constrained the evaluation of TQEF, and thereby reduced the data now available to HEFCE in determining the success and effectiveness of the initiative.
- 9.14 As a result of the decision of the TQEF evaluation steering group, overall there appears to be little that could be identified as a clear strategy for the evaluation of TQEF, for example, no regular cycle of activities has been proposed to attempt to measure change, and no short-, medium and long-term indicators that we are aware of have been identified. Such a strategy would not only have been useful to HEFCE, but would also have been valuable to HEIs in making it clear what kind of evaluative data would be collected over time. Only two independent studies of aspects of TQEF have been undertaken: an initial formative study by CHEMS Consulting in 2001; and work by the Lancaster University and Open University team for the LTSN. In addition, HEFCE has had the annual monitoring process to provide some assurance about spending on the institutional strand.
- 9.15 A number of consequences result from these weaknesses:
- a. To date there have been numerous gaps in the evaluation of TQEF, for example there are several areas about which HEFCE has almost no performance data at all, including FDTL.
 - b. Until the current study by the Academy, there has been no evaluation of the individual strand (other than a privately undertaken published survey of award winners). Thus the impact of the strand on institutions and their practice in

⁹ *Evaluation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund* (reference TQEFESG/00/1) presented to the TQEF evaluation steering group, 17 November 2000, is available on request.

encouraging and rewarding teaching has been unknown, although during this period the size of the strand has been increased.

- c. As far as we are aware, there has been no review of the HE in FE strand (originally included in TQEF but subsequently included in another funding programme), and that was not included within the remit of this evaluation.
- d. The absence of baseline provision for 1999-00 (although recommended in the scoping study) means that there has been no way of measuring quantitative improvements in learning and teaching.
- e. No substantive work has been undertaken to date on the impact of TQEF as a whole on student learning.

d) Value for Money

9.16 Although substantial, the total spending on TQEF of approximately £181 million to 2005 is annually about 1 per cent per annum of the total sum that HEFCE distributes for teaching. As a central contribution to enhancement it is therefore modest. In addition, account needs to be taken of the extent to which TQEF has stimulated increased investment in enhancement by HEIs, and in all the institutions that were visited this was felt to be the case. However, data are not kept in any consistent way which could enable any accurate estimate of additional spending to be made.

9.17 The VFM of the contribution by HEFCE needs to be assessed on the basis of several criteria:

- the individual value and effectiveness of the three strands
- the additional synergy (and therefore increased value) achieved by the three strands operating as part of the same programme
- the sustainability of the activities being funded
- the additionality of funding, including the extent to which TQEF funded activities that would have happened anyway.

9.18 So far as the individual value of the three strands is concerned, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 report on benefits, impact and effectiveness, and we therefore summarise briefly our conclusions in relation to value.

Conclusions

Institutional strand: As reported in Chapter 4, our conclusion is that the institutional strand has been generally effective in stimulating enhancements in learning and teaching. It has encouraged much institutional innovation; contributed to raising the status of teaching in some HEIs; and generally helped to develop the climate which has seen extensive interest in hosting CETLs which - in our view - would not have been the case five years ago. Within HEIs it is frequently reported that TQEF funding is more than matched by institutional resources, and the

budgetary protection afforded by earmarked funds is almost unanimously considered to be valuable by all the sources that we approached. In one sense the value of this strand self-evidently depends upon how individual HEIs have sought to use TQEF funds, and the leverage provided to the use of existing institutional resources. As noted in Chapter 7, most of the data obtained for this study suggest that in the majority of institutions the value was significant, and overall our view is that, in general, the institutional strand has represented good value for money.

Subject strand: All the funding bodies have essentially made a decision already about the VFM of the subject strand, in that they have taken the decision to fund the HE Academy and to continue with the work of the subject centres. The information brought together in Chapter 5 coupled with the recommendations of the Burgess Review suggests that this was an appropriate decision. The VFM of FDTL is impossible to assess as no evaluation data were available after Phase One.

Individual strand: It is in this strand that the main concerns about VFM exist, and as the information presented in Chapter 6 identifies its impact and benefits have been patchy. Although it has clearly had an impact at the individual level for the fellows concerned, there has been substantially less at departmental and institutional levels. It is also open to discussion whether the impact on individuals could not have been achieved more effectively through smaller amounts distributed to a larger number of winners. As noted in Chapter 6 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion.... that revisions to the scheme aimed at maximising its future VFM should consider decoupling the individual award (as a prize for past performance) from the project grant (to improve quality at department or institutional level)'.

