October 2005

Survey of communications and relations between HEFCE and its key non-HEI stakeholders and staff

Report to HEFCE by the MORI Social Research Institute

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Executive Summary

This executive summary presents the findings of the major study conducted on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) by the MORI Social Research Institute. Surveys were carried out among key non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff using a web-based methodology between 20th June and 22nd July 2005. In total 154 key non-HEI stakeholders and 193 members of HEFCE staff participated in the study.

HEFCE's reputation

Favourability towards HEFCE is very high among key non-HEI stakeholders; 82% say they regard the Council as very or mainly favourable. What is more, out of nine other public sector organisations working within the higher and further education sector, in terms of favourability HEFCE is ranked highest. However, it should be borne in mind that HEFCE has relationships with the stakeholder organisations selected to take part in this survey, whereas the other bodies may not have. It is therefore reasonable to expect favourability to be higher towards HEFCE.

Around half of non-HEI stakeholders would speak highly of HEFCE if asked directly or without prompting, compared with just one in seven who would be critical. Over a third would, however, be neutral, suggesting that although around half of stakeholders are, overall, favourable toward HEFCE, there is a substantial minority who are not yet prepared to be an advocate of the Council. Among HEFCE staff advocacy is very high, with over two in three saying they would speak highly of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation. This is an unusually high level of staff advocacy in comparison with other public sector organisations[1].

HEFCE's role

Stakeholders and staff tend to have similar views of HEFCE's role. Both groups *strongly agree* that "HEFCE effectively works in partnership with bodies with an interest in higher education"; "is an agent of the government"; and "actively collaborates to bring about improvements in higher education" and *disagree* with the idea that "HEFCE is primarily a regulatory body". There is less agreement, however, as to whether HEFCE "effectively consults bodies with an interest in higher education" or "acts in the public interest", as staff are more likely to agree with these statements than external stakeholders.

HEFCE is seen to be most effective at carrying out activities relating to more general support and policy development, such as: supporting widening participation; enhancing learning and teaching; and developing higher education policy. It is in the more tangible areas, particularly in stakeholders' eyes, that the Council is in some way falling short – for example, maintaining and building links

[1] Data is taken from the MORI Reputation Survey Normative Database, which holds the results for key indicators, such as advocacy, taken from previous stakeholder surveys with public sector organisations. Here we are referring to the aggregate score for *all* public sector organisations.

with business and the community; minimising bureaucracy and promoting sustainability.

The relationship between HEFCE and stakeholders

The vast majority of non-HEI stakeholders (77%) are satisfied with their relationship with HEFCE. Stakeholders especially value how the Council works in partnership with their organisation, listens to their views and works with their organisation on shared objectives. Three-quarters of stakeholders (74%) rate HEFCE as above average compared with other higher education bodies, and 64% think their current relationship with HEFCE is better than three years ago.

To further improve relations with the Council, stakeholders would like earlier and more meaningful/ effective consultation over policies. HEFCE staff concur with stakeholders about ways in which their relationship could be improved, namely: ensuring stakeholders feel valued; understanding stakeholders' needs; and inputting into stakeholders' plans and policies.

Stakeholder Relations Contacts (SRCs) generally appear to be aware of what other colleagues are doing in relation to their stakeholder organisation, and the majority feel that their nomination as SRC is appropriate. Most view stakeholder relations management as a core part of their job and say they know enough about their stakeholder to do justice to the relationship and feel supported in their role by colleagues. However, some SRCs are slightly unsure of what is expected of them, and feel that they lack the resources (time and training) to carry out the role effectively.

Contact and communications with HEFCE

The vast majority of stakeholders rate their dealings with HEFCE over the past 12 months as *very or fairly good,* and this is the case regardless of the seniority of staff with which stakeholders have had contact. Overall HEFCE is judged by most non-HEI stakeholders to communicate well with their organisation. The majority of stakeholders know who to contact at HEFCE if they have enquiries and find HEFCE staff accessible. However, one in seven (15%) would like contact with more senior HEFCE staff in the future.

The methods stakeholders typically use for communicating with HEFCE are email, formal personal meetings, the telephone and informal personal meetings. Encouragingly, these also tend to be the *preferred* methods for communicating with HEFCE – in particular email contact and informal personal meetings. The popularity of electronic forms of communication among stakeholders concurs with other research conducted by MORI for similar organisations.

Information from HEFCE

Three-quarters of stakeholders (76%) feel HEFCE keeps them well informed about its activities. However, 24% say that HEFCE only gives a limited amount of information or does not tell them much at all about what it does.

The most highly rated resource is HEFCE's website, which is rated as useful by the vast majority (94%) of stakeholders who access it at least a few times a year. Reactions to other publications are generally positive among stakeholders who use them, in particular publications relating to Council business, Research and Evaluation reports on the HEFCE website, the Council Briefing and HEFCE's annual reports. The annual meeting and the Admin-hefce electronic mailing list are less widely used and regarded as less useful than other sources.

Looking to the future

The top priority among staff and stakeholders is involving and consulting stakeholders more – and earlier on – in policy development. Stakeholders want improved communications and more regular information briefings from HEFCE, whereas staff would like to see clearer policies in relation to stakeholders and improved internal communications/cross-council working. However, both audiences feel that HEFCE should clarify its role and priorities and communicate these more clearly to stakeholders. There is also some feeling that HEFCE should make more effort to understand stakeholders' views and priorities.

Introduction

HEFCE has a strong commitment to communicating effectively with all stakeholder groups. Whereas communications and relations with universities and colleges have been monitored through three-yearly surveys (run by MORI in 1999/2000 and 2002/03) for some time, HEFCE is now developing a system to manage and monitor this process with other key stakeholder groups. As part of this project, HEFCE commissioned MORI to measure opinions of *key non-HEI stakeholders* through a quantitative survey. In addition, as all HEFCE employees are ambassadors for the organisation and play a key role in shaping the opinions of key non-HEI stakeholders, HEFCE commissioned MORI to conduct a parallel quantitative survey of *HEFCE staff*.

Both surveys aimed to quantify opinions in order to inform future stakeholder relations activity. The key objectives of the surveys, as outlined by the Council, were:

- To establish how key non-HEI stakeholders perceive the Council's relationship with them – building on previous qualitative research with external stakeholders and surveys of communications and relations between HEFCE and universities and colleges in 1999/2000 and 2003;

- To measure the views of key non-HEI stakeholders regarding strategic priorities of the Council;

- To gauge the views of internal stakeholders (staff) on HEFCE's performance though a brief staff survey – in order to compare the views of internal and external stakeholders and identify any gaps in perceptions;

- To establish baseline benchmarks for tracking changes in internal and external stakeholders' perceptions of the Council's performance in future surveys – *to be repeated every three years among key non-HEI stakeholders and annually among HEFCE staff;*

- To identify any improvements that might be made to HEFCE's stakeholder communications and relations, operations or services.

Our thanks go to all the HEFCE staff and stakeholders who took part in the pilot and mainstage surveys. Our thanks also go to Roger Grinyer and Kathryn Mills (Corporate Communications) and the other project members at HEFCE with whom MORI worked in close partnership to deliver this survey.

Methodology

Online survey

Surveys were conducted among key non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff using a web-based methodology. MORI emailed each potential respondent with an invitation to take part in the survey and a direct link to the protected site where the questionnaire was held. Each link was unique and gave respondents access to their own individual area of the survey. Respondents completed the questionnaire on screen and results were collated electronically.

A paper version of both questionnaires was also made available in case any respondents were unable to complete the survey online. This was requested by only one respondent.

Respondents who had not completed the survey after two weeks were sent a reminder email by MORI. After a further two weeks, reminder telephone calls were made to "Strategically Very Important" stakeholders[2] and HEFCE Stakeholder Relations Contacts (SRCs) who had still not completed, in order to encourage completion of the online surveys and boost response rates.

Sampling

All samples for key non-HEI stakeholders and staff were supplied by HEFCE, as is usually the case with surveys of stakeholders and employees.

As HEFCE did not have a complete database of key non-HEI stakeholders prior to the survey, a list of existing stakeholder organisations was drawn up by HEFCE. HEFCE Stakeholder Relations Contacts were then asked to provide contact details for individuals in each stakeholder organisation for which they had SRC responsibility. In many cases, more than one contact was supplied from a stakeholder organisation at different levels of seniority. All individuals from the resulting database were invited to take part in the online stakeholder survey.

For the staff survey, a database of all HEFCE staff was provided and all were invited to take part in the online staff survey.

Response rate

In the mainstage, online surveys were conducted with 154 key non-HEI stakeholders and 193 staff. In addition, two stakeholders and one member of staff took part in the pilot survey but not in the mainstage (other pilot survey participants took part in both the pilot and mainstage). A number of email invitations were 'undeliverable', due to email addresses being either incorrect or out-of-date. As shown in the table below, this represents adjusted response rates

[2] For the purposes of analysis, HEFCE gave each stakeholder one of three levels of importance: Important (I), Strategically Important (SI) and Strategically Very Important (SVI). SVI stakeholders are of the highest importance to HEFCE.

of 61% among stakeholders and 79% among staff. These response rates are very high in MORI's experience of research among similar audiences. This is no doubt due at least in part to the good work done by the HEFCE project team to raise awareness of the survey in advance of invitation emails being sent out. In addition, high response rates often reflect goodwill of respondents towards the organisation being surveyed.

Table 1: Response rates

	Invited	Invitation undeliverable	Completed mainstage	Completed pilot only	Adjusted response rate[3]
Key non-HEI Stakeholders	270	15	154	2	61%
HEFCE Staff	249	3	193	1	79%
Total	519	18	347	3	70%

Source: MORI

Questionnaire

The questionnaires were developed in close consultation with HEFCE. Where relevant, questions from the 2002/03 Survey of Communications with Universities and Colleges were included in order to facilitate comparisons with this stakeholder group. In addition, new questions were asked about advocacy of HEFCE, relationships and communications with HEFCE/stakeholders. These included some key 'normative' measures on reputation, allowing HEFCE's performance to be benchmarked against other organisations surveyed by MORI. It is envisaged that these surveys will form a baseline for future surveys of communications with stakeholders and staff – it was therefore important to ensure that all questions would be suitable for tracking on a regular basis.

The stakeholders' questionnaire took 15-20 minutes to complete. The staff survey questionnaire was limited to key questions from the stakeholders' survey in order to minimise the burden on HEFCE staff (who have recently completed HEFCE's internal staff survey). Average interview lengths were 15 minutes for Stakeholder Relations Contacts (who had additional questions to answer) and around 10 minutes for other staff.

[3] The adjusted response rate excludes individuals whose email invitation to take part in the survey was undeliverable (i.e. due to an incorrect or out-of-date email address) and includes individuals who took part in the pilot survey and/or mainstage survey.

Fieldwork

Prior to the mainstage fieldwork, both online surveys were piloted between 26th May and 8th June 2005 among five key non-HEI stakeholders and four members of HEFCE staff, to ensure that the questionnaires worked well and that no technical problems were experienced. Respondents were telephoned and asked for feedback after they had completed the pilot survey online. Some minor changes were made to the wording of the invitation emails and questionnaires following the pilot stage, and one new question was added.

Mainstage fieldwork was conducted between 20th June and 22nd July 2005. A full timetable is shown in the table below.

Table 2: Timetable of fieldwork

Date (2005)	Stage
26th May – 8th June	Pilot stage
May/June	Pre-survey communications to staff (HEFCE)
June	Pre-notification letters to stakeholders (HEFCE)
20th June	Invitation emails sent to staff and stakeholders by MORI
4th July	Reminder emails sent to staff and stakeholders by MORI
11th – 20th July	Telephone reminders to SRC staff and "Strategically Very Important" stakeholders
22nd July	Online surveys closed

Source: MORI

Analysis

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a *sample* of HEFCE's staff and stakeholder population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances. In other words, not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant and there is a calculated margin of error for all findings. A guide to statistical significance is included in the Appendices.

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due to multiple answers, to rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

For analysis purposes HEFCE staff and key non-HEI stakeholders were grouped into various categories, on the basis of information either provided with the original sample or answers given in the questionnaire.

HEFCE Staff	**Key non-HEI Stakeholders**
Gender	Gender
Seniority: o CEO/ Chair/ Director/ Head o Executive/ Consultant o Administration/ Finance	Seniority: o CEO/Chair/ Director/Head/ Deputy CEO/ Company Secretary o Manager/ Officer/ Adviser
Stakeholder Relations Contact (SRC) or not	Length of time dealing with HEFCE
Department/ Division	Organisation type: Funding body/ Government department/ Higher Education Agency/ NDPB/ Regional body/ Representative body/ Other
Job Role	Stakeholder importance
Advocacy of HEFCE (whether speak highly of the organisation)	Advocacy of HEFCE (whether speak highly of the organisation)
How good perceive relationship with stakeholder to be	State of relationship with HEFCE compared to three years ago
	Overall satisfaction with HEFCE
	Rating of HEFCE

Analysis of responses has been conducted for *each* question asked in the key non-HEI stakeholder survey and the staff survey, and reported on in the following sections. In addition, where applicable, MORI has highlighted differences in the perceptions held by these two groups (HEFCE staff and non-HEI stakeholders). Where appropriate, analysis has also been conducted at sub-group level within the two separate samples i.e. using the categories outlined in the table above. In some instances the data are based on small sample sizes and this is noted in the text or footnotes.

Qualitative data

At the end of each questionnaire HEFCE staff and non-HEI stakeholders were asked to identify up to three key priorities for improving stakeholder relations over the next three years. This was a completely open-ended question which has provided a wealth of qualitative information. Where applicable, verbatim quotes from this question have been included in the report.

Key drivers' analysis

In addition to reporting on how stakeholders and staff respond to different questions, we have also conducted key drivers' analysis of the data. This identifies how a set of answers (independent variables) relates to another answer (dependent variable). Key drivers' analysis tells how well these independent variables predict each dependent variable, and also the effect of each independent variable on the dependent. For this project key drivers' analysis was used to determine which factors are related to an increase or decrease in favourability towards, and advocacy of, HEFCE. This analysis process was also used to determine what affects overall satisfaction with the relationship that exists between non-HEI stakeholders and the Council, in order to help HEFCE manage relationships with stakeholders in the future.

Comparative data

The findings from the survey of key non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff have been set in context by including comparison data from other MORI studies conducted with public and private sector organisations. In addition, where applicable, we have compared the findings with the results from the *Survey of Communications and Relations between HEFCE and Universities and Colleges*, conducted by MORI on behalf of HEFCE in 2003 and 1999.

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[4] We would like to point out that no press release or publication of the findings should be made without the advance approval of MORI or HEFCE.

1. HEFCE's Reputation

HEFCE appears to enjoy a strong reputation among its key non-HEI stakeholders. The majority (82%) of non-HEI stakeholders have a favourable overall opinion of HEFCE, and half (51%) would speak highly of HEFCE to colleagues. This compares very favourably with other public sector organisations surveyed by MORI.

Unusually high levels of advocacy in MORI's experience are also seen among HEFCE staff, with more than two in three (69%) saying that they would speak highly of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation. As all members of staff are ambassadors for their organisation, this is a very positive finding for HEFCE.

There is still room, however, for developing advocacy among the significant minority of stakeholders (36%) and staff (23%) who currently say they would be neutral about HEFCE – and, indeed, among the small minority who would be critical. Key drivers' analysis shows that, in order to increase levels of advocacy and favourability, HEFCE should focus on improving its reputation among HE institutions, and on being seen as a more "flexible" organisation. Relationships and communications with HEFCE are also highly correlated with favourability, and are examined in more detail in the section 'Relationships between HEFCE and Stakeholders' and 'Contact and Communications with HEFCE'.

Both stakeholders and staff perceive HEFCE's reputation to be less positive among higher education institutions than among non-HEI bodies with an interest in HE. Indeed, while there had been a marked improvement in the level of favourability towards HEFCE among HEIs in the 2003 survey, this does not match the exceptionally high levels of favourability seen among non-HEI stakeholders in this survey.

When asked to rate different aspects of HEFCE's reputation, the quality of staff is most highly praised by stakeholders. Reassuringly, the majority of staff also agree.

HEFCE is regarded by the majority of stakeholders and staff as "approachable", "effective" and "respected". There is less agreement between staff and stakeholders as to whether HEFCE is "flexible" and "transparent" (staff are more likely than stakeholders to think so) or "proactive" (stakeholders are more likely than staff to think so).

Favourability towards HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

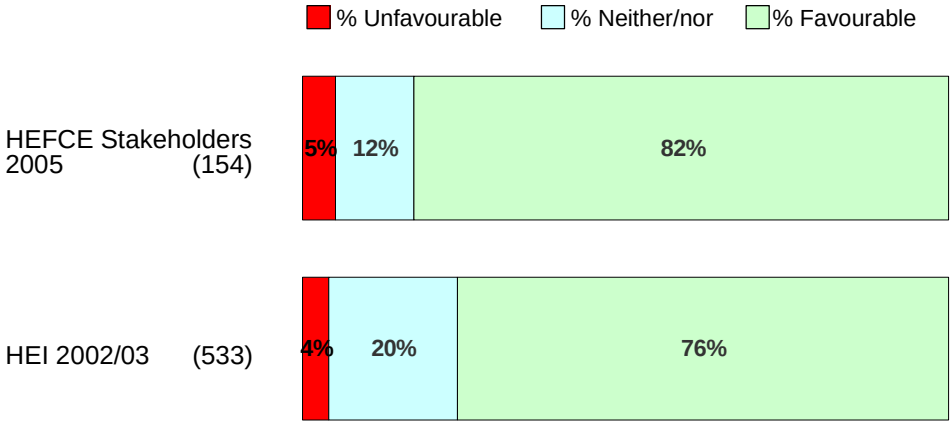
Favourability towards HEFCE is high. Just over four in five (82%) of key non-HEI stakeholders feel very or mainly favourable towards HEFCE, whilst only a tiny proportion (5%) is unfavourable.

It is interesting to note that the key non-HEI stakeholders surveyed this year are somewhat more likely to be favourable towards HEFCE than the Higher

Education Institutions (HEIs) surveyed in 2003[5]. Future waves of research among both groups will confirm whether this is due to the nature of these different stakeholder groups, or due to an upwards trend in favourability towards HEFCE.

Chart 1: Favourability towards HEFCE (Q2)

Q Please indicate how favourable or unfavourable your overall opinion or impression of each organisation is



Base: All respondents (shown in brackets)

Source: MORI

As shown in Table 3 below, familiarity tends to breed favourability among HEFCE's stakeholders; 85% of those who know HEFCE "very well" are favourable towards it, whereas those who say they only know HEFCE "fairly well" are more likely to be neutral (23% are neither favourable/unfavourable). This link between familiarity and favourability is very common and has been seen in other MORI research.

[5] *Survey of Communications and Relations between the HEFCE and Universities and Colleges*, conducted by MORI on behalf of HEFCE between November 2002 and January 2003.

Table 3: The effect of familiarity with HEFCE (Q1) on favourability (Q2)

	Know HEFCE very well	Know fair amount about HEFCE
Base: All stakeholders who know at least a little about HEFCE	*(99)* %	*(53)* %
Very favourable	21	8
Mainly favourable	64	68
Neither favourable nor unfavourable	7	23
Mainly unfavourable	7	0
Very unfavourable	0	0
No opinion	1	1

Source: MORI

Comparing the findings for favourability with those of other public sector organisations linked to higher and further education[6], HEFCE's ratings are at the top end of the scale. However, levels of favourability appear to vary according to the type of organisation that the stakeholder is from: those from Higher Education Agencies[7] and Representative Bodies tend to be most favourable (100% and 93% are favourable respectively), whereas those from Regional Bodies are less favourable (68% favourable) and more neutral (26% neither favourable/unfavourable) than average[8]. Levels of favourability towards HEFCE amongst other types of organisations are in between these: 85% of respondents from Funding Bodies, 79% from NDPBs (Non-Departmental Public Bodies) and 76% from Government Departments are favourable towards HEFCE. However, the small bases for each type of organisation mean that these results are indicative only.