9.19 The value of the synergy achieved by linking the three strands into a single initiative called TQEF is difficult to determine, but in any case as HEFCE largely assumed that synergy would happen on its own no major costs have been incurred against which to assess value. The issue here is therefore whether greater potential value could have been added within any particular strand by greater synergy being achieved overall.

9.20 In Chapter 7 we concluded that in practice there was little planned integration between the three strands, and where it occurred it was because specific HEIs (and often individual enhancement 'champions' in HEIs) sought to achieve greater value through integration. In the HEIs where most progress has been made, impressive achievements have occurred whereby the work of NTFS fellows and subject centres have been integrated into institutional priorities set down in learning and teaching strategies.

However, in most HEIs such integration is modest and rests with enthusiastic subject specialists to create for themselves, and in other HEIs it is almost non-existent.

- 9.21 We therefore conclude that although there has been some additional value created through individual HEIs creating synergy between the strands for themselves, more could have been done by HEFCE at an earlier stage, notwithstanding the subsequent decision to create the HE Academy to take on this role. Two early good practice guides (HEFCE 2001/37 'Strategies for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education - a Guide to Good Practice' and HEFCE 99/55 'Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies - a Guide to Good Practice') and the later activity of the national co-ordination team, were helpful but more could have been done.
- 9.22 Sustainability is a major issue and as noted in Chapter 8 affects TQEF in different ways. To summarise the conclusions of that Chapter: so far as the institutional strand is concerned, the increasing seriousness with which HEIs are treating their learning and teaching strategies provides an environment whereby sustainability can be achieved.
- 9.23 Overall, we found that almost all senior staff consulted were much more confident than previously that the conditions for sustainability existed; in particular that in many HEIs enhancement no longer depended only on enthusiasts but was now more firmly embedded because of the developments noted in Chapter 4. Nonetheless many felt that the progress made was still somewhat fragile, and in particular was threatened by institutional priorities concerning the 2008 RAE. However, the potential for sustainability in many - not all - HEIs is high. The sustainability of other aspects of TQEF, notably FDTL and the individual strand, are much more open to question for the reasons considered in the respective chapters above.
- 9.24 Finally in relation to VFM is the issue of additionality: was the TQEF simply funding something that would have happened anyway? This is clearly not the case in relation to the subject and individual strands: had the funding bodies not provided support the LTSN and subsequently the HE Academy would not have existed and nor would the NTFS. The key test of additionality lies in the institutional strand, and presents a real policy dilemma: by definition any initiative which involves providing additional funding on the basis of activities prioritised in institutional strategies risks failing the additionality test, in that it is to be expected that a serious strategy will identify those funding priorities that an HEI would have wanted to do anyway. In this sense the VFM tests of sustainability and additionality point in opposite directions: the former requires commitment and the setting of priorities, whilst the latter argues that funding should not be provided for activities that would be done anyway - that is precisely those things that might have low potential sustainability!
- 9.25 Most HEIs have got around this dilemma in two ways. First, TQEF funding has accelerated what institutions wanted to do. The development of learning and teaching strategies clarified priorities and the funding required (whether centralised or devolved). TQEF support helped to make more things possible in a quicker timescale. Second, 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 university resources to this kind of activity. This would not, of course, have been possible unless a receptive environment existed within most HEIs to take advantages of the earmarking.

- 9.26 Overall, we therefore conclude that - with the possible exception of the individual strand - value for money has been at the very least acceptable across the higher education system, and in some institutions has been reported to be high. This is unlikely to be true for those HEIs where enhancement has lacked a champion and as a result institutional activities have been weak. However we encountered no such examples in our data collection. The VFM of FDTL cannot be assessed as no data exist.

10 The Future

- 10.1 In this final Chapter we review two main issues: the future funding of TQEF, and whether HEFCE may wish to collect any additional types of evidence in the future on the long-term impact on the student learning experience and on embedding good practice in this area.