With that exception, the high level of favourability is consistent across all key sub-groups of stakeholders, including Important stakeholders (79%), Strategically Important stakeholders (82%) and Strategically Very Important stakeholders (83%)[9]. The findings also indicate that favourability does not vary significantly according to the seniority of the stakeholder.

[6] Data is taken from the MORI Reputation Survey Normative Database, which holds the results for key indicators, such as advocacy, taken from previous stakeholder surveys with public sector organisations. Here we are referring to the aggregate score for *all* public sector organisations.

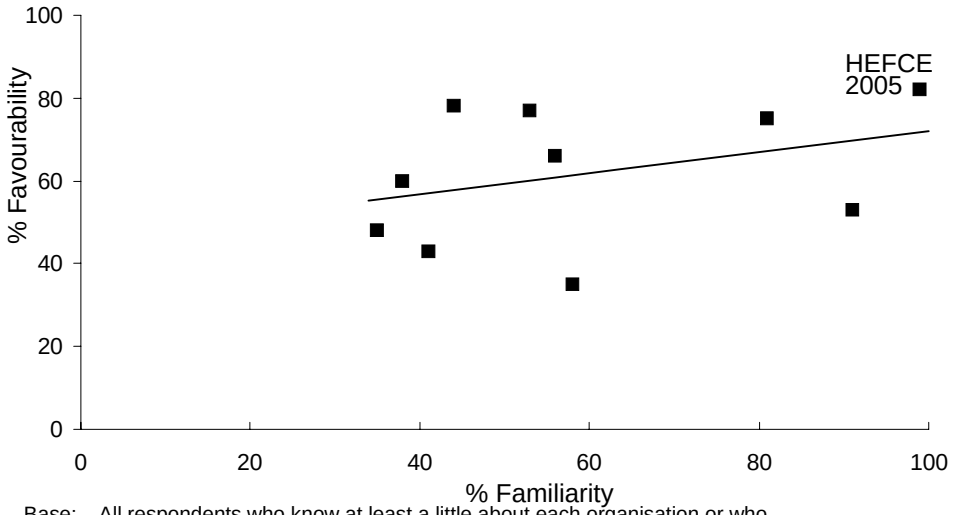
[7] Please note that 'Higher Education Agencies' does not include Government Departments.

[8] Please note that findings are indicative due to low base sizes.

[9] For the purposes of analysis, HEFCE gave each stakeholder one of three levels of importance: Important (I), Strategically Important (SI) and Strategically Very Important (SVI). SVI stakeholders are of the highest importance to HEFCE. It is important to note that Important Stakeholders and Strategically Very Important Stakeholders only represent a small number of individuals (24 and 36, respectively), as such the findings should be treated with a degree of caution.

To put the findings into context, respondents were asked to rate favourability towards a number of other organisations, from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to Universities UK. As shown in the chart below, favourability is far greater towards HEFCE than to any other organisation asked about. Even when based only on those organisations which stakeholders know "very well" or "fairly well", HEFCE has the clear lead. However, it is worth noting at this stage that, whereas HEFCE may have established relationships with the individuals selected to take part in this survey, the other organisations shown below may not. It may therefore be reasonable to expect favourability to be higher towards HEFCE than towards other organisations.

Chart 2: Familiarity and Favourability towards HEFCE and Comparator Organisations (Q1/Q2)



Base: All respondents who know at least a little about each organisation or who work for the organisation

Source: MORI

Advocacy for HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

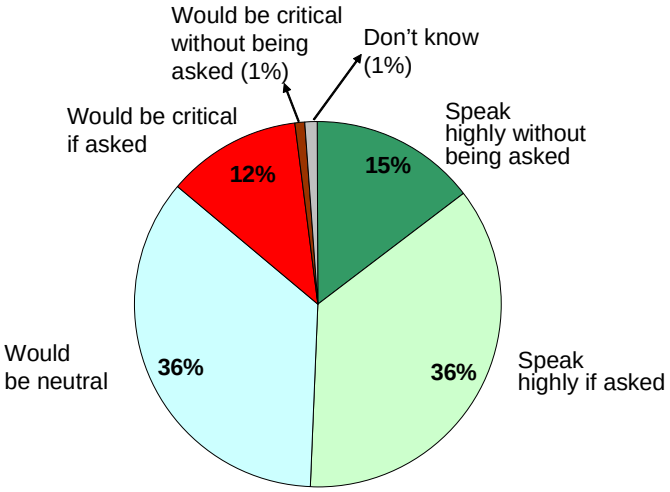
When speaking to others about HEFCE, around half of the key non-HEI stakeholders surveyed say they would speak highly of the Council (51%), although most of these would do so only if asked directly. Around a third (36%) would be neutral about HEFCE, suggesting that although stakeholders are favourable overall toward HEFCE (see previous section), they are not yet prepared to advocate it to others. Just one in seven (13%) would be critical.

It is important to note that HEFCE's results are very positive compared with other public sector stakeholder studies undertaken by MORI[10]. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of developing advocacy of the Council among those who are currently neutral.

[10] Data is taken from the MORI Reputation Survey Normative Database, which holds the results for key indicators, such as advocacy, taken from previous stakeholder surveys with public sector organisations. Here we are referring to the aggregate score for *all* public sector organisations.

Chart 3: Advocacy for HEFCE among Stakeholders (Q7)

Q Which one of the phrases below best describes the way you would speak of HEFCE to your colleagues?



Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Stakeholders from Higher Education Agencies are more likely to be advocates of HEFCE than other groups of stakeholders (80%, compared with 51% overall). Those who are more likely to be neutral towards HEFCE include individuals representing non-departmental public bodies and regional bodies, stakeholders who have three years or less experience of dealing with HEFCE, and those who do not feel well informed about the Council. However, as bases are low this finding is indicative rather than statistically significant. With this exception, advocacy levels are consistent across the different categories, including Important stakeholders, compared with Strategically Important and Strategically Very Important stakeholders.

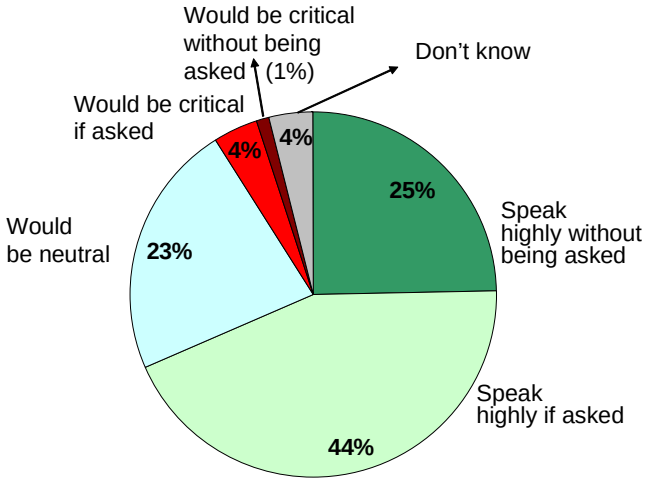
The views of staff

Advocacy is also very high among HEFCE staff. Seven in ten staff (69%) would speak highly of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation, and only a tiny minority (5%) would be critical. Compared with other public sector organisations surveyed by MORI[11], this level of advocacy among staff is unusually high and, as ambassadors for HEFCE, employees' high level of advocacy seems to be paying dividends in securing favourability towards the organisation among external stakeholders, as shown in the section above. In public sector organisations surveyed by MORI up to May 2005[12], only 37% of staff said they would speak highly of their employer to people outside the organisation, and 27% said they would be critical. We also typically find lower levels of advocacy in our HEI staff surveys than achieved in the HEFCE 2005 survey among staff.

[11] Data is taken from the MORI Reputation Survey Normative Database, which holds the results for key indicators, such as advocacy, taken from previous stakeholder surveys with public sector organisations. Here we are referring to the aggregate score for *all* public sector organisations.
[12] See previous footnote.

Chart 4: Advocacy for HEFCE among Staff (Q3)

Q Which one of the phrases below best describes the way you would speak of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation?



Base: HEFCE staff 2005 (193) Source: MORI

Advocacy tends to increase with seniority (see Table 4 below). The majority of senior management (Directors/Heads of Department and above) would speak highly of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation – more than half without being asked. In contrast, around half of administrative-level staff would only speak highly of HEFCE if asked and a similar proportion would be neutral[13]. Whilst this pattern is not unusual in MORI's experience of employee research, it is worth noting that in the past 12 months a significant proportion of non-HEI stakeholders have had direct contact with administrative staff and staff that one might not expect to be customer facing – for example, 30% with switchboard or reception staff and 24% with finance staff (see section on Contact and Communications with HEFCE). It is therefore important to convert staff at all levels, if possible, to positive advocates of HEFCE.

[13] Please note that findings are indicative due to low base sizes.

Table 4: Advocacy of HEFCE by seniority of staff

	CEO/Chair /Director/ Head	Executive	Administr-ation
Base: All staff	*(16*)* %	*(154)* %	*(22*)* %
Speak highly without being asked	56	25	5
Speak highly if asked	25	45	45
Would be neutral	19	20	41
Would be critical if asked	0	5	0
Would be critical without being asked	0	1	0
Don't know	0	3	9

**Please note low base sizes*

Source: MORI

Ratings of knowledge and experience of HEFCE

The views of stakeholders and staff

When asked to rate different aspects of HEFCE, it is the quality of staff that is most highly praised. The majority of non-HEI stakeholders rate the quality of HEFCE senior management (71%) and staff overall (69%) as *very good* or *fairly good*. In the staff survey, higher ratings are given for the quality of staff overall (78%) than senior management (62%).

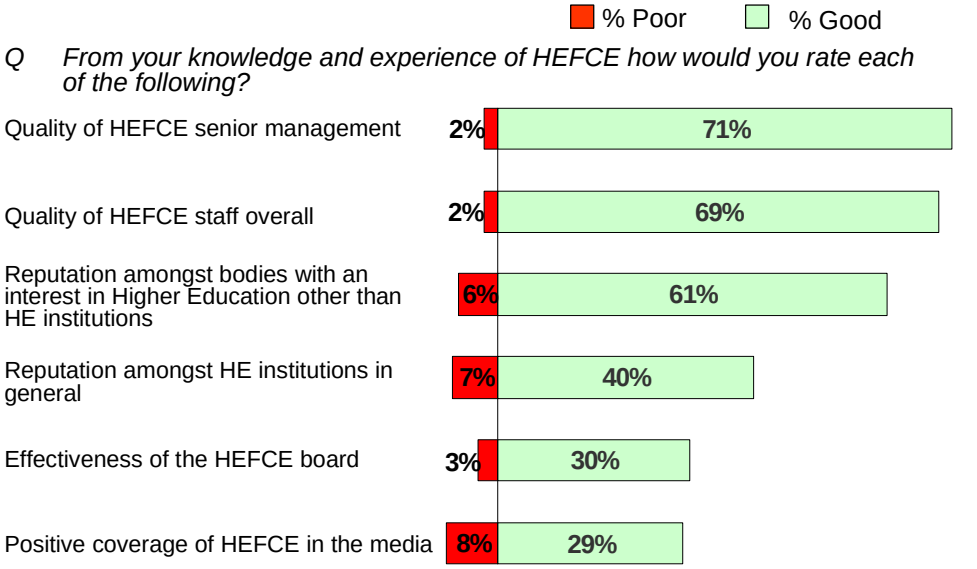
HEFCE is generally perceived to have a good reputation amongst bodies with an interest in higher education other than HEIs. Its reputation among HEIs, on the other hand, is rated less positively by both non-HEI stakeholders (40% *very/fairly good*) and HEFCE staff (53% *very/fairly good*). This may reflect the relatively lower levels of favourability seen in HEFCE's 2003 survey of HEIs. However, current non-HEI stakeholders underestimate HEFCE's reputation among HEIs if the 2003 HEIs' survey is anything to go by: over half (55%) of HEI respondents in 2003 rated HEFCE's reputation amongst HEIs as *very good* or *fairly good*, compared with 40% of non-HEI stakeholders in this survey.

While only three in ten non-HEI stakeholders (30%) regard the effectiveness of the HEFCE board as good, it is important to note that less than one in twenty (3%) feel that it is poor, and more than half do not provide a response either way (28% answered don't know and 27% declined to give an answer). This indicates that a high proportion of stakeholders who took part in the research have no experience of the HEFCE board and therefore do not feel able to comment.

However, it is interesting to note that half (50%) of stakeholders categorised as Strategically Very Important consider the HEFCE board to be effective, compared with a quarter (25%) of those defined as Important.

Coverage of HEFCE in the media is perceived to be quite mixed by both non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff, although non-HEI stakeholders seem to be less aware of negative coverage than staff (8% of stakeholders compared with 16% of staff).

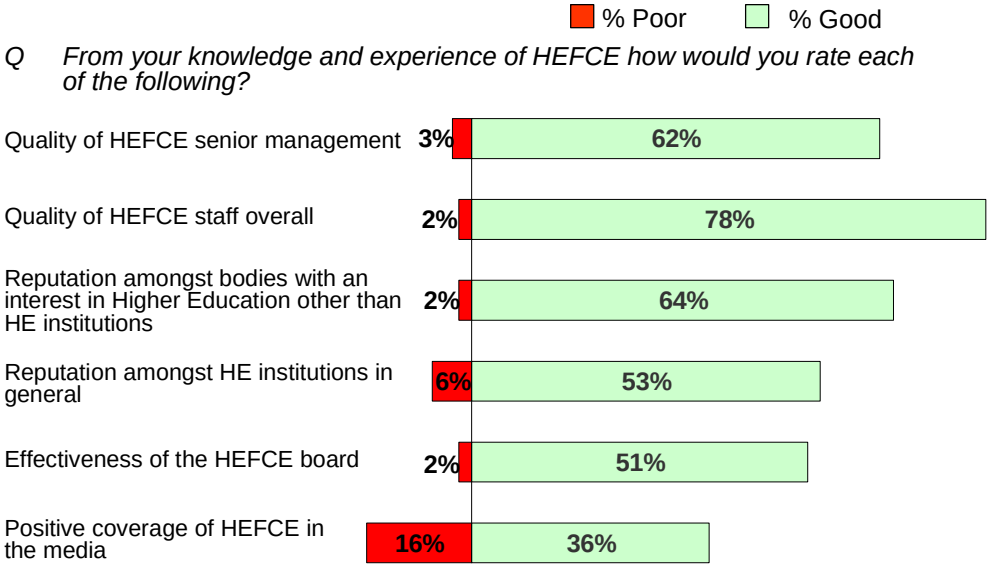
Chart 5A: Ratings of Experience of HEFCE (Q6 Stakeholders)



Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Chart 5B: Ratings of Experience of HEFCE (Q2 Staff)



Base: HEFCE Staff 2005 (193)

Source: MORI

The image of HEFCE

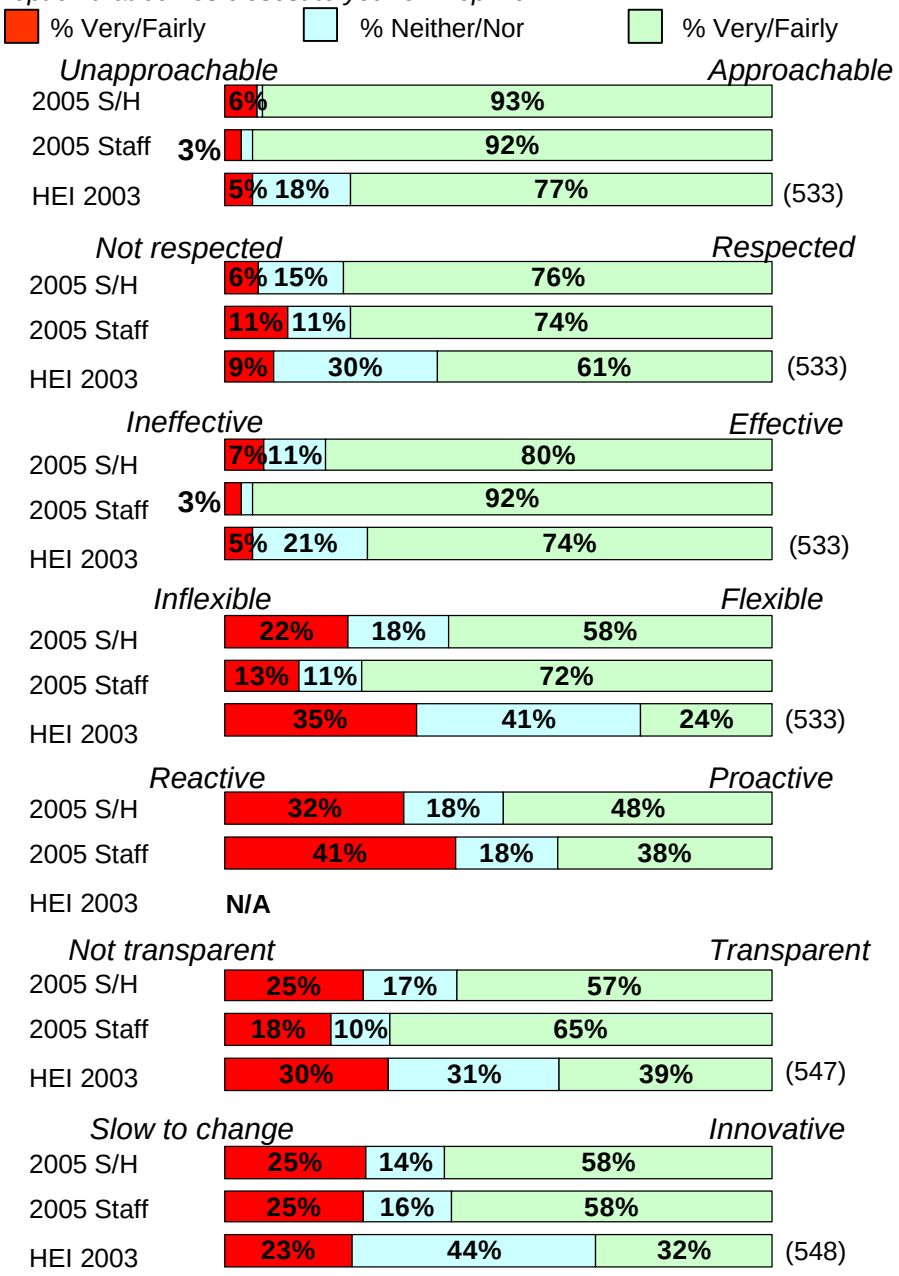
The views of stakeholders and staff

"Approachable" and "effective" are adjectives that the vast majority of both non-HEI stakeholders and staff would attribute to HEFCE. Around three-quarters of stakeholders (76%) and staff (74%) would also describe HEFCE as "respected". While HEFCE staff are more likely than key non-HEI stakeholders to describe the organisation as "flexible" (72% staff compared with 58% stakeholders) and "transparent" (65% staff compared with 57% stakeholders), non-HEI stakeholders (48%) are more likely than staff (38%) to view the organisation as "proactive".

Where comparable, ratings on image attributes tend to be much more positive among key non-HEI stakeholders and staff in this survey than they were among HEIs in the 2003 survey.

Chart 6: Describing HEFCE
(Q5 Stakeholders & Q1 Staff)

Q Thinking of your experiences or perceptions of HEFCE overall, please select the option that comes closest to your own opinion



Base: Stakeholders 2005 (154), Staff 2005 (193), HEIs 2003 (in brackets) Source: MORI

While these findings hold across most subgroups of stakeholders, it is interesting to note that Strategically Very Important stakeholders are more likely to regard HEFCE as respected and transparent, than Strategically Important stakeholders.

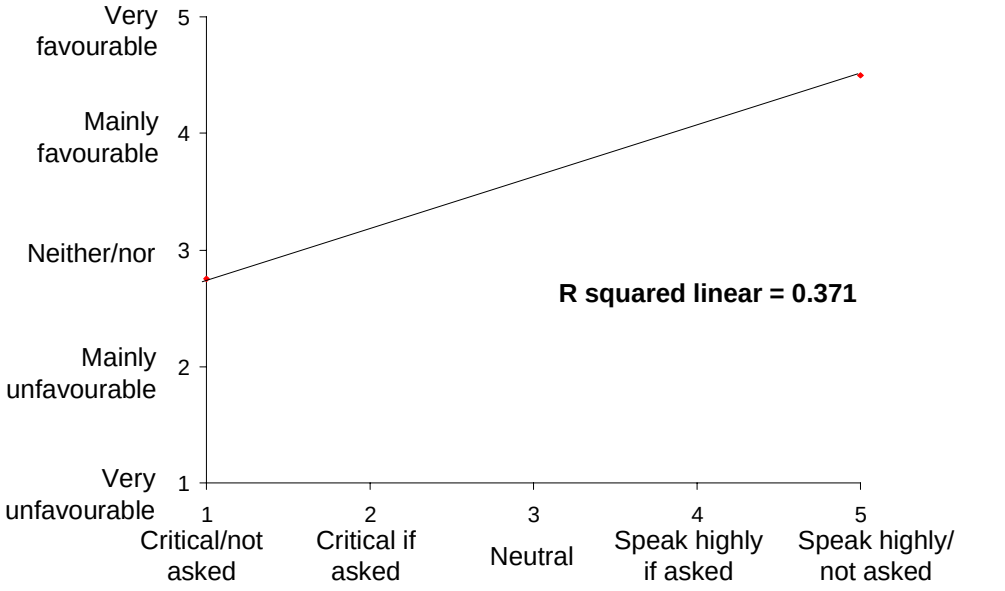
Managing HEFCE's reputation: key drivers' analysis

It is possible to identify factors that drive favourability or advocacy among stakeholders and staff by looking at the strength of the statistical relationship

(correlation) between these and other measures (e.g. image factors, aspects of the relationship, effectiveness of HEFCE etc). By focusing on the factors that have the strongest correlation with favourability and advocacy, HEFCE can effectively manage its reputation. MORI conducted "key drivers' analysis" to determine which factors are related to an increase or decrease in favourability and advocacy.[14]

First and foremost, the key drivers' analysis shows us that favourability and advocacy are highly correlated. This is to be expected in MORI's experience: an improvement in favourability towards HEFCE commonly leads to an improvement in advocacy.

Chart 7: Correlation between advocacy & favourability



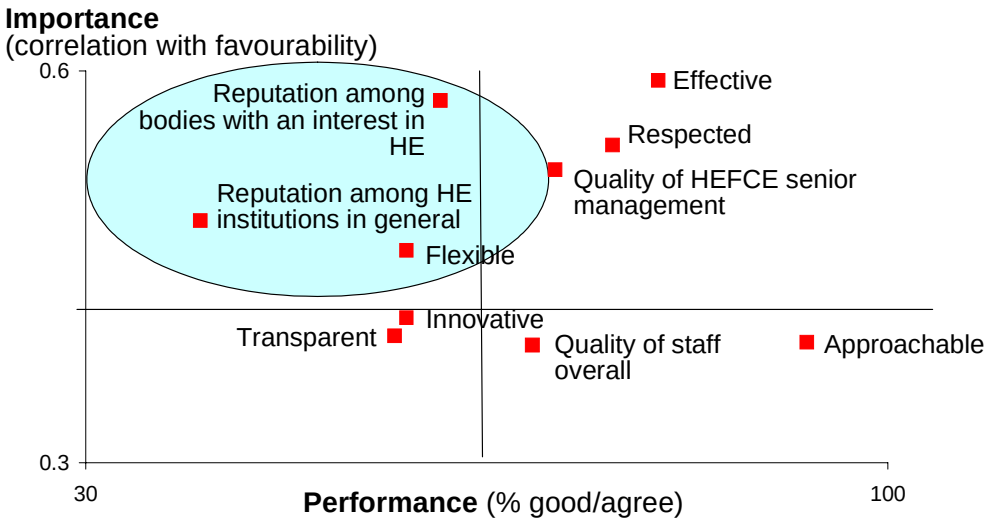
Source: MORI

Of greater interest to HEFCE in terms of reputation management is to know what can be done to improve overall measures such as favourability and advocacy. Certain image and reputation factors are key in driving favourability among stakeholders – in particular "effective", "respected" and "quality of HEFCE's senior management". Stakeholders already have a strong association of HEFCE with these attributes and this must be maintained or further strengthened.

Flexibility and "reputation among HE institutions" are also key drivers of favourability. However, as shown in the previous section, a significant proportion of non-HEI stakeholders rate HEFCE relatively poorly on these factors – they are therefore areas for improvement.

[14] This key drivers' analysis is based on a statistical correlation of all satisfaction and image ratings and "favourability" and "advocacy".

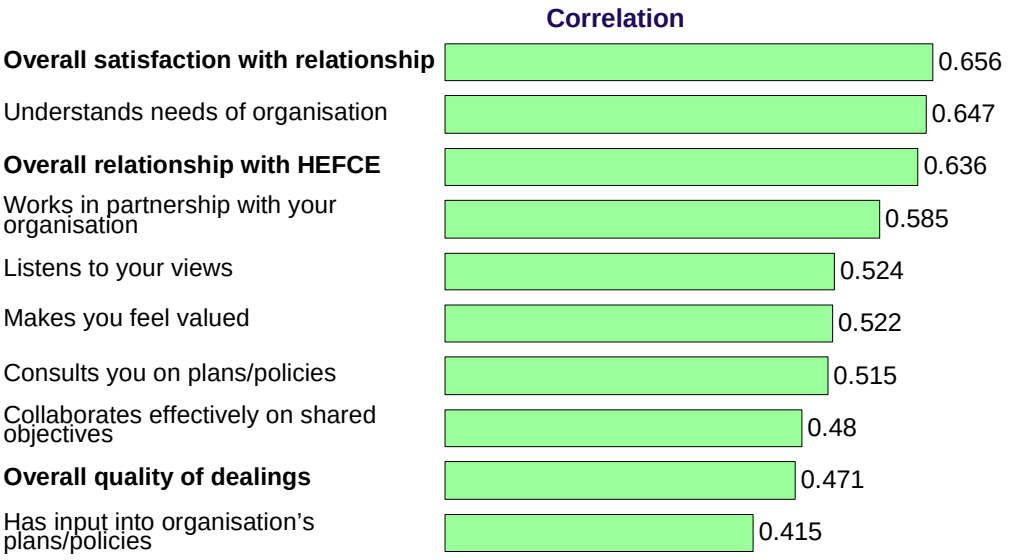
Chart 8: Key drivers of favourability: importance vs performance



Source: MORI

Many of the strongest influences on favourability among key non-HEI stakeholders relate to effective relationships between HEFCE and stakeholder organisations: factors such as "works in partnership with your organisation", "understands the needs of your organisation", "satisfied with the overall relationship with HEFCE" are all key drivers of favourability. It will be seen in the section on Relationships between HEFCE and Stakeholders how HEFCE is currently performing on these factors, and how HEFCE can target improvements in "overall relationships".

Chart 9: Favourability and aspects of relationship: correlation

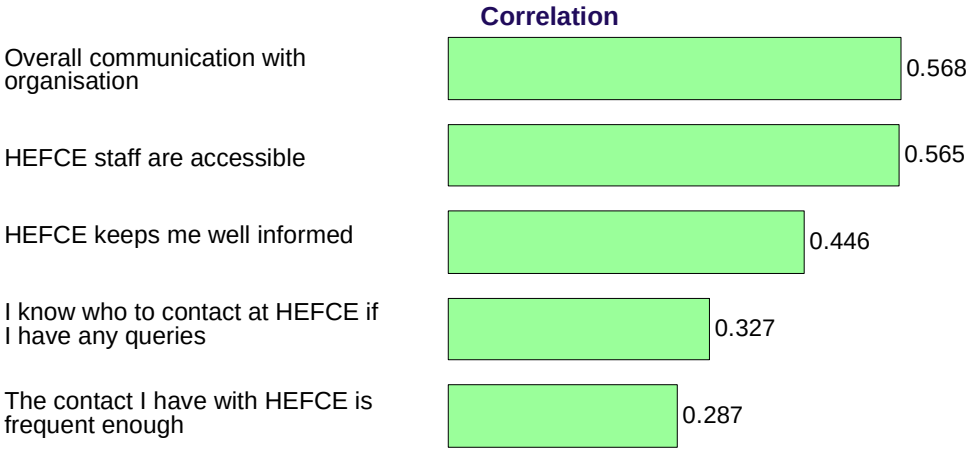


Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Effective communications between HEFCE and stakeholder organisations, such as accessibility of staff and how well informed HEFCE keeps its stakeholders, are also key in driving favourability. Further details on communications can be found in the Contact and Communications section.

Chart 10: Favourability and communications: correlation



Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

2. HEFCE's Role

This chapter examines and compares staff and stakeholders' perceptions of HEFCE's role and how effective they feel the organisation is.

Reflecting the finding that HEFCE is seen to have a good reputation among bodies with an interest in higher education, the majority of stakeholders (75%) and staff (77%) agree that HEFCE effectively works in partnership with such organisations.

HEFCE is seen by most stakeholders and staff to be an agent of the Government and actively collaborating to bring about improvements in higher education. There is less agreement as to whether HEFCE is an advocate for the HE sector – a significant minority of stakeholders (24%) and staff (19%) disagree. Stakeholders and staff also tend to *disagree* that HEFCE is primarily a regulatory body.

The activities that stakeholders regard as most important for HEFCE are also those where HEFCE is thought to be performing most effectively.

Stakeholders and staff both tend to see HEFCE as most effective at activities relating to general support and policy development: widening participation, enhancing teaching/learning and research and higher education policy development.

However, staff are somewhat more likely than stakeholders to rate HEFCE as effective at supporting links with business and the community, and minimising the accountability burden. Neither group sees HEFCE as effective at promoting sustainability – however few see this as an important part of HEFCE's remit.

Perceptions of HEFCE's role

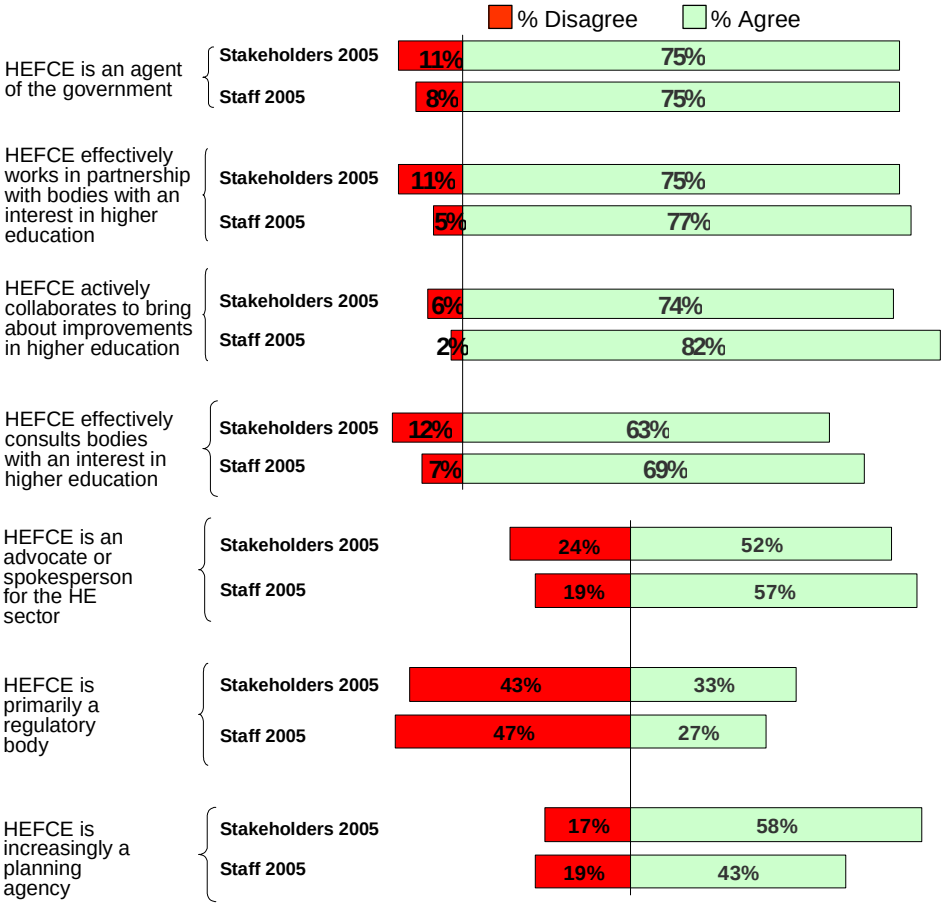
The views of stakeholders and staff

When asked to describe HEFCE's role, the views of stakeholders and HEFCE staff are generally closely matched. Both groups *strongly agree* that "HEFCE effectively works in partnership with bodies with an interest in higher education" (75% stakeholders, 77% staff); "is an agent of the Government" (75% stakeholders, 75% staff); and "actively collaborates to bring about improvements in higher education" (74% stakeholders, 82% staff). Key non-HEI stakeholders and staff are both unlikely to agree, however, that "HEFCE is primarily a regulatory body" (44% stakeholders and 47% staff disagree).

There is less agreement between non-HEI stakeholders and staff as to whether "HEFCE effectively consults bodies with an interest in higher education" or "acts in the public interest". In both cases, staff are somewhat more likely to agree than non-HEI stakeholders.

Chart 11: Perceptions of HEFCE's Role (Q8/Q4)

Q Thinking about the HEFCE's current role, how strongly do you agree/ disagree with the following statements?



Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154) HEFCE Staff 2005 (193) Source: MORI

Stakeholders from regional bodies in particular disagree that HEFCE "effectively consults bodies with an interest in higher education" (around one in four respondents from regional bodies disagree, compared with 12% overall).

Priorities for improving relations with stakeholders: clarifying HEFCE's role

When key non-HEI stakeholders were asked what HEFCE's three key priorities should be for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years, nearly one in five (18%) stakeholders who cite an improvement say that HEFCE should clarify its role and priorities.

> *Greater clarity over HEFCE's role – is it a planning or strategic organisation?*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Agreed definition of roles vis-à-vis HEIs in determining type and areas of strategic support needed to support sector, while leaving appropriate leadership and management responsibilities with HEIs*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Be clear about its own functions and priorities and communicate these effectively*
>
> Stakeholder

Some feel that HEFCE's role must be more clearly defined in relation to that of its stakeholder organisations.

> *I think we and HEFCE should enter into a semi-formal agreement on our respective roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to decision-making*
>
> Stakeholder

In addition, it is felt that HEFCE's role needs to be more clearly differentiated from that of the DfES.

> *It is sometimes difficult to understand the overlap or gap between HEFCE activity and DfES activity… clarification would be helpful*
>
> Stakeholder

And some feel that HEFCE should modify its role.

> *HEFCE should not be a planning body - it should be responsive to university needs, so it should be in listening and service mode*
>
> Stakeholder

The effectiveness of HEFCE

The views of stakeholders and staff

The survey asked both audiences to what extent they feel various aspects of HEFCE's activities are carried out effectively.

The majority of non-HEI stakeholders and staff are in agreement that HEFCE supports "widening participation", "the enhancement of learning and teaching" and "developing higher education policy" *very effectively* or *fairly effectively*. Ratings of the effectiveness of HEFCE's "support for the strategic development of universities and colleges" and "higher education policy development" are also relatively high among both audiences.

However, perceptions of non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff diverge on other issues. Whereas the majority (82%) of staff say "support for higher education institutions in difficulty" is *very/fairly effective*, less than three in five (59%) stakeholders agree. This may be because HEFCE's intervention in this area is of necessity largely carried out in private. Staff are also somewhat more likely to perceive "HEFCE's support for links with businesses and the community" (70%) and "minimising the accountability burden" (66%) as effective, than stakeholders (47% and 38%[15] respectively).

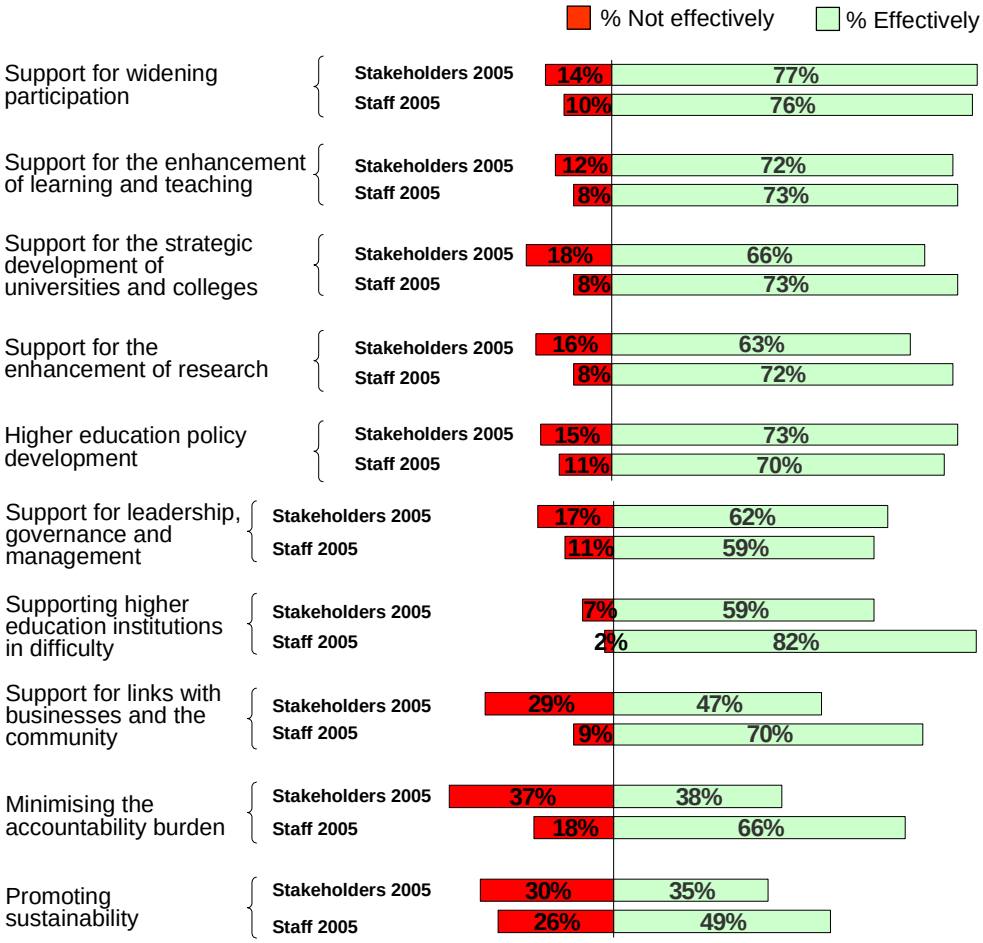
Both audiences are least likely to rate HEFCE as effective at "promoting sustainability" (49% staff and 35% stakeholders).

There are some significant differences in the views of non-HEI stakeholders and respondents to the 2003 HEI survey. HEIs in 2003 (60%) were more likely to rate HEFCE's "support for links with businesses and the community" as *very/fairly effective* than stakeholders in this survey (47%). In contrast, non-HEI stakeholders (63%) are more likely to view HEFCE as effective at "supporting the enhancement of research" than was revealed in the 2003 HEI survey (44%).

[15] To place this 38% in context, when HEIs were asked in the 2003 survey whether the administrative burden HEFCE places on institutions had improved, stayed the same or deteriorated, only 11% said it had improved. Although not directly comparable, this does suggest some improvements have been made since then in this area.