Future Funding

- 10.2 Funding for the subject strand of TQEF is part of the overall support of the funding bodies for the Academy, and therefore secure in the medium term. However, funding for the institutional strand has only been extended for one year from 2005, and therefore expires in 2006. At current levels of provision this is approximately £17 million. There are arguments both for and against continuing funding the institutional strand of TQEF against approved strategies and we summarise both below. However, if funding is to continue we do not think that it should be at a reduced rate. Indeed current funding for small institutions is very modest and to reduce it further would not be viable. Therefore the issue is essentially whether to continue to earmark funding or (as for human resources funds) to roll it up into the recurrent grant. The issue is not new for HEFCE, and from the beginning of the initiative the question of how long earmarking would be required has been an acknowledged policy issue.
- 10.3 As noted above, amongst almost all of those surveyed there was strong support for the continuation of earmarked funding against approved institutional learning and teaching strategies. Although this might be expected amongst educational developers who have a vested interest in continued earmarking, it was also the case at executive level and almost all PVCs (academic) took this view. Frankly this surprised us as we expected to hear a strong institutional plea for abandoning earmarking. In some institutions this could be perceived as a lack of executive leadership in ensuring the conditions for the sustainability of existing TQEF investment.
- 10.4 In summary, the arguments in favour of continuing to earmark funding are as follows:
- a. Despite the significant strides that have been made in many institutions in implementing learning and teaching strategies and embedding good practice, the extent to which they are consistently deeply rooted varies in the sector. As noted above, although policy at senior levels is now largely in place, at middle management level much remains to be done in ensuring implementation beyond the enthusiasts. Additional funding has the potential to support such implementation; conversely its absence would in many - not all - HEIs slow it down, and perhaps even reverse it.
 - b. In all research active HEIs the period between 2005 and 2007 is likely to see an intensive focus on research. Without TQEF funding and the corporate disciplines that funded learning and teaching strategies provides, it is very likely that in such institutions teaching enhancement will be put on the back burner and the momentum of the last few years may be lost.

- c. Funding for the Academy is already in place, and the next few years will see extensive effort from it in providing a wide range of activities to enhance learning and teaching. HEIs will need to have effective mechanisms in place to help them consider how the output of the Academy can be adapted to institutional practice, and TQEF funding would be the main HEFCE contribution to this. Therefore to remove earmarked funding at exactly the same time that the work of the Academy was at its peak might appear to be perverse, and potentially damage the chances of the success of at least the subject strand.
- d. The funding of CETLs provides considerable additional opportunities for enhancing innovation in teaching, but it will also make additional demands on HEIs in considering the adoption of the outputs of CETLs. The absence of earmarked funding is likely to mean that some - perhaps many - HEIs will not do this in a strategic way, particularly in the light of the demands of the 2008 RAE.
- e. The almost unanimous view of those involved within institutions at both senior and operational levels should be taken account of in favouring the continuation of earmarking.

10.5 However, there are powerful arguments to the contrary:

- a. The usual arguments in favour of recurrent funding as against earmarking: institutional flexibility; a reduction in the administrative burden (although modest in this case); and so on.
- b. The argument for continued earmarking essentially means that at the most senior levels many HEIs cannot be trusted to prioritise the enhancement of learning and teaching in the light of competing priorities, and instead are likely to use the funding for other purposes - in particular, but not exclusively, the RAE. This argument could equally well apply to other initiative funding (such as human resources) where the decision has been made to abandon earmarking.
- c. The introduction of student variable fees will in any case provide additional incentives for HEIs to enhance teaching and there is no need for additional money to encourage them to do this.
- d. After six years of initiative funding, almost as a matter of principle earmarking should cease, particularly where for many HEIs embedding is well developed.

10.6 In balancing these views there is, of course, a seeming paradox: this reports describes how most institutions have made generally good progress in embedding, but if this were really the case then it could be argued that earmarked funding would not be needed to protect the work in place. Although there is some truth in this argument, the reality is that there are different positions within institutions: some have sufficiently robust systems in place to ensure that the work that TQEF has funded would not be set back if funded through the block grant; whereas in other cases the various pressures to be faced in the next few years mean that there is a much greater degree of risk.