Chart 12: Effectiveness of HEFCE (Q10 Stakeholders & Q5 Staff)

Q To what extent, if at all, do you feel the following aspects of HEFCE's activities are carried out effectively?



Base: HEFCE Stakeholders 2005 (154) HEFCE Staff 2005 (193) Source: MORI

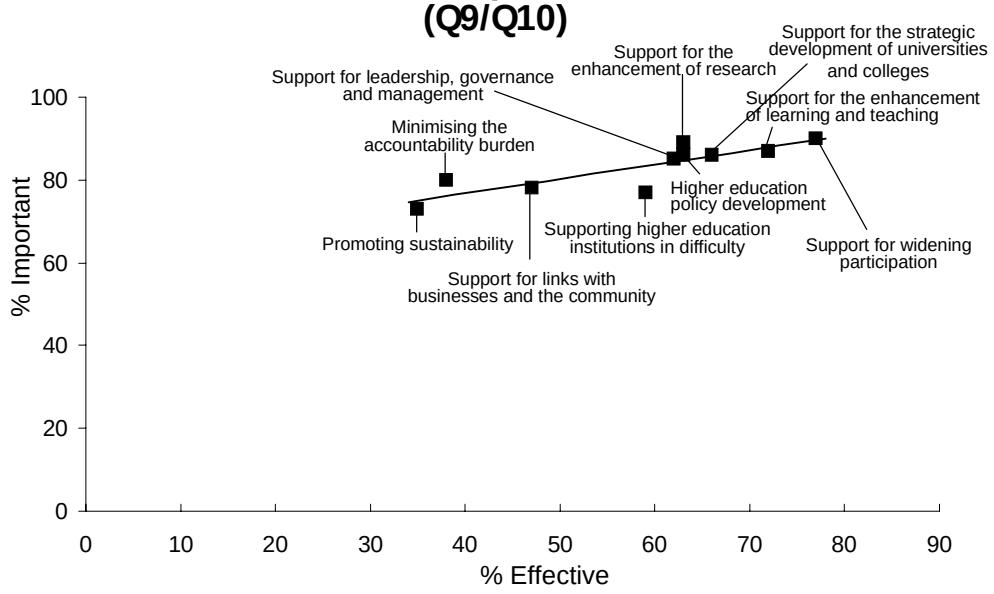
Thus it appears that HEFCE is seen to be most effective at carrying out activities relating to more general support and policy development.

Stakeholders' views

It is in the more tangible areas, particularly in stakeholders' eyes, that the organisation come the closest to failing – for example, in assisting struggling higher education institutions, maintaining and building links with the wider community, and minimising bureaucracy.

To look at this in more depth, the chart below plots the proportion of stakeholders who feel HEFCE carries out a role effectively against the proportion who feel the role is important (staff were not asked about the importance of each role).

Chart 13: Effectiveness Vs Importance of HEFCE's Activities (Q9/Q10)



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154) Source: MORI

All of HEFCE's activities are rated as very/fairly important by the majority (at least seven in ten) of stakeholders. Encouragingly, the activities that stakeholders regard as most important for HEFCE are also those where HEFCE is thought to be performing effectively (support for widening participation, enhancement of learning and teaching and development of higher education policy). As seen in the section on HEFCE's Reputation, development of higher education policy is also a key driver of favourability towards HEFCE, so the more HEFCE is seen to be doing this, the more favourable stakeholders will be towards the organisation.

The area in which HEFCE is seen to be performing least effectively is also the one regarded as least important: promoting sustainability.

However, there are some activities that stakeholders view as important but do not believe HEFCE is carrying out as effectively. These include support for enhancement of research, strategic development of universities and colleges, and leadership, governance and management. It is important to communicate to stakeholders what work is being done in these areas by HEFCE.

3. Relationship between HEFCE and Stakeholders

In this chapter we compare how stakeholders and HEFCE staff view their relationship.

As seen in the first section on HEFCE's Reputation, many of the strongest influences on favourability towards HEFCE relate to effective relationships between HEFCE and stakeholder organisations. Factors such as "works in partnership with your organisation", "understands the needs of your organisation" and "makes you feel valued" – as well as overall satisfaction with relationships – are highly correlated with favourability.

It is therefore good news that the majority (77%) of key non-HEI stakeholders are satisfied with their relationship with HEFCE overall, and a similar proportion (74%) say they have a better relationship with HEFCE than with other bodies associated with higher education. In addition, nearly two-thirds (64%) feel that their relationship with HEFCE has improved over the last three years. These positive views on relationships with external stakeholders are shared by HEFCE staff.

Most aspects of the relationship are seen by both staff and key non-HEI stakeholders as effective. The majority of stakeholders feel that HEFCE is effective at working in partnership with their organisation and collaborating on shared objectives, and just under half say that these aspects of their relationship with HEFCE have improved over the last three years.

Having input into stakeholders' plans and policies is the area where HEFCE is seen to be least effective, partly because this is not seen to be applicable to their relationship with many stakeholder organisations.

There appears to be some room for improvement with making key non-HEI stakeholders feel valued; key drivers' analysis shows that, along with working in partnership with stakeholders, making stakeholders feel valued is likely to have the greatest positive impact on overall satisfaction with relationships.

"Genuine" consultation of stakeholders is seen as a priority for improving relations.

The relationship between stakeholders and HEFCE

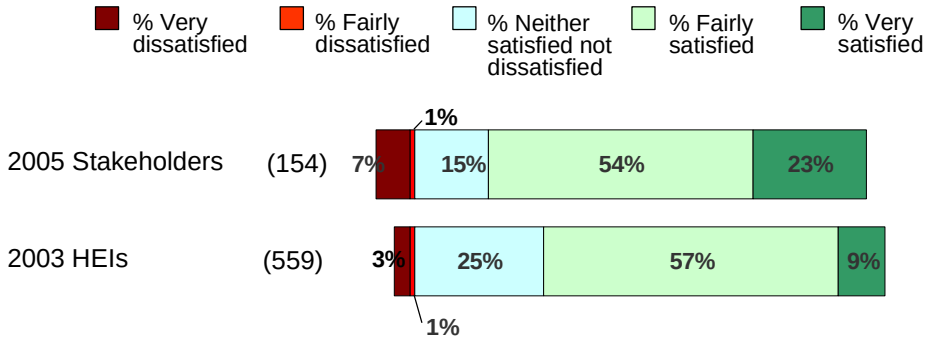
Stakeholders' views

The majority (77%) of key non-HEI stakeholders are satisfied with the relationship that their organisation has with HEFCE, of which over a fifth (23%) are *very satisfied*. Satisfaction levels are therefore somewhat more positive than

they were in the 2003 HEIs survey, reflecting higher levels of favourability towards HEFCE seen in the Reputation section.

Chart 14: Overall Satisfaction with Relationship (Q12)

Q Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the relationship your institution has with the HEFCE?



Base: All respondents (shown in brackets)

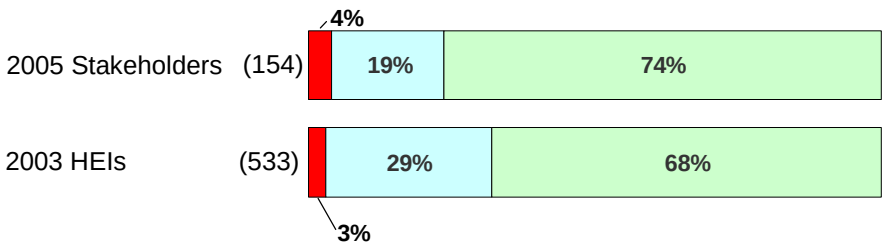
Source: MORI

This finding is consistent across all key sub-groups including Important stakeholders (79%), Strategically Important stakeholders (76%) and Strategically Very Important stakeholders (78%). Looking at the figures for different types of organisation, satisfaction appears to be lower amongst NDPBs (71%), Regional Bodies (74%) and Government Departments (76%) and highest amongst Higher Education Agencies (100%). Satisfaction levels for other types of organisation falls somewhere in between: 79% of Representative Bodies and 85% of Funding Bodies are satisfied with their overall relationship with HEFCE.

When asked how their relationship with HEFCE compares to that with other higher education bodies, three-quarters (74%) of stakeholders rate HEFCE as above average, including a third (34%) who say it is one of the best. A fifth (19%) of stakeholders believe that it is on a par with other higher education bodies. Respondents in the 2003 HEIs survey were somewhat more likely to view their relationship with HEFCE as "about average" compared with other HE bodies (29%).

Chart 15: Relationship with HEFCE Compared to Other Organisations (Q3)

Q How would you rate HEFCE compared to other bodies associated with higher education with which you are familiar?



Base: All respondents (shown in brackets)

Source: MORI

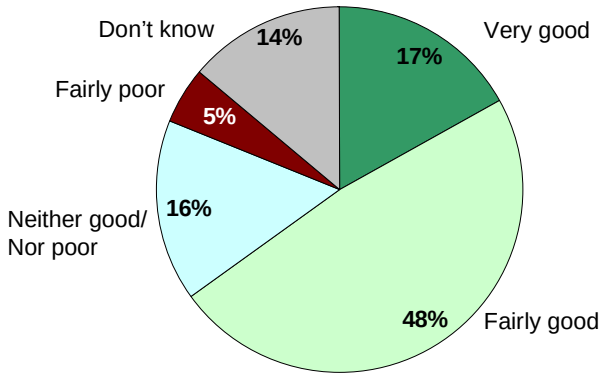
The views of staff

The majority (65%) of HEFCE staff rate their relationship with stakeholders other than higher education institutions as *very good* or *fairly good*[16]. Staff and stakeholders therefore appear to have similar perceptions of how positive or satisfactory their relationship is.

[16] Staff who are SRCs or have some SRC contact were asked about their relationship with their specific stakeholder (or one of their stakeholders if they had multiple stakeholders). Those who do not have any SRC contact with stakeholders were asked about stakeholders in general. In order to facilitate comparisons, staff who answered "don't know" have been excluded from the base.

Chart 16: Overall Rating of Relationship (Q8)

Q Overall, how would you describe the relationship HEFCE has with stakeholders other than higher education institutions (SRCs: the relationship HEFCE has with a specific stakeholder)?



Base: HEFCE staff 2005 (193) Source: MORI

As might be expected, staff who do not have direct contact with stakeholders (either as SRCs or staff with "some contact") are least likely to be able to rate HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders (17% of this group of staff say "don't know").

If those who feel unable to rate HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders are not included, there are relatively similar good ratings among SRCs/ staff with "some contact" (79%) and non-SRCs (75%) with regard to how they view HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders.

And how this relationship has changed

The views of stakeholders and staff

Stakeholders and staff with SRC responsibilities were asked to consider how their relationship has changed over the last three years (or how the relationship has changed since they have been working together). Nearly two-thirds (64%) of stakeholders think the relationship is better than three years ago, a quarter (26%) of whom think it is *much better*. Around one in six (18%) report no change.

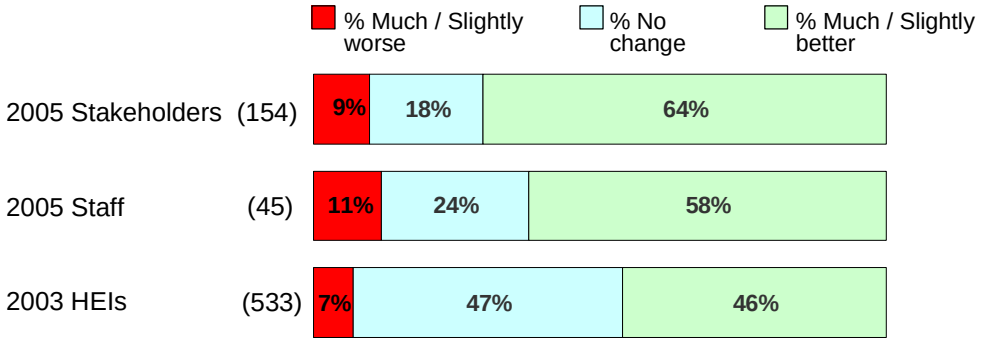
Strategically Very Important stakeholders appear more likely to regard their relationship with HEFCE as having improved over the last three years than Important stakeholders do (67% and 54%, respectively). Similarly, Higher Education Agencies (80%) and Regional Bodies (79%) are more likely to feel that things have got better, than other organisation types. However, in both cases the differences between sub-groups are not statistically significant so should be treated with caution.

Staff views on the relationship are slightly more neutral overall: three in five (58%) staff feel the relationship has improved and a quarter (24%) think there has been no change.

Chart 17: Change in Relationship (Q13 & Q9)

Q To what extent do you feel your relationship with HEFCE has got better or worse over the last three years (or since you have been working with HEFCE if less than three years)?

Q To what extent do you feel HEFCE 's relationship with [a specific stakeholder] has got better or worse over the last three years (or since you have known this stakeholder if less than three years)?



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154) HEFCE staff
(All SRCs and those with some stakeholder contact)

Source: MORI

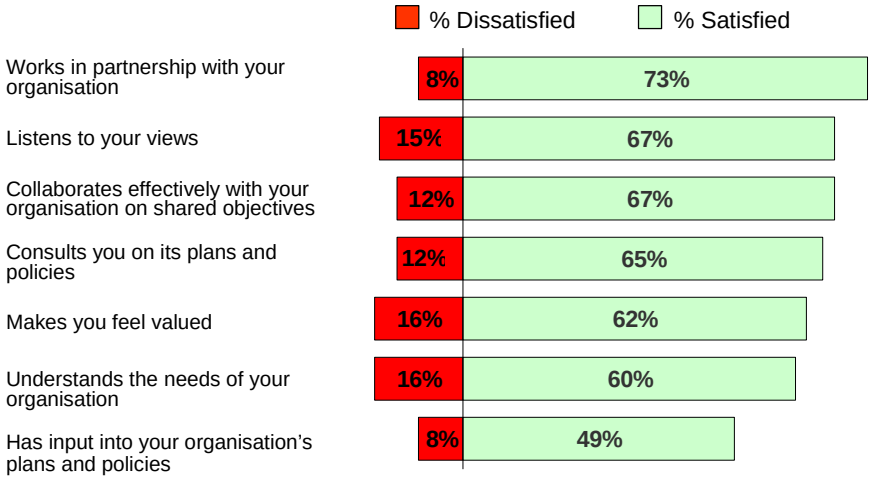
Satisfaction with different aspects of the relationship

Stakeholders' views

Stakeholders were asked how satisfied they were with a number of aspects of their relationship with HEFCE. Stakeholders tend to be satisfied with most of the aspects of their relationship with HEFCE. In particular, satisfaction with HEFCE working in partnership with their organisation is high (73%). Nearly two-thirds are satisfied that HEFCE listens to their views (67%), collaborates effectively with their organisation (67%) and consults on its plans and policies (65%). Around three in five are satisfied that HEFCE understands them (60%) and feel valued by HEFCE (62%).

Chart 18: Satisfaction with Aspects of Relationship (Q11)

Q How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your relationship with HEFCE?



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Around a half (49%) of stakeholders are satisfied with HEFCE's input into their organisation's plans and policies – however one in six (18%) feel this attribute is not applicable to their relationship with HEFCE.

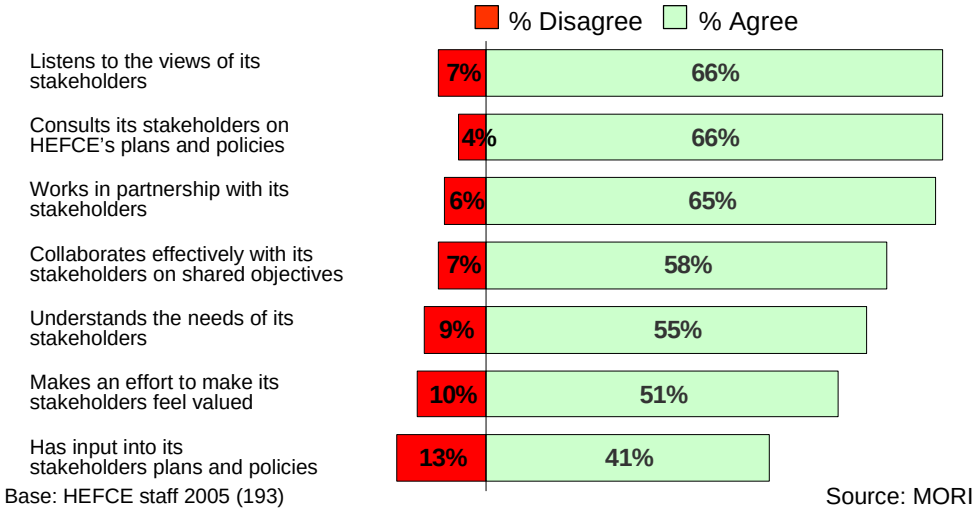
The views of staff

Staff were also shown a series of similar statements to assess the relationship HEFCE has with its stakeholders[17]. Ratings of aspects of the relationship appear to be largely in line with stakeholder satisfaction, although different scales were used so direct comparisons cannot be made. The statements that staff are least likely to agree with – that HEFCE makes an effort to make stakeholders feel valued (51% agree), understands stakeholders' needs (55% agree) and has input into stakeholders' plans and policies (41% agree) – mirror the areas where stakeholders say HEFCE is least effective.

[17] Staff who are SRCs or have some SRC contact were asked about their relationship with their specific stakeholder (or one of their stakeholders if they had multiple stakeholders). Those who do not have any SRC contact with stakeholders were asked about stakeholders in general. In order to facilitate comparisons, staff who answered "don't know" have been excluded from the base.

Chart 19: HEFCE's Relationship with stakeholders (Q7)

Q Thinking about HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders other than higher education institutions [SRCs: HEFCE's relationship with a specific stakeholder], to what extent do you agree or disagree that…?



Base: HEFCE staff 2005 (193)

Source: MORI

Stakeholders were also asked to what extent these aspects of their relationship with HEFCE have changed over the last three years. The picture is fairly positive, with more perceived improvement over the last three years than deterioration.

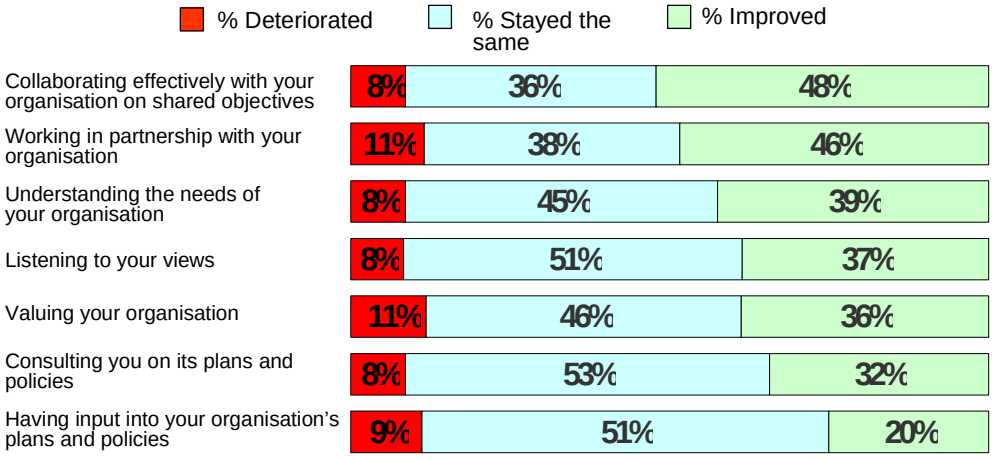
The areas where stakeholders feel HEFCE has most improved over the last three years are "collaborating effectively on shared objectives" (48% improved, net improved score[18] of +39) and "working in partnership with stakeholder organisations" (46% improved, net improved score of +35).

HEFCE has not however made as much headway with "having input into stakeholder plans and policies", as it has in the other areas (20% improved, net improved score of +11). However, a significant minority (15%) feel this is not applicable to their relationship with HEFCE.

[18] 'Net improved score' is worked out by subtracting the % deteriorated from the % improved to give a positive or negative net score

Chart 20: Change in Aspects of Relationship (Q14)

Q Have the following areas of your relationship with HEFCE improved, stayed the same or deteriorated over the last three years?



Base: All stakeholders except those who have been dealing with HEFCE for less than three years (142)

Source: MORI

Key drivers of overall satisfaction with relationship

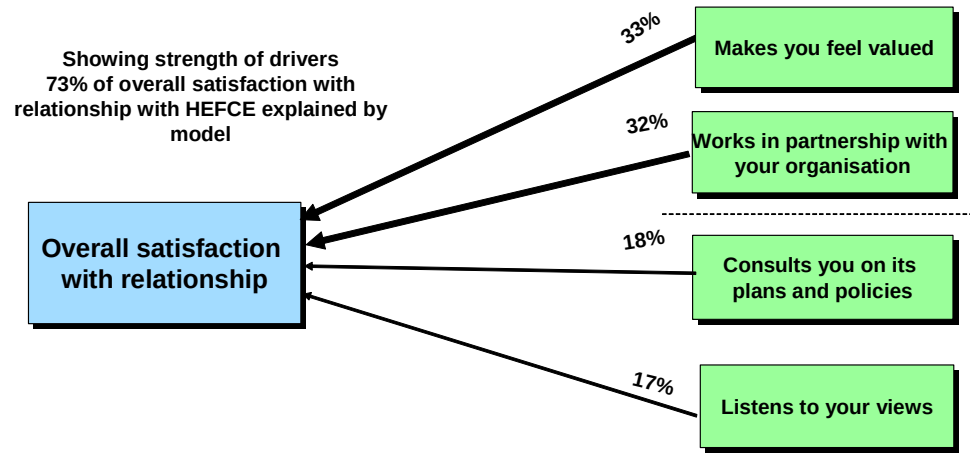
Stakeholders' views

As seen in the section on HEFCE's Reputation, it is possible to identify factors that drive favourability or advocacy among stakeholders by looking at statistical relationships between these and other measures. Similarly, looking at the statistical relationships between "overall satisfaction with relationships" and various aspects of relationships can help HEFCE to manage relationships with stakeholders.

MORI conducted key drivers' analysis to determine which factors most strongly determine an increase or decrease in overall satisfaction with relationships.[19] Four aspects of the relationship between HEFCE and key non-HEI stakeholders are key in driving overall satisfaction with relationships. Each of the strongest two drivers, "makes you feel valued" and "works in partnership with your organisation", has twice as much impact on overall satisfaction with relationships as "consults you on its plans and policies" or "listens to your views". However, all are important.

[19] This key drivers' analysis is based on a multiple regression analysis of all relationship attributes (Q10) and "overall satisfaction with relationships" (Q11). This model explains 73% of the variation in overall satisfaction – meaning that there are other drivers of satisfaction that are not explained by the model. However, this is a very strong model.

Chart 21: Regression Analysis: Drivers of satisfaction with relationship with HEFCE

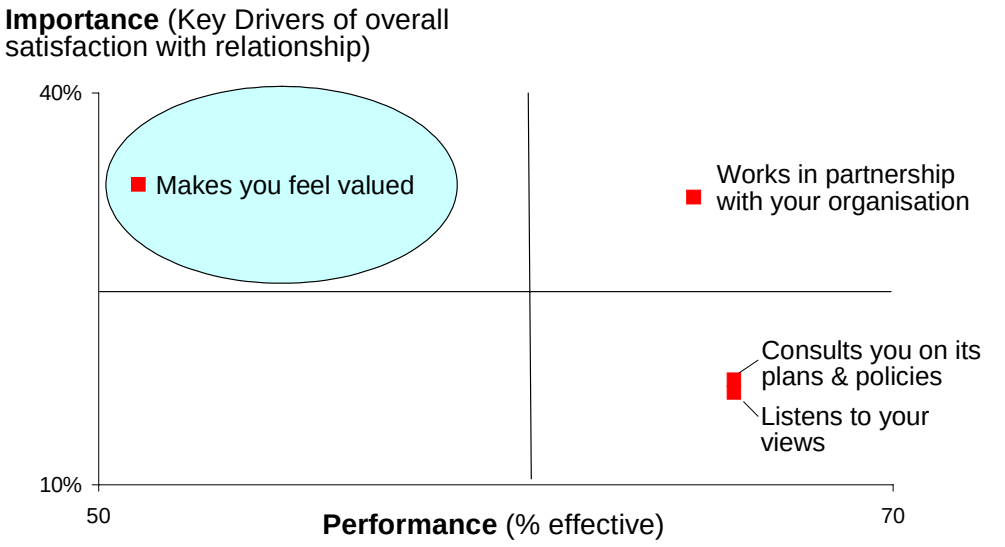


Base: 154

Source: MORI

By plotting satisfaction with each aspect of the relationship between HEFCE and key non-HEI stakeholders against relative importance (as determined by key drivers' analysis), we can identify improvement priorities. As shown in the chart below, *making key non-HEI stakeholders feel more valued* is likely to have the greatest positive impact on overall satisfaction with relationships.

Chart 22: Key drivers of relationship: importance vs performance



Source: MORI

Priorities for improving relations with stakeholders: consultation

Stakeholders' views

When asked what HEFCE's three key priorities should be for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years, the most frequently cited improvement (mentioned by 25% of stakeholders who give an answer) relates to ensuring that stakeholders are consulted early on about policy issues and that more meaningful/effective consultation is carried out with stakeholders.

Indeed, it is felt by some that, although HEFCE does currently consult stakeholders, the decisions have already been made.

> *Consultation with appropriate partners absolutely has to be improved: if consultation happens [at the moment], you end up with the feeling that the issue has been stitched up before a consultation document is released and HEFCE are only consulting you because they have to*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Doing consultations that are taken seriously and affect the outcome. [There is] a lot of cynicism about the fact that conclusions are reached and reports written before consultations are complete*
>
> Stakeholder

Stakeholders would like to be consulted earlier on in the process.

> *Involve stakeholders at earlier discussions of policy*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Liaising with funding bodies about policy development well in advance of change*
>
> Stakeholder

HEFCE must also show that it is acting on the suggestions of stakeholders.

> *Actively engage with and listen to stakeholders outside the HEFCE sector and then act on the recommendations/ advice given. HEFCE are 'behind the curve' in terms of adopting new ideas, making changes and facilitating culture change in HE*
>
> Stakeholder

Showing it is taking on board external stakeholder views in response to its consultations. It carries out a lot of consultations – and our organisation has put considerable effort into responding but it is not obvious that it takes on board views from consultation. RAE is a good example. So we're starting to call into question whether it's worth putting in the time and effort to respond

Stakeholder

Others feel that HEFCE must make more effort to understand the needs and priorities of stakeholders.

Make greater efforts to understand stakeholders' perspectives and work with them. At present it seems that the main drivers for HEFCE relate to the government agenda rather than that of the HEIs and others they supposedly are working with

Stakeholder

Improved dialogue and meaningful exchange of views with Universities. Consultation often refers to a one way process. 'Take it or leave it', even when said very nicely, does not reflect a spirit of co-operation and partnership

Stakeholder

Priorities for improving relations with stakeholders: adopting a lead at a regional level

Stakeholders' views

Adopting a lead at a regional level is also cited as a priority by around one in eight stakeholders (12%), when asked what HEFCE's key priorities should be for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years.

The regional agenda is now a reality – HEFCE personnel are unable to contribute fully to the Skills White Paper/ RSP approach because a) there is not sufficient regional resource and b) funding decisions remain at national level

Stakeholder

To maintain the development of their relationship with HE stakeholders at regional level

Stakeholder

Clarification of HEFCE's regional policy so that partners understand what HEFCE wants to achieve

Stakeholder

Bringing national best practice examples to the regions to help accelerate progress in developing the right support for businesses

Stakeholder

Develop the understanding of HEFCE regional staff of the issues which are significant to the regions

Stakeholder

Visibility of HEFCE staff at regional and local events

Stakeholder

More stakeholder contact time at strategic regional level (rather than HEI/ institutional level)

Stakeholder

Assist regional stakeholders to lobby central government on issues of strategic importance

Stakeholder

Build on HEFCE ability to understand and describe the different regional and sub-regional pictures to a national audience

Stakeholder

4. The Stakeholder Relations Contact (SRC) Role

This chapter looks in more detail at the Stakeholder Relations Contact (SRC) role.

Staff are not always clear about whether or not they are an SRC, suggesting that the role may need to be more clearly defined and communicated to all HEFCE staff. Indeed, nearly two in five (37%) say that they do not know who the SRC is for the stakeholders they deal with, and one in five (20%) SRCs say that they do not have a good understanding of what is expected of them as an SRC.

The majority (75%) of staff view stakeholder relations as an important part of their job and nearly half (48%) would like to be kept more informed about joint activities with stakeholders. One in five (20%) non-SRCs say they would be interested in finding out more about the role.

The majority of HEFCE staff feel that their line manager and director prioritise stakeholder relations sufficiently, and the majority of SRCs feel sufficiently supported by their line manager and director in their SRC role. However, when asked what HEFCE could do to improve relations with stakeholders, some staff say that stakeholder relations management should be promoted more actively by senior management.

SRCs generally agree that they are in a good position to carry out their role effectively. They feel that their nomination as an SRC is appropriate, and agree that they know enough about their stakeholders to do justice to the relationship. However, some feel that they lack the necessary time and training to carry out the role effectively.

The SRC role

The views of staff

Of the 38 SRCs surveyed, the majority are aware that they are currently an SRC. However, two SRCs are not sure if they are an SRC and one believes that he/she is not currently an SRC and does not want to be one. There is some confusion around the role among non-SRCs; 7% define themselves as an SRC and a further 13% are not sure if they are an SRC or not.

> *I was not aware I was classed as an SRC, therefore I think it may be important to make clear where there is a specific responsibility to manage a relationship with an organisation*
>
> HEFCE staff member

As shown in table 5 below, there is some interest in the role among non-SRCs, with one in five (20%) non-SRCs saying that they would be interested in finding out more about the role. Greatest interest in the SRC role comes from staff in Learning & Teaching (four out of 17), Assurance (six out of 21) and Analytical Services Group (four out of 19).

Table 5: The SRC role[20] (Q6) - Staff

	Total	SRCs	SRCs/ Some contact	Non SRCs
Base: All staff	*(193)* *%*	*(38)* *%*	*(45)* *%*	*(148)* *%*
I am currently an SRC	24	92	80	7
I am not sure if I am an SRC	12	5	9	13
I am not currently an SRC and do not want to be	48	3	7	60
I am not currently an SRC but I would be interested in finding out more about the role of SRCs	17	0	4	20

Source: MORI

Stakeholder relations management at HEFCE

The views of staff

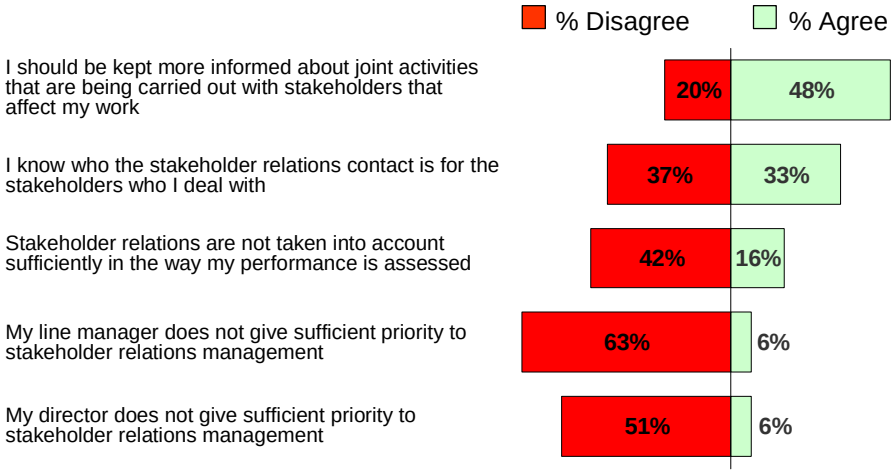
Staff were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements about stakeholder relations management at HEFCE. The majority disagree that senior colleagues should give greater priority to stakeholder relations management, and more disagree (42%) than agree (16%) that stakeholder relations need to be taken more into account when performance is assessed.

However, just under half (48%) of all staff surveyed agree that they should be kept more informed about joint activities that are being carried out with stakeholders. Whereas SRCs have a reasonably good overview of what other colleagues are doing in relation to their stakeholder organisation (67% agree, 16% disagree), only one in three (33%) non-SRCs agree that they know who the nominated SRC is for relevant stakeholders.

[20] 'Some contact' refers to colleagues who work closely with SRCs and stakeholders and were asked to respond as substitutes for the SRC in this survey. 'Non SRCs' refers to all other staff.

Chart 23: HEFCE's Stakeholder Relations Management (Q14a-d & f)

Q Thinking about your colleagues, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?



Base: All respondents (193 staff)

Source: MORI

Staff in an executive role are more likely than those at other levels to agree that they should be kept more informed about joint activities with stakeholders (51% executives agree compared with just 31% of other staff).

Stakeholder relations evaluation

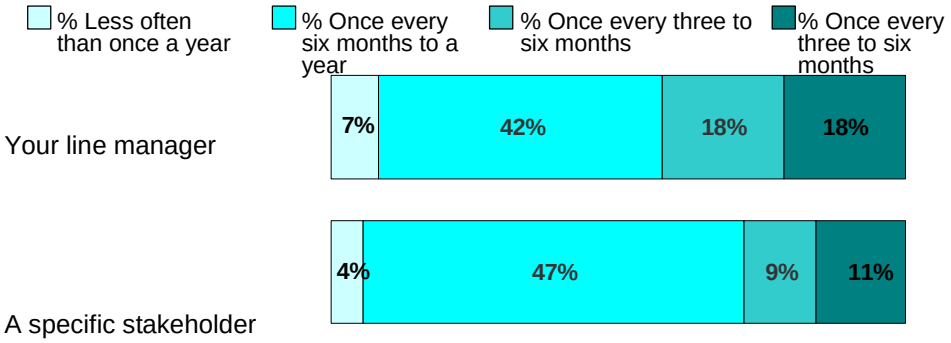
The views of staff

The survey asked SRCs and those with some stakeholder contact how often they review and evaluate stakeholder relations. The majority (78%) claim to review stakeholder relations at least once a year with their **line manager or director**; nearly half of these (36%) at least once every six months.

However, relations seem to be reviewed less often **with stakeholders**. While two-thirds (67%) of SRCs claim to review stakeholder relations at least once a year with their stakeholder contact, three in ten (29%) say they never review the situation with their stakeholder.

Chart 24: Evaluation of Stakeholder Relations (Q12a- b)

Q How often, if at all, do you review and evaluate stakeholder relations with…



Base: SRCs and those with some stakeholder contact (45) Source: MORI

Support for SRC role

The views of staff

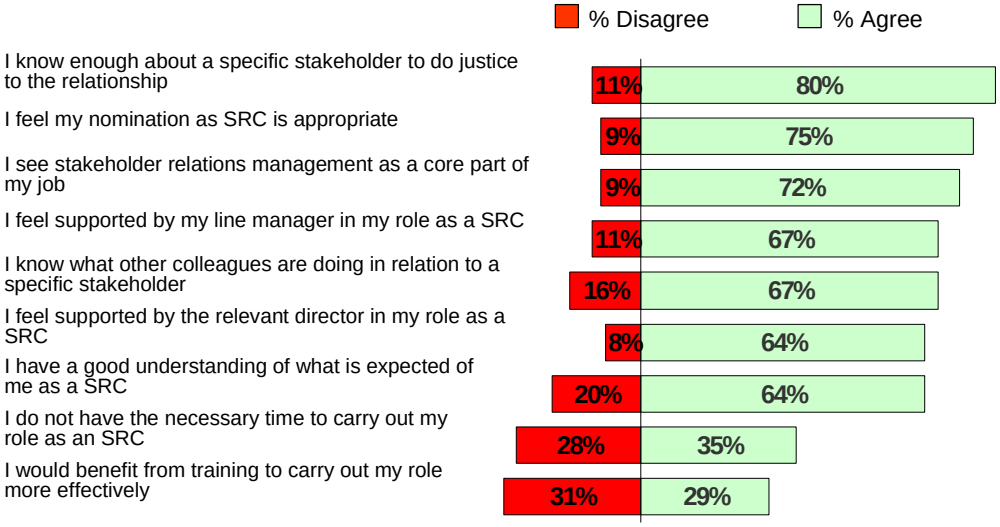
The majority of SRCs feel that their nomination as SRC is appropriate (75%) and view stakeholder relations management as a core part of their job (72%). In addition, most (80%) agree that they know enough about their stakeholder to do justice to the relationship.

Overall, SRCs feel supported in their role by colleagues. Around two-thirds of SRCs feel supported in their role by their manager (67%) and director (64%) and know what other colleagues are doing in relation to their stakeholder (67%).

However, one in five (20%) SRCs disagree that they have a good understanding of what is expected of them as an SRC, and some feel that they lack the resources to carry out the role effectively. Over a third (36%) say they lack the necessary time to carry out the role, and three in ten (29%) agree that training would help them carry out their role more effectively.

Chart 25: Support for SRC Role (Q13a-h & Q14e)

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?



Base: SRCs and those with some stakeholder contact (45)

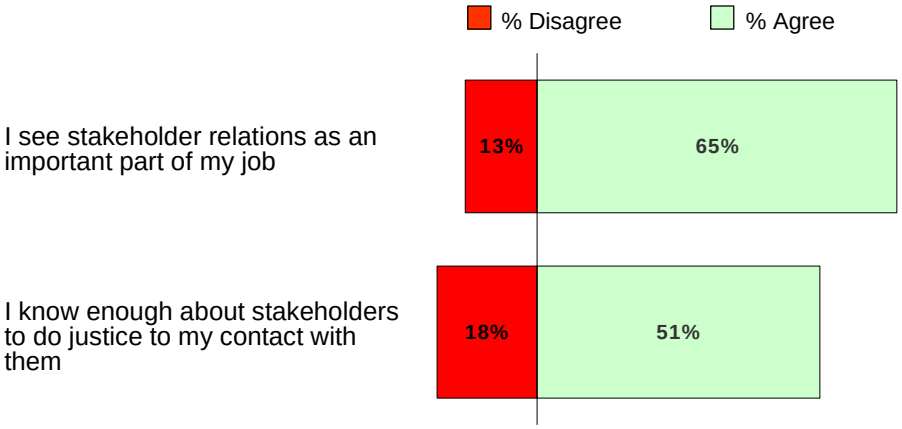
Source: MORI

Stakeholder relations are viewed as important for HEFCE, even by staff who are not directly involved. Almost two-thirds (65%) of staff who do not have formal SRC responsibilities see stakeholder relations as an important part of their job, with only one in seven (14%) who do not.

Half (51%) of non-SRCs believe they know enough about stakeholders to do justice to their contact with them. However, one in six (18%) disagree, suggesting that more could be done to raise awareness of stakeholder relations management among non-SRCs.

Chart 26: Support for Stakeholder Relations Management Among Non-SRCs (Q13i-j)

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?



Base: Non-SRCs (148)

Source: MORI

HEFCE staff priorities for improving relations with stakeholders

When staff are asked what HEFCE's three key priorities should be for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years, the most common responses are "joint working with stakeholders", "involvement in policy development" and "clarifying roles/positions in relation to stakeholders/SRCs". Some selected verbatim quotes below illustrate these points.