10.7 On balance, we think that a move to recurrent funding from 2006-07 would run a significant risk in two areas. First, in many - not all - HEIs the work funded by TQEF might be set back, especially because of the very particular circumstances associated

with the 2008 RAE. Continued earmarking of TQEF funding provides some protection against this happening. Second, the work of the Academy (and to a lesser extent the CETLs) might well be undermined because of a lack of earmarked funding to encourage institutions to adopt its outputs, particularly in the face of RAE pressures. *Accordingly, on balance we think that earmarked funding should continue for another three years. However, we think that it will be highly unlikely that a strong case could be made for continued earmarking after that time.*

- 10.8 In this context a further question that needs to be considered is whether any further guidance needs to be provided by HEFCE on what an earmarked extension of the institutional strand of funding should be spent on, and therefore how relevant parts of annual monitoring statements will be assessed. There are two main arguments here: on the one hand we do not think that any further guidance on topic areas (such as employability) is desirable. Indeed we have noted that the additional criteria applied to TQEF funding in 2002 were generally not helpful, and in any case simply encouraged many HEIs to do what they were doing anyway.
- 10.9 However, we do think that 'light touch' guidance might be helpful in two areas, all mentioned elsewhere in this report: on alerting HEIs to the need to plan for the integrating of outcomes from the Academy into their learning and teaching strategies; and on adopting rigorous processes to encourage embedding at departmental level and obtaining the support of heads of departments and middle managers in doing so.

Additional Evidence on the Long-term Impact

- 10.10 The terms of reference for this evaluation asked for indications of any additional types of evidence in the future on the long term impact on the student learning experience and embedding good practice that HEFCE might require.
- 10.11 Notwithstanding the introduction of the national student survey, there are a number of areas where further information on the long term impact of TQEF and more generally the quality of learning and teaching is required. The scoping study for this evaluation presented to HEFCE in late 2004 itself made proposals which included:
- a longer term review of the effectiveness of FDTL projects (the evaluation of the first round of FDTL recommended a review after five years to learn what long-term benefits had resulted from project funding)
 - a quantitative study of academic staff attitudes and practice to learning and teaching, and the changes brought by TQEF and other programmes
 - a major study examining the main influences on enhancing learning and teaching within HEIs, including the comparative influences of TQEF, the Quality Assurance Agency, the various initiatives by JISC, widening participation, etc
 - an in-depth collaborative study on the enhancement of learning and teaching in (say) 10 voluntary participating HEIs.

- 10.12 However, all of these activities - and many more - now need to be seen in the light of a broader question: how will the Academy collect evidence of its own effectiveness that will satisfy its funding bodies? We noted in Chapter 8 the substantial work that the Academy is now doing in encouraging dissemination across programmes and TQEF strands, and as far as we are concerned almost all the areas in which more research might be required on the enhancement of learning and teaching in the sector fall more properly into the remit of the Academy rather than HEFCE. However, it will be important for the Academy to collect data at an early stage which can serve as a benchmark for impact to be subsequently assessed in the longer term, otherwise it will replicate the error made at the early stage of TQEF in not collecting initial data in order that effectiveness measures could be collected over time.
- 10.13 In addition to the areas indicated in paragraph 10.11 the report highlights several other areas where useful studies could be undertaken to support the continued implementation of TQEF:
- a. First, in order to spread institutional good practice in the implementation of learning and teaching strategies, we think that more work needs to be done in the short term probably via the HE Academy and perhaps building upon its new PVC network. In particular, follow-on work to 2001's good practice document should be commissioned to identify the now significant amount of good practice that is being undertaken by some HEIs in integrating the multiple strands of TQEF (and other activities) in a way that aids institutional dissemination and adoption.
 - b. Second, we repeat the proposal made in Chapter 5 that HEFCE clarify its assumptions and expectations about dissemination and transferability in learning and teaching initiatives.
 - c. Third, as noted in Chapter 7 much of this evaluation identifies issues highly relevant to the implementation of the new CETLs. The Council should review this, and seek to avoid problems associated with the establishment of aspects of TQEF being repeated.

List of abbreviations

AMS	Annual monitoring statement
CETL	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FE	Further education
HE	Higher education
HE Academy	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HERRG	Higher Education Regulation Review Group
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LTS	Learning and teaching strategy
LTSN	Learning and Teaching Support Network
NTFS	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
PVC	Pro vice-chancellor
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
TLTP	Teaching and Learning Technology Programme
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
VFM	Value for money