More joint working with stakeholders/ involvement in policy development:

> *Joint meetings with external stakeholders to discuss areas of common concern*
>
> Staff member

> *Cultural recognition within HEFCE that stakeholders can and should add value and [should] not be seen as those whom we simply have to maintain and keep aware*
>
> Staff member

> *Finding ways to work more effectively with DfES so that we don't simply have to implement what they want to do, even when we disagree*
>
> Staff member

> *Clearer identification of the relationships involved and the level of engagement. A distinction needs to be made between everyday liaison (to receive advice) and policy development*
>
> Staff member

> *Involving stakeholders more strongly in our policy development – inviting them in to provide guidance, particularly relating to employability and sector skills development*
>
> Staff member

> *Making greater effort to understand the objectives, priorities and context of other stakeholders so we can engage them more effectively in our strategies (e.g. LSC)*
>
> Staff member

Clarifying roles/ positions in relation to stakeholders/ SRCs:

> *Being clear about which bodies we describe as our key stakeholders and why, and organising our interactions, including time and briefings to reflect our priorities*
>
> Staff member

Ensure all those in the Council responsible for relating to a particular stakeholder really do work together as a team and are well co-ordinated and fully informed about all that is going on and is planned to happen and the priorities and aims for the Council of the relationship

Staff member

Just as SRCs need training to understand their responsibilities as contacts, non-SRCs should be given guidelines on whether and when to inform the SRC of dealings they have with stakeholders, to maintain an overview of interaction between HEFCE and stakeholders

Staff member

Explicit clarification of the objectives of the stakeholder relationship from both ends for the benefits of SRCs

Staff member

Share the SRC list widely within the Council, make it accessible through alphabetical list and topic list, identify SRC clearly, ideally have only one SRC per contact

Staff member

There needs to be recognition of the workload implications of being an effective SRC. I don't think it works as well as it could because senior staff – who tend to be SRCs – have such heavy workloads and the SRC role gets squeezed. Perhaps they need support to do more of the internal/ HEFCE networking

Staff member

Communications are also seen as an area for improvement by HEFCE staff. Several cite improving internal communications as a means of sharing information about stakeholders.

Better communication within the Council – if we want to share information about stakeholders, then we should be better at communicating with each other

Staff member

A mechanism for knowledge-sharing. A brief on each and their remit, strengths, results, etc. Current themes, active projects (generally and between us). This need be no more than a one-pager and updated every six months, including links to websites for further information

Staff member

Internal communication and cross-council working: given the changing landscape of HE and evolving role for the Council over the next five years, it will be increasingly important that we work collectively across policy areas and directorates in collaboration

Staff member

This kind of knowledge-sharing is seen to be particularly important for SRCs.

In my view, SRCs would benefit from an informal SRC network and bi-annual meetings hosted by the Chief Executive, to reflect on their experiences, forward plan and find solutions to generic problems such as dealing with the impact of stakeholder restructuring

Staff member

Staff would also like clearer guidance and communications on the stakeholder relations management process – and who key non-HEI stakeholders are.

Help for staff to understand when to involve stakeholders in projects and which stakeholder to involve

Staff member

Highlighting to staff the main stakeholders for their area of work

Staff member

Appropriate training and inductions are seen to be important to ensure that everyone understands key non-HEI stakeholders.

Training – making sure everyone in the Directorate/Council understands priority stakeholders at a given time (more update meetings for this for all levels of staff)

Staff member

A briefing on stakeholders should be included as part of the induction process

Staff member

5. Contact and Communications with HEFCE

This chapter looks at stakeholders' views of their communication with HEFCE and discusses experiences and opinions of contact with HEFCE staff.

The vast majority (83%) of stakeholders rate the quality of dealings they have had with HEFCE over the past 12 months as *very/fairly good*.

As seen in the section on HEFCE's Reputation, effective communications between HEFCE and stakeholder organisations are key in driving favourability towards HEFCE. Accessibility of staff, knowing who to contact at HEFCE and having frequent enough contact, as well as overall ratings of communications, are highly correlated with favourability.

It is therefore reassuring that nine out of ten stakeholders say that HEFCE communicates well with their organisation. In addition, around four in five stakeholders agree that staff are accessible, they know who to contact and have frequent enough contact with HEFCE.

The majority of stakeholders are in direct contact with HEFCE at least once a month, with around a third in contact at least once a week. This is generally in line with their preferred frequency of contact, and only a tiny minority (4%) say that the contact they have with HEFCE is not frequent enough.

Stakeholders' contact with HEFCE tends to be at a senior level, although covers a wide range, from reception staff to the Chief Executive. Only a minority (15%) of stakeholders say that they would like contact with HEFCE staff at a more senior level.

Communication between HEFCE and stakeholders is primarily by email, meetings and telephone. Email and informal meetings are most preferred by stakeholders.

The second most frequently cited improvement to stakeholder relations relates to "improving communications" and "more regular information briefings". Stakeholders' suggestions for how to improve communications include more regular and informal meetings, bringing together all HEFCE communications/information into one place, more consistent and reliable communications and more communications at a regional level. In addition, HEFCE staff suggest more briefings and joint events with stakeholders and clearer channels for communicating with stakeholders.

Overall dealings with HEFCE

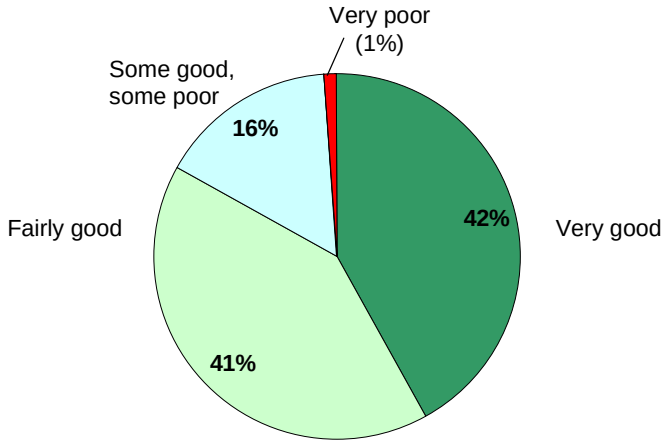
Stakeholders' views

The vast majority (83%) of stakeholders rate the quality of dealings they have had with HEFCE over the past 12 months as *very/fairly good*. Of the remainder, most (16%) feel that dealings with HEFCE staff have been inconsistent, being good at times, but sometimes poor. Only 1% of stakeholders describe the quality of dealings as poor.

As seen in the section on HEFCE's Reputation, quality of dealings correlates highly with overall measures such as advocacy and favourability. It is therefore important to ensure that good work in this area is maintained.

Chart 27: Quality of Dealings with HEFCE Staff (Q18)

Q How would you rate the quality of dealings you have had with HEFCE staff over the past 12 months?



Base: All stakeholders who have had some contact with HEFCE staff in the past 12 months (152) Source: MORI

Ratings of the quality of dealings are consistently high regardless of the level of seniority at which stakeholders have had contact with HEFCE over the past 12 months.

Overall communications with HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

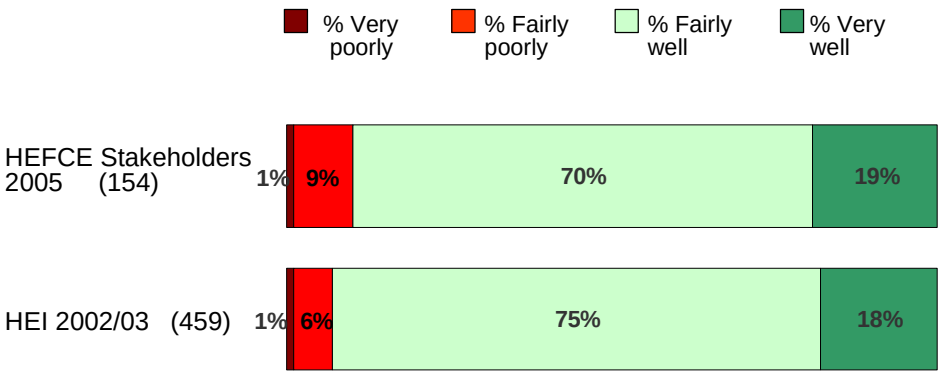
The vast majority (89%) of stakeholders say that HEFCE communicates well with their organisation, of which one in five (19%) say HEFCE communicates *very* well. These findings are in line with the survey of HEIs in 2003, when 93% of respondents rated communications positively.

Ratings of HEFCE's overall communications compare very favourably with other similar organisations surveyed by MORI[21].

Again, overall communications are closely correlated to advocacy and favourability, so this finding is good news for HEFCE and its importance must not be underestimated.

Chart 28: Overall Communication Ratings (Q22)

Q Overall, how well or poorly does HEFCE communicate with your organisation?



Base: All respondents (shown in brackets)

Source: MORI

Current and preferred communications with HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

The most commonly used methods for communicating with HEFCE are email (90%), formal personal meetings (79%), telephone (78%) and informal personal meetings (73%). These also tend to be the *preferred* methods among stakeholders for communicating with HEFCE – in particular email contact and informal personal meetings (both 74%). This suggests that HEFCE staff should continue with email contact but try to encourage more informal meetings with stakeholders, rather than formal meetings.

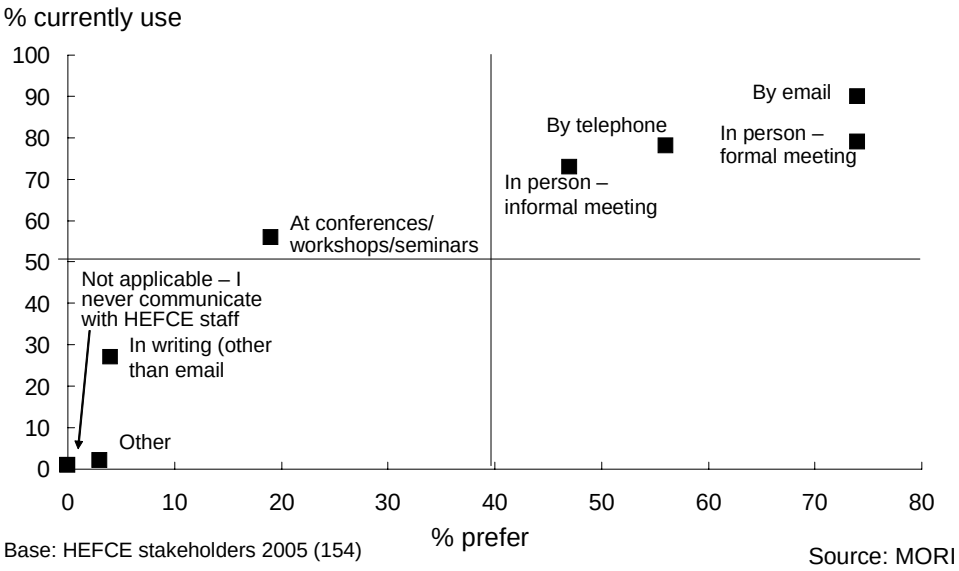
Research conducted by MORI on behalf of similar public sector organisations[22] also indicates that electronic forms of communication tend to be popular with stakeholders.

Email contact seems especially popular among managers, officers and advisers, 91% of whom cite email as a preferred means of communication compared with 69% of more senior staff. Senior-level stakeholders (21%) are more likely than

[21] Once again data is derived from MORI normative databases.
[22] Data derived from MORI normative database.

manager level stakeholders (6%) to want to communicate with HEFCE at conferences, workshops and seminars.

Chart 29: Use & Preference in Communication Media (Q19/20)



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

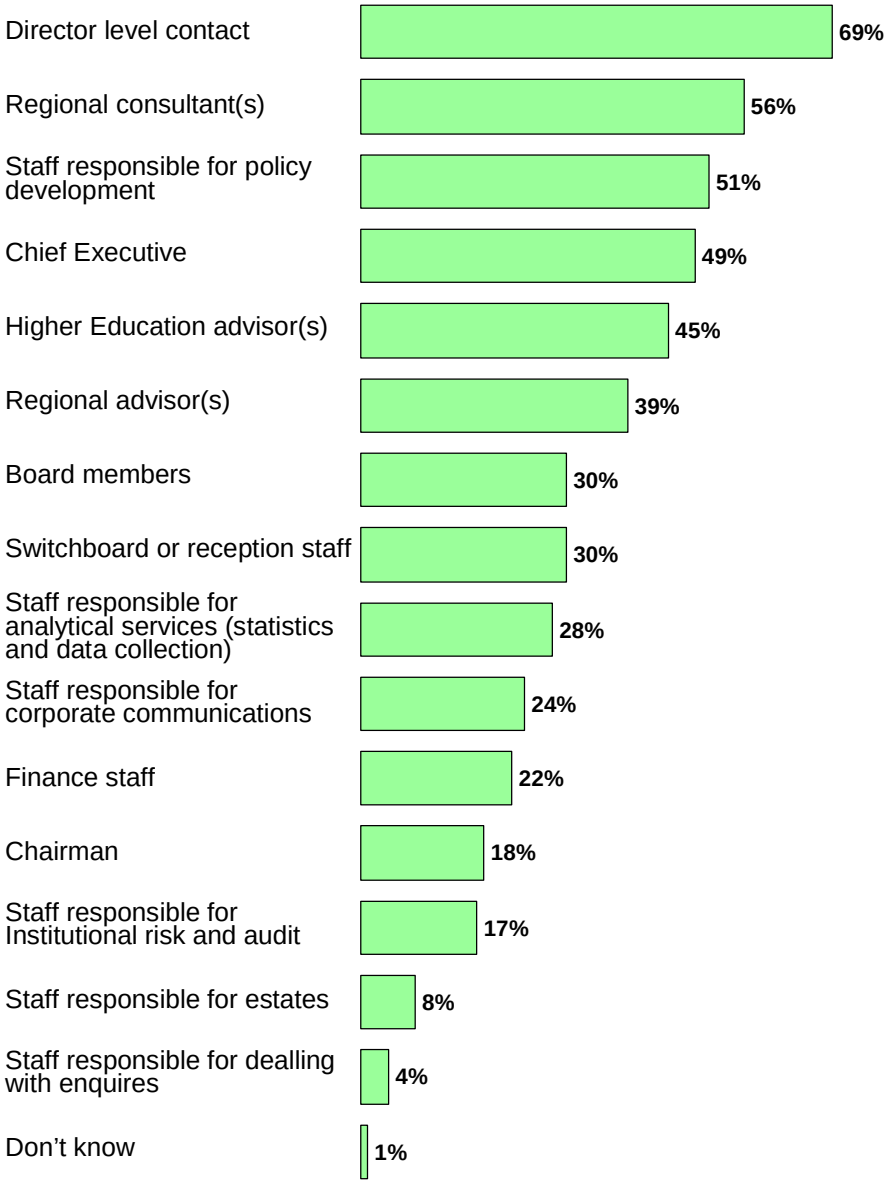
Level and frequency of contact with HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

Stakeholders tend to have contact with a range of HEFCE staff. Contact is most commonly with Directors (69%) and Regional Consultants (56%). Around half (49%) have had some contact with the Chief Executive over the past 12 months and one in six (18%) with the Chairman.

Chart 30: Level of Contact (Q17)

Q *With which, if any, of the following in HEFCE have you had direct contact in the past 12 months?*



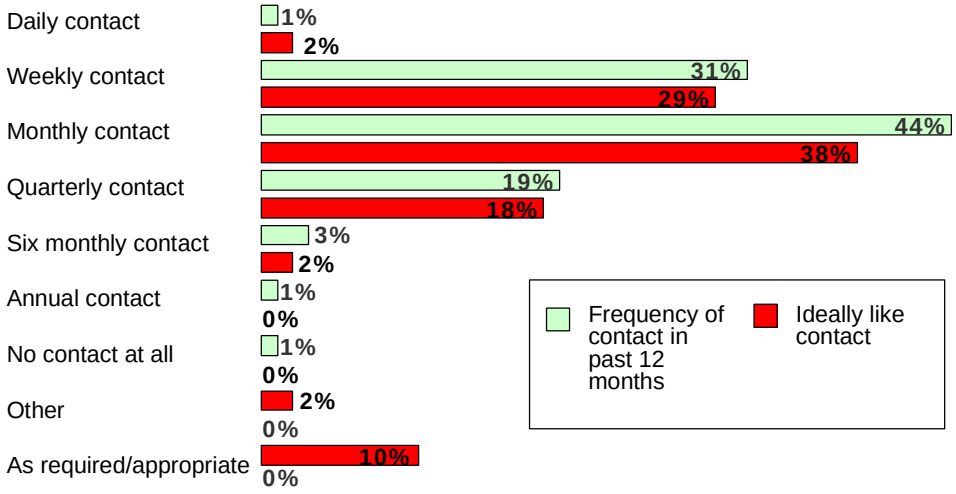
Base: All who have had some contact with HEFCE staff in the past 12 months (152)

Source: MORI

Three-quarters (76%) of stakeholders are in direct contact with HEFCE at least once a month, a third (32%) of these at least weekly. Only 5% have contact less than once a quarter or not at all. This is largely in line with stakeholders' preferred frequency of contact.

Chart 31: Frequency of Contact (Q15/16)

Q Which of the following best describes how frequently you have personally been in direct contact with HEFCE over the past 12 months?
Q How often would you ideally like to have direct contact with HEFCE?



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Reported frequency of contact with HEFCE is higher among Strategically Very Important (SVI) stakeholders. Half (50%) of SVIs say they have direct contact at least weekly, compared with 29% of Strategically Important (SI) stakeholders and 21% of Important (I) stakeholders[23].

Attitudes towards contact with HEFCE

Stakeholders' views

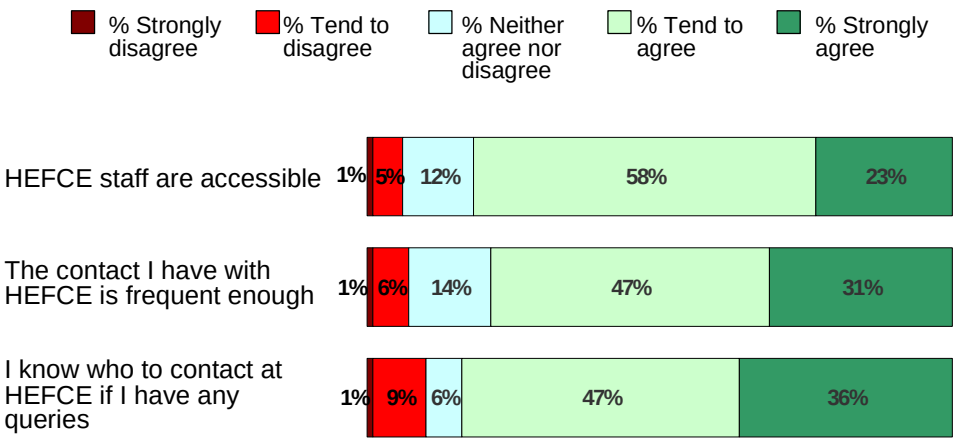
Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with a series of statements to gauge attitudes towards the level and style of contact they have with HEFCE.

Attitudes towards contact with HEFCE tend to be positive. The majority of stakeholders agree that they know who to contact at HEFCE if they have enquiries (83%) and that HEFCE staff are accessible (81%). A similar proportion (79%) feel the contact they have with HEFCE is frequent enough.

[23] For the purposes of analysis, HEFCE gave each stakeholder one of three levels of importance: Important (I), Strategically Important (SI) and Strategically Very Important (SVI). SVI stakeholders are of the highest importance to HEFCE.

Chart 32: Satisfaction with Contact: Positive Statements (Q21)

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?



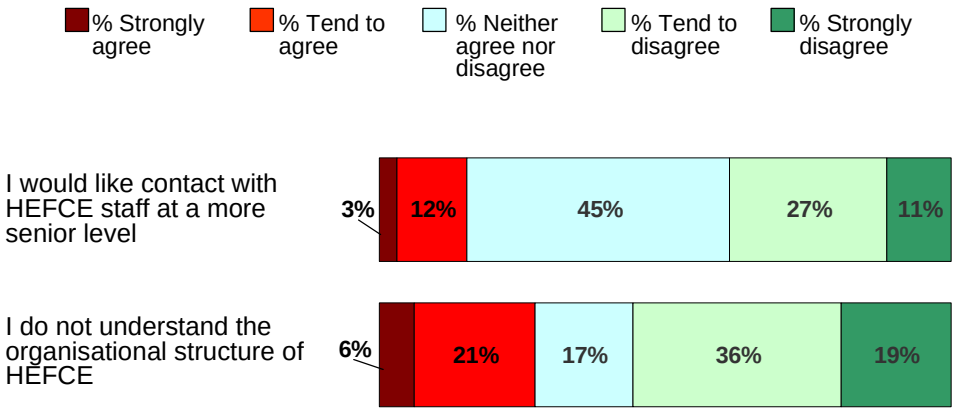
Base: HEFCE shareholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Whereas over half (55%) indicate that they understand the organisational structure of HEFCE, a significant minority (27%) say they do not. One in seven (15%) would like contact with HEFCE staff at a more senior level but close to four in ten (38%) would not.

Chart 33: Satisfaction with Contact: Negative Statements (Q21)

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Priorities for improving relations with stakeholders: communications

Stakeholders' views

When asked what HEFCE's three key priorities should be for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years, the second most frequently cited improvement relates to "improving communications" and "more regular information briefings" (mentioned by 19% of stakeholders who gave a response). Suggestions for improving communications include:

- More informal meetings

> *More informal, discursive events to consult with the community*
>
> Stakeholder

- More communications/contact at a regional level

> *Regular "Keep In Touch" meetings at sub-regional level*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Hold their Board meetings across England and arrange to visit a nearby pre-1992 university and a post-1992 university. This will enable them to have a better understanding of the issues faced and be more visible to their stakeholders*
>
> Stakeholder

- Bringing together communications/information into one place

> *Only by putting circular letters, Council briefings, major publications and R&D reports together can one piece together what is important. What about a fortnightly email on "what's new, what's important and where is it on the website?"?*
>
> Stakeholder

> *Clearer sign-posting to things I really need to be aware of from the plethora of available info*
>
> Stakeholder

- More consistent/reliable communications

> *Achieving a greater level of consistency across all communications*
>
> Stakeholder

Greater reliability of communications with senior staff. Sometimes information given is misleading, retracted or denied

Stakeholder

- More personal contact with senior/experienced staff

Recruit more experienced and senior staff in order to increase the resource available for personal contacts

Stakeholder

- And improvements to the website

The HEFCE website needs to be enhanced to enable users to better understand the make-up of the organisation and locate contacts by topic as well as name…

Stakeholder

Current and detailed information available through the website

Stakeholder

Staff

HEFCE staff also cite possible improvements to communication with stakeholders. These include:

- More briefings and joint events with stakeholders

Stimulate more – and more informed – engagement with stakeholders, so that they are more au fait with current policy issues and constraints on HEFCE. External HEFCE briefings?

Staff member

All staff, irrespective of their role and level in the organisation could be given more exposure – even if passively – for example, by attendance at events, open days, etc of our key stakeholders (HEIs) and our major non-HEI stakeholders

Staff member

- Clearer channels for communicating with stakeholders

Clearly defined and publicised communication channels with stakeholders

Staff member

- And more regular meetings with stakeholders

> *Set up regular review meetings with relevant stakeholders to encourage sharing of ideas and possibilities of joint working*
>
> Staff member

6. Information from HEFCE

This chapter deals with stakeholders' attitudes towards the information they receive from HEFCE and how informed they feel about HEFCE and its activities.

Keeping stakeholders well informed is a key driver of overall satisfaction with relationships between stakeholders and HEFCE. The more informed stakeholders feel, the more satisfied they will be with their relationship with HEFCE. This in turn will have a positive impact on favourability and advocacy.

Three-quarters (76%) of stakeholders believe that HEFCE keeps them well informed about its activities. However, a significant minority (24%) feel that HEFCE only gives them limited information or doesn't tell them much at all about what it does. Less well informed stakeholders tend to include those in less senior roles. There is scope, therefore, for improving information among this group of stakeholders.

Sources of information most commonly used by stakeholders are contact with staff, the HEFCE website, informal contact with colleagues and HEFCE reports and publications. These are also the most popular preferred sources of information about HEFCE.

Stakeholders view HEFCE's most useful publication/information source to be the HEFCE website. This is accessed by more than half of stakeholders at least once a month.

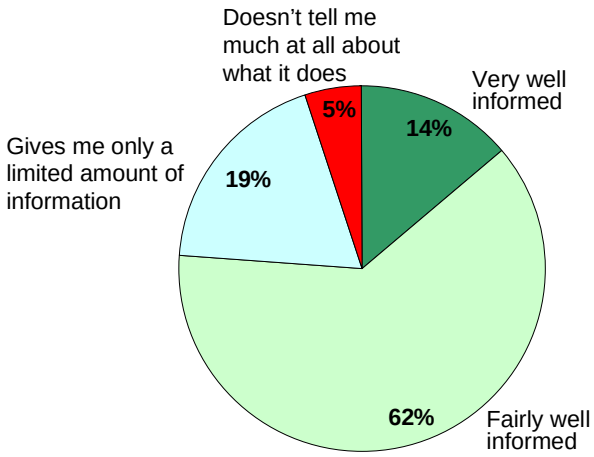
How informed do stakeholders feel?

Stakeholders' views

Three in four (76%) stakeholders feel that HEFCE keeps them well informed about its activities, of which one in seven (14%) feeling *very* well informed. However nearly a quarter (24%) feel that HEFCE only gives them a limited amount of information or does not tell them much at all about what it does.

Chart 34: Information (Q18)

Q To what extent, if at all, does HEFCE keep you informed about its activities? HEFCE keeps me…



Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154) Source: MORI

Stakeholders who *do not* feel well informed tend to include those in less senior roles (31% do not feel informed); those who do not have contact with senior HEFCE staff (33% not informed); and those who have been dealing with HEFCE for less than three years (31% not informed).

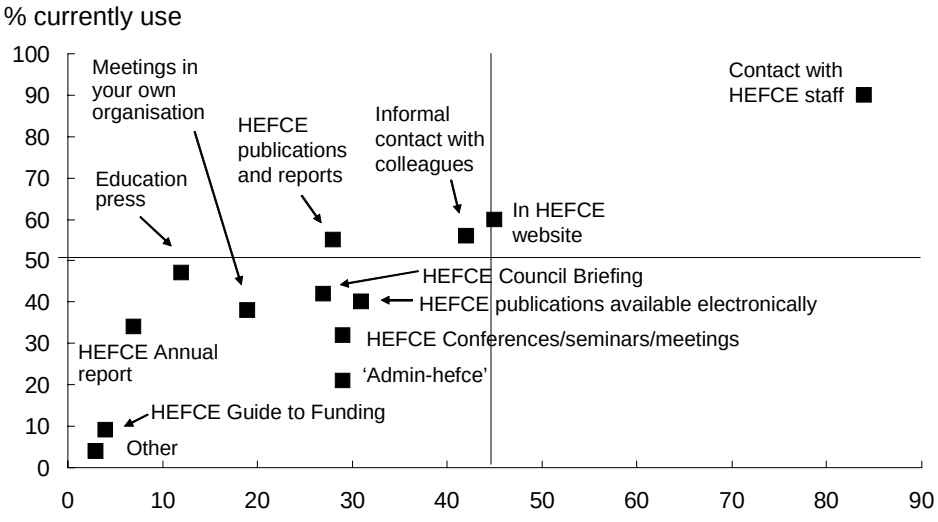
Information is highly correlated to advocacy: those who feel that HEFCE keeps them well informed are more likely to be advocates of HEFCE (92% advocates) than those who do not (8% advocates). It is therefore important to ensure that all stakeholders feel well informed about HEFCE's activities.

Sources of information

Stakeholders' views

Respondents were asked about current and preferred sources of information about HEFCE's activities. HEFCE staff are the most common source of information about HEFCE (90%), followed by the HEFCE website (60%), informal contact with colleagues (56%) and HEFCE publications and reports (55%). These sources of information are also the most preferred.

Chart 35: Current & Preferred Source of Information (Q24/25)



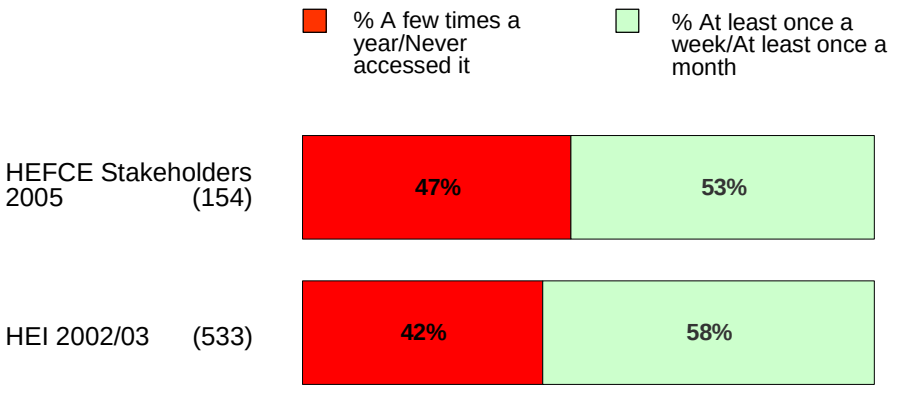
Base: HEFCE stakeholders 2005 (154)

Source: MORI

Over half (53%) of stakeholders access HEFCE's website at least once a month, of which one in six (18%) access it at least once a week. Only one in eight (12%) stakeholders say they have never accessed it. Frequency of access to HEFCE's website was slightly higher in the 2003 HEIs survey, as shown in the chart below. However, this may be due to differing information requirements of HEI stakeholders.

Chart 36: Use of www.hefce.ac.uk (Q26)

Q How often, if at all, do you access HEFCE's website?



Base: All respondents (shown in brackets)

Source: MORI

Usefulness of publications

Stakeholders' views

The survey also asked stakeholders to rate the usefulness of various HEFCE publications and sources of information[24].

The most highly rated resource is HEFCE's website, which the vast majority (94%) of those who access it at least a few times a year rate as useful. Indeed, three in ten (30%) rate the HEFCE website as *very useful*.

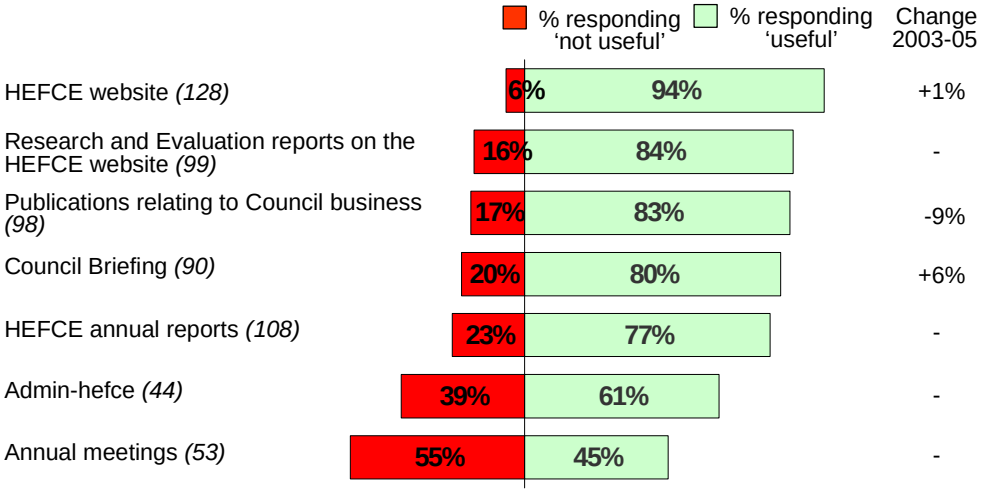
Those who are able to rate other publications are generally positive. More than four in five stakeholders find publications relating to Council business and Research and Evaluation reports on the HEFCE website useful (84%), over three-quarters (77%) rate the Council Briefing useful and three in five (61%) say HEFCE's annual reports are useful.

The majority of stakeholders are unable to rate the usefulness of HEFCE's electronic mailing list, 'Admin-hefce' – possibly because they are not aware of it; however, among those who are, the vast majority (80%) find it useful.

The annual meeting is seen to be useful by less than half (45%) of stakeholders who are able to rate it.

Chart 37: Usefulness of Publications (Q27)

Q How useful do you personally find the following?



Base: All giving a response (i.e. excluding Don't know/Not applicable) - bases shown in brackets

Source: MORI

[24] For the sake of comparability, all "don't know" and "not applicable" responses have been removed from bases.

7. Priorities for Improving Stakeholder Relations

At the end of both surveys, non-HEI stakeholders and HEFCE staff were asked to identify up to three key priorities for improving stakeholder relations over the next three years. Findings relate to HEFCE's relationships, role and communications, and have therefore already been covered in various sections of this report.

A wide variety of priorities for improving stakeholder relations are cited by staff and stakeholders, reflecting the broad scope of the survey. However, some key themes emerge.

Among stakeholders, the three most frequently cited improvements relate to more effective consultation on policy issues, greater regional presence and better communications/information briefings.

Staff are also most likely to cite involving stakeholders more in policy development. In addition, clarifying roles and policies in relation to stakeholders and improving internal communications and cross-council working are frequently mentioned.

The views of stakeholders and staff

As shown in the tables below, both groups most frequently cite involving and consulting stakeholders more – and earlier on – in policy development (mentioned by 24% stakeholders and 26% staff who cite an improvement).

Communications are also key for both staff and stakeholders; whereas stakeholders want improved communications and more regular information briefings from HEFCE (18% mentions), staff would like to see clearer policies in relation to stakeholders (22% mentions) and improved internal communications/cross-council working (13% mentions).

Both survey audiences feel that HEFCE should clarify its role and priorities and communicate these more clearly to stakeholders (mentioned by 13% stakeholders and 10% staff who cite an improvement). There is also some agreement that HEFCE should make more effort to understand stakeholders' views and priorities (mentioned by 7% of stakeholders and 9% of staff).

Stakeholders want greater flexibility (10% mentions) and less bureaucracy/accountability burden (12% mentions). Lighter touch and quicker policy/planning processes are also mentioned (by 6-7% of stakeholders who cite an improvement).

Reflecting the views of SRCs expressed earlier in the survey, a relatively high proportion of SRCs cite more training, time and support as a priority for developing stakeholder relations.

Table 6: Stakeholder priorities for improving relations with HEFCE (Q28 – mentions over 5%) - Stakeholders

	Total
Base: All stakeholders suggesting an improvement	*(104)*
	%
Ensure stakeholders are consulted early on about policy issues/ more meaningful/ effective consultation with stakeholders/ feedback results	24
Adopt a lead at regional level/ more regular and structured regional meetings	18
Improve communications/ more regular information briefings	18
Clarify HEFCE's role/ priorities	13
A partnership approach to working with stakeholders/ listen to stakeholders	12
Less bureaucracy/ more streamlined approach/ lessen duplication and burden of accountability	12
More transparency/ flexibility/ equality in regards to funding	10
Independence from DfES/ define relationship with DfES/ need to fight the cause of the HE sector	9
HEFCE should be a planning body/ should think more strategically	8
HEFCE to be more proactive in its communication with stakeholders	7
HEFCE needs to understand stakeholders'/ sector priorities and views better	7
Lighter touch/ be less prescriptive or controlling	7
Speed up processes/ policy and planning processes should be quicker	6
Improve the website content/ ensure new articles are flagged up/ provide contact details	6
More transparency/ openness in relationships with stakeholders	6

N.B. Table shows responses over 5% only. For a full listing of responses, please see appended marked-up questionnaire.

Source: MORI

Table 7: Staff priorities for improving relations with stakeholders (Q15 – mentions over 5%) - Staff

	Total
Base: All staff suggesting an improvement	*(113)*
	%
More joint working with stakeholders/ involvement in policy development	26
Clarifying roles/ policies in relation to stakeholders/ SRCs	22
Improve internal communications/ more cross-council working	13
More training/ development/ support/ guidance for SRCs	12
Spend more time with stakeholders/ more time to develop individual stakeholder relationships	11
More secondments/ shadowing	10
Improve stakeholders' awareness/ understanding of HEFCE's role	10
More coordinated approach/ system for managing stakeholders	10
Make available more/ clearer information on stakeholders	9
More training/ development/ support/ guidance for staff in general	9
Understanding stakeholders' needs/ agenda/ priorities	9
More opportunities for contact with stakeholders	8
Development/ improvement in stakeholder management	8
Greater prioritisation of key non-HEI stakeholders/ more information on which stakeholders are key	7
Greater understanding of our respective roles	7
Improve communication/ dialogue with stakeholders	6
Consult with stakeholders early on in proceedings	5

N.B. Table shows responses over 5% only. For a full listing of responses, please see appended marked-up questionnaire.

Source: MORI

8. Taking the Research Forward

The MORI Reputation Framework

From decades of experience in stakeholder reputation research, MORI has developed a framework for understanding what defines and influences an organisation's reputation (see diagram below) in order to help our clients take forward the findings of the research they commission.

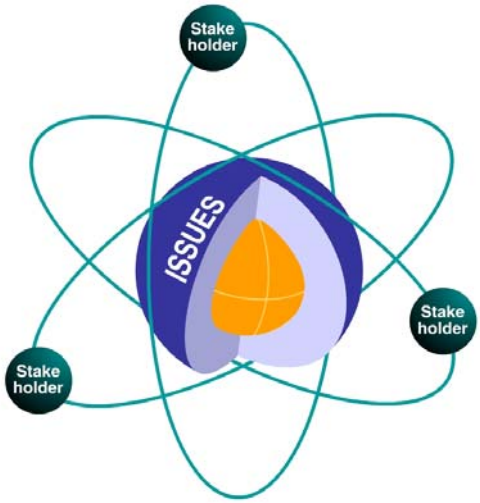
The framework suggests that an organisation's reputation has three components. At the centre are the **building blocks** of reputation, over which the organisation has direct control:

- its values, what it stands for and how it operates;
- its strategy, its vision and future direction;
- its behaviour, actions and conduct when interacting with stakeholders; and
- its communications.

These building blocks need to be aligned in the eyes of its stakeholders if the organisation is to achieve a strong reputation. For example, if an organisation's behaviour is out of line with its values, or if its communications do not match stakeholders' experience of its behaviour, the organisation risks reputational damage.

Surrounding the organisation are the **issues** it has to deal with, conditions that could have a significant impact on the function or future interests of the organisation. These could result from external forces or be of the organisation's own making, and they are ever-changing, swirling around the organisation like clouds. The organisation has limited control over these issues, and its response to them in the eyes of its stakeholders will determine the strength of its reputation. Reputation management therefore involves identifying key issues and implementing appropriate action and communications on them.

Orbiting the organisation and its issues are the **stakeholders**, which can include anyone affecting the organisation, or who is affected by it. The organisation's reputation is defined primarily by its relationships with these stakeholders, so identifying which groups are key to the organisation is the first step in evaluating its reputation. Some stakeholders are closer to the organisation than others, and of course some stakeholders influence others. Stakeholders see the organisation through the issues surrounding it – their perception of the organisation's response to the issues they see as important will determine its reputation.



Source: MORI

Applying the MORI Reputation Framework to HEFCE

Below we outline our understanding of the stakeholders and issues affecting HEFCE's reputation, and how the research findings can help HEFCE take steps to improve communications and relationships with stakeholders in the future.

Stakeholders

- HEFCE staff
- Key non-HEI stakeholders
  - higher education agencies
  - government departments
  - representative bodies
  - regional bodies
- Universities and colleges (comparisons from 2002/3 survey)

Issues

- Responding to the Government's vision for higher education set out in the White Paper, 'The future of higher education', and an accelerating pace of change within the higher education sector.
- In an age of mass higher education, the need to widen access and respond to an increasingly diverse student population, including more mature students and more part-time students.

- This, coupled with a move towards lifelong learning, demands more flexible, individualised and independent ways of learning.

- The expansion of higher education leading to increasing specialisation of institutions and the need for more partnership working at the regional, national and international level.

- The globalisation of the higher education market and increasing international competition in research.

- Changing funding structures, including more public funding and higher contributions from students/ graduates, with consequently higher expectations regarding the quality of teaching and support.

- In a knowledge economy, where the importance of human capital is increasingly acknowledged, increasing expectations that higher education contributes to economic competitiveness and innovation.

- Increasing expectations that higher education contributes to social inclusion and the strength of communities, particularly through knowledge transfer.

Taking the research findings forward

Overall, HEFCE's reputation is very strong among both key non-HEI stakeholders and staff, with very high levels of both familiarity and favourability in absolute terms, and compared with comparator organisations. Advocacy is also high, particularly regarding the proportions who would spontaneously recommend HEFCE to others, although there is perhaps scope to convert those with neutral opinion into advocates of the organisation. HEFCE's reputation among HEIs is not as strong as it is among non-HEI stakeholders and staff.

Looking at the different elements of the reputation framework, from HEFCE's strategic plan it is evident that the organisation has a clearly defined strategy, in terms of its four key strategic aims and three cross-cutting supporting aims. Stakeholders generally perceive this strategy as being met, particularly the aims of widening participation, enhancing learning and teaching, and developing leadership, governance and management. Where agreement is less strong, opinion tends to be neutral rather than negative – for example, this is the case for staff views on supporting the strategic development of universities and colleges (related to the strategic aim of building on institutions' strengths). These cases could be addressed by more effective communication of the strategic aim and the actions HEFCE is taking to address it.

Stakeholders' perceptions of HEFCE's behaviour and communications are also very positive, and in most cases this is aligned with the priorities that HEFCE has identified and the values implied in the strategic plan. A clear priority in the strategic plan is partnership working, collaboration and building lasting relationships (and relationships indeed emerge as important drivers of favourability and advocacy in the key driver analysis). Stakeholders perceive HEFCE's behaviour in this respect to live up to its objective – HEFCE's partnership working and collaboration on shared objectives is seen as highly

effective by non-HEI stakeholders, and both non-HEI stakeholders and staff rate its stakeholder relationships highly and say they have improved over the last three years (although again, HEIs are less positive). Staff also tend to agree that stakeholder relationships are given high priority in the organisation. Three-quarters of non-HEI stakeholders say they get frequent enough contact from HEFCE, and communications seem well-targeted, in that the frequency of contact is highest for SVIs.

Flexibility and innovation are also identified as important qualities in HEFCE's strategic plan. Flexibility emerges as an important driver of favourability and advocacy in the key driver analysis, but it is not rated as positively as some other measures among stakeholders. While the majority of key non-HEI stakeholders and three-quarters of staff see HEFCE as flexible, there is scope to improve ratings on this quality, and HEIs are more negative here than other stakeholder groups. Over half of key non-HEI stakeholders and staff see HEFCE as innovative, although a quarter in each case perceive it as slow to change and are again more negative. These are the areas where HEFCE's behaviour may be perceived to be out of line with its values and strategy (albeit by a minority of stakeholders), and therefore may be areas of risk to HEFCE's reputation.

While HEFCE is in an extremely positive position with its stakeholders in many respects, there are a number of action points for HEFCE to strengthen its reputation further. Since only a small minority is negative towards the organisation, HEFCE can focus on converting those with neutral opinion into positive advocates. Since familiarity and favourability are closely linked, more communication with this group could increase their regard for HEFCE – although this group would have to be carefully targeted with profile-raising communications since these would not be appropriate for many other stakeholders, who are of course already highly knowledgeable about the organisation.

HEFCE's relationships with HEIs may also need to be addressed. The perception among key non-HEI stakeholders and staff is that HEFCE does not enjoy as strong a reputation among HEIs, and this is backed up to some extent by the findings of the 2002/3 survey. Of course, stakeholders do not operate in isolation – different groups interact with each other and influence other stakeholders' opinions of an organisation. It may be that HEIs will never be as favourable towards HEFCE as other stakeholders due to the nature of their relationship with the organisation. Nevertheless, since HEIs are a core stakeholder group for HEFCE, their concerns should be addressed to avoid 'leakage' of their negative perceptions to other stakeholder groups.

Another group of stakeholders which may need additional attention are the regional bodies making up part of the non-HEI stakeholder group. There are indications that regional bodies are less positive towards HEFCE than other non-HEI stakeholders, and 'more regional meetings' emerge as the second highest priority for HEFCE to improve relations with its stakeholders (albeit mentioned by a minority). HEFCE's dual role of promoting higher education nationally, while also responding to particular regional needs, is a challenging one. There is a risk that regional stakeholders may feel HEFCE is focusing too much on the

national agenda and neglecting regional issues. Of course, resources will need prioritisation, but it could be that relatively simple measures such as more communication about HEFCE's activities at the regional level, or more regular regional briefings or newsletters could answer some of these concerns.

Appendices

A. Pre-notification Letter (from HEFCE to Key Non-HEI Stakeholders)

HEFCE stakeholder survey

Dear Colleague

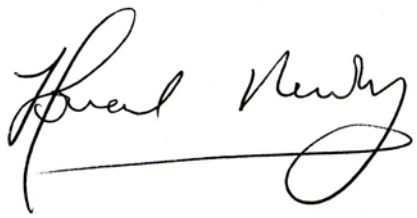
We at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) have commissioned the market research company MORI to conduct a programme of research to help us improve our relationships and communications with other bodies with an interest in higher education. The information will be used by HEFCE to measure our current performance and determine how we can improve the way we operate in the future.

I hope that you will be able to help us by participating in this online survey. MORI will also be approaching a cross-section of key contacts within a sample of organisations HEFCE interacts with – your feedback is therefore very important.

The information collected will be treated in strictest confidence by MORI. It will not be passed to anyone outside the MORI project team. A copy of the summary report will be published on the HEFCE website, and MORI will let you know when this is available.

If after completing the questionnaire you wish to discuss any of the issues raised, please contact Roger Grinyer at HEFCE on 0117 931 7307.

Thank you very much for your help with this survey.



Sir Howard Newby
Chief Executive
HEFCE

B. Survey Cover Email (from MORI to Key Non-HEI Stakeholders)

SUBJECT: HEFCE stakeholder survey

Dear <<name>>

MORI, the market research company, has been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to conduct a programme of research to help the Council improve its relationships and communications with other bodies with an interest in higher education. The information will be used by HEFCE to measure its current performance and determine how it can improve the way it operates in the future.

We hope that you will be able to participate – the survey should take around 10-20 minutes to complete. We are approaching a cross-section of key contacts within a sample of organisations HEFCE interacts with – your feedback is therefore very important to us. We are primarily interested in your personal viewpoint rather than those of your colleagues or your organisation as a whole. There may be some questions where you feel unable to answer as they are not relevant to your role or current experience – in these instances please feel free to mark the 'Don't know' or 'Not applicable' column.

The information collected will be treated in strictest confidence by MORI. It will not be passed to anyone outside the MORI project team. All responses given are non-attributable, unless authorised by you – the data collected is aggregated in order to present survey results in a summary form only. A copy of the summary report will be published on the HEFCE website, and MORI will let you know when this is available.

To participate in the online survey, please go to the link below and follow the instructions. Your password is <<ID#>>.

We would be very grateful if you could complete the online survey by **Thursday 30th June 2005.** If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Kate Smith or Caroline Simpson on 020 7347 3000.

If after completing this questionnaire you wish to discuss any of the issues raised, please contact Roger Grinyer at HEFCE on 0117 931 7307.

Thank you very much for your help with this survey.

Jane Stevens
Project Director
MORI

C. Staff Invitation Email (HEFCE/ MORI to Staff)

SUBJECT: HEFCE staff survey on stakeholder relations

Dear <<name>>

As I mentioned in my note on Councilnet on 29 April, MORI, the market research company, has been commissioned by HEFCE to conduct a survey of staff and a parallel survey of contacts at key stakeholders other than HE institutions. The findings from these surveys will be used to help us improve our relationships and communications with key stakeholders other than HE institutions. The results will be contained in a report and widely discussed within the Council. There will also be a staff briefing.

This online survey has been sent to all HEFCE colleagues, and we are interested in your personal viewpoint. There may be some questions where you feel unable to answer as they are not relevant to your role or current experience – in these instances please feel free to mark the 'Don't know' or 'Not applicable' column.

The information collected will be treated in strictest confidence by MORI. It will not be passed to anyone outside the MORI project team. It will not be possible to identify you from any of your responses; the data will be aggregated in order to present survey results in a summary form only.

To participate in the online survey, please go to the link below and follow the instructions. Your password is <<ID#>>. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete; however, if you are a stakeholder relations contact (SRC) you will have a few more questions to answer and the survey will take you 10-15 minutes.

We would be very grateful if you could complete the online survey, by **Thursday 30th June 2005.** If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Simpson or Kate Smith at MORI on 020 7347 3000.

Thank you very much for your help with this survey.

Howard Newby	Jane Stevens
Chief Executive	Project Director, MORI

D. Marked-Up Stakeholder Questionnaire

FINAL TOPLINE – 26 AUGUST 2005

- MORI interviewed 154 HEFCE stakeholders via an online survey on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Sample details were provided by HEFCE
- Fieldwork took place between 20 June – 22 July 2005
- Where results do not sum to 100, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated
- Results are based on all respondents (154) unless otherwise stated
- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one half or one percent, but not zero
- All data are unweighted

NB. Where relevant, data from HEFCE's 2003 Survey of Communications and Relations with Universities and Colleges is shown for comparison. The 2003 survey was completed between 26 November 2002 and 31 January 2003. Unless otherwise specified, figures are based on 559 questionnaires completed by senior staff from universities, HE colleges and FE colleges.

1. AWARENESS AND VIEWS OF HEFCE

Q1. **In order to help place our findings in a broader context, please indicate how well you know each of the organisations listed below.* ****

		Base: All excluding stakeholders from the named organisation	Know very well / Know a fair amount	Know just a little / Heard of but know nothing about / Never heard of
			%	%
A. Organisation n	**2005**	***144***	**91**	**9**
	2003	*559*	*56*	*44*
B. Organisation n	**2005**	***152***	**41**	**59**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
C. HEFCE (The Higher Education Funding Council for England	**2005**	***154***	**99**	**1**
	2003	*559*	*89*	*11*
D. Organisation n	**2005**	***146***	**58**	**42**
	2003	*559*	*39*	*61*
E. Organisation n	**2005**	***152***	**38**	**63**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
F. Organisation n	**2005**	***153***	**56**	**44**
	2003	*559*	*67*	*33*
G. Organisation n	**2005**	***154***	**53**	**47**
	2003	*476*	*48*	*52*
H. Organisation n	**2005**	***153***	**44**	**56**
	2003	*476*	*31*	*69*
I. Organisation n	**2005**	***153***	**35**	**65**
	2003	*559*	*25*	*75*
J. Organisation n	**2005**	***150***	**81**	**19**
	2003	*476*	*70*	*30*
K. Organisation n	**2005**	***154***	**58**	**42**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

** 2003 survey question wording: "Please tick the appropriate circle to indicate how well you feel you know each organisation"*
*** Other organisations asked about have been anonymised to protect their identities*

Q2. **You indicated that you know at least a little about the organisation(s) below. Please mark the appropriate circle below indicating how favourable or unfavourable your overall opinion or impression of each is. It is your <u>overall opinion or impression</u> that we are interested in**.**

		Base: All who know at least a little about each organisation (and, in 2005 survey, all who work for the named organisation)	Very favourable / Mainly favourable	Neither favour-able nor unfavou rable	Mainly unfavourable / Very unfavourable	No Opinio n
			%	%	%	%
A. Organisation n	**2005**	***153***	**54**	**33**	**10**	**3**
	2003	*497*	*23*	*61*	*15*	*N/A*
B. Organisation n	**2005**	***146***	**23**	**59**	**7**	**12**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
C. HEFCE (The Higher Education Funding Council for England	**2005**	***154***	**82**	**12**	**5**	**1**
	2003	*533*	*74*	*23*	*4*	*N/A*
D. Organisation n	**2005**	***143***	**29**	**45**	**22**	**3**
	2003	*394*	*24*	*52*	*24*	*N/A*
E. Organisation n	**2005**	***116***	**38**	**49**	**3**	**9**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
F. Organisation n	**2005**	***140***	**49**	**37**	**4**	**9**
	2003	*497*	*34*	*46*	*20*	*N/A*
G. Organisation n	**2005**	***146***	**51**	**37**	**1**	**11**
	2003	*388*	*48*	*49*	*3*	*N/A*
H. Organisation n	**2005**	***110***	**55**	**40**	**0**	**5**
	2003	*269*	*45*	*53*	*2*	*N/A*
I. Organisation n	**2005**	***125***	**26**	**61**	**6**	**7**
	2003	*331*	*21*	*61*	*18*	*N/A*
J. Organisation n	**2005**	***148***	**67**	**26**	**4**	**3**
	2003	*418*	*52*	*38*	*10*	*N/A*

*** Other organisations asked about have been anonymised to protect their identities*

Q3 **Thinking about the relationship your organisation has with HEFCE, how would you rate HEFCE compared to other bodies associated with higher education with which you are familiar (e.g. DfES, LSC, QAA, SCOP, TTA, UCAS, Universities UK and Research Councils)?***

	2005 %	*2003* %
One of the worst / Below average	**4**	*3*
About average	**19**	*29*
Above average / One of the best	**74**	*68*
No opinion	**3**	*0*

** 2003 survey question wording: "How would you rate the HEFCE in relation to the service they provide your institution, compared to the other bodies listed at Q1 with which you are familiar?"*

Q4 **How long have you personally been dealing with HEFCE?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	2005 %
Less than 6 months	**3**
More than 6 months, less than a year	**6**
More than a year, less than 3 years	**23**
More than three years	**68**
Don't know	**0**
Not applicable – I have never personally dealt with HEFCE	**1**

Q5 **Here are some phrases or adjectives which may or may not describe HEFCE. Thinking of your experiences or perceptions of HEFCE overall, on the scale below, please select the option that comes closest to <u>your own</u> opinion.**

NB: Slight change in question layout since 2003 survey

HEFCE is…

Q5A **Approachable/Unapproachable**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very approachable / Fairly approachable	**93**	*77*
Neither approachable/nor approachable	**1**	*18*
Fairly unapproachable/ Very unapproachable	**6**	*5*

Q5B **Effective/Ineffective**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very effective / Fairly effective	**80**	*74*
Neither effective nor ineffective	**11**	*21*
Fairly ineffective / Very ineffective	**6**	*5*
No opinion	**3**	*0*

Q5C **Flexible/Inflexible**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very flexible / Fairly flexible	**58**	*24*
Neither flexible nor inflexible	**18**	*41*
Fairly inflexible / Very inflexible	**22**	*35*
No opinion	**2**	*0*

Q5D **Innovative/Slow to change**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very innovative / Fairly innovative	**58**	*32*
Neither innovative nor slow to change	**14**	*44*
Fairly slow to change / Very slow to change	**25**	*23*
No opinion	**4**	*0*

Q5E **Reactive /Proactive**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very reactive/ Fairly reactive	**32**	*N/A*
Neither reactive nor proactive	**18**	*N/A*
Fairly proactive/ Very proactive	**47**	*N/A*
No opinion	**3**	*N/A*

Q5F **Not respected/Respected**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Not at all respected / Not very respected	**6**	*9*
Neither respected/nor respected	**15**	*30*
Fairly respected / Very respected	**76**	*61*
No opinion	**3**	*0*

Q5G **Not transparent/Transparent**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Not at all transparent / Not very transparent	**25**	*30*
Neither transparent/nor transparent	**17**	*31*
Fairly transparent / Very transparent	**57**	*39*
No opinion	**1**	*0*

Q6 **From your knowledge and experience of HEFCE how would you personally rate each of the following? If you do not deal with a particular part of HEFCE, please choose 'not applicable'.**

		Very good / Fairly good %	Some good, some poor %	Fairly poor / Very poor %	Don't know %	n/a %
A. Quality of HEFCE senior management	**2005**	**71**	**16**	**2**	**5**	**7**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
B. Quality of HEFCE staff overall	**2005**	**69**	**25**	**2**	**3**	**1**
	2003	*67*	*32*	*2*	*0*	*0*
C. Effectiveness of the HEFCE board	**2005**	**30**	**12**	**3**	**28**	**27**
	2003	*54*	*25*	*21*	*0*	*0*
D. Positive coverage of HEFCE in the media	**2005**	**29**	**44**	**8**	**12**	**7**
	2003	*35*	*46*	*18*	*0*	*0*
E. Reputation amongst HE institutions in general	**2005**	**40**	**39**	**7**	**7**	**6**
	2003	*55*	*37*	*9*	*0*	*0*
F. Reputation amongst bodies with an interest in Higher Education other than HE institutions	**2005**	**61**	**21**	**6**	**7**	**5**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Q7 **Which one of the phrases below best describes the way you would speak of HEFCE to your colleagues?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	2005 %
Speak highly without being asked	**15**
Speak highly if asked	**36**
Would be neutral	**36**
Would be critical if asked	**12**
Would be critical without being asked	**1**
Don't know	**1**

2. PERCEPTIONS OF HEFCE'S ROLE

Q8 **Thinking about HEFCE's current role, how strongly do you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

		Strongly agree/ Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree / Strongly disagree %	No opinion %
A. HEFCE is an agent of the government	**2005**	**75**	**14**	**11**	**1**
HEFCE is an agency of the government	2003	*90*	*5*	*5*	*0*
B. HEFCE is an advocate or spokesperson for the HE sector	**2005**	**52**	**23**	**24**	**1**
	2003	*49*	*20*	*31*	*0*
C. HEFCE is primarily a regulatory body	**2005**	**33**	**19**	**43**	**5**
	2003	*51*	*21*	*28*	*0*
D. HEFCE is increasingly a planning agency	**2005**	**58**	**21**	**17**	**5**
	2003	*62*	*25*	*13*	*0*
E. HEFCE effectively consults bodies with an interest in higher education	**2005**	**63**	**19**	**12**	**6**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
F. HEFCE acts in the public interest	**2005**	**62**	**28**	**7**	**3**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
G. HEFCE actively collaborates to bring about improvements in higher education	**2005**	**74**	**19**	**6**	**1**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
H. HEFCE effectively works in partnership with bodies with an interest in higher education	**2005**	**75**	**14**	**11**	**1**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Q9 **How important or unimportant do you personally think each of the following roles and activities should be for HEFCE?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	Very important	Fairly important	Neither	Fairly unimpor-tant	Very unimpor-tant	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A. Support for the strategic development of universities and colleges	**46**	**40**	**6**	**5**	**2**	**1**
B. Support for the enhancement of learning and teaching	**45**	**42**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**2**
C. Support for widening participation	**43**	**47**	**5**	**3**	**-**	**1**
D. Support for the enhancement of research	**45**	**44**	**6**	**3**	**1**	**1**
E. Support for links with businesses and the community	**33**	**45**	**13**	**6**	**2**	**1**
F. Support for leadership, governance and management	**34**	**51**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**3**
G. Higher education policy development	**49**	**37**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**1**
H. Minimising the accountability burden	**42**	**38**	**10**	**6**	**-**	**3**
I. Promoting sustainability	**29**	**44**	**18**	**7**	**2**	**1**
J. Supporting higher education institutions in difficulty	**31**	**46**	**12**	**8**	**1**	**3**

Q10 **And to what extent, if at all, do you feel the following aspects of HEFCE's activities are carried out effectively?**

		Very effectively / Fairly effectively %	Not very effectively / Not at all effectively %	Don't know %
A. Support for the strategic development of universities and colleges	**2005**	**66**	**18**	**16**
	2003	*60*	*40*	*0*
B. Support for the enhancement of learning and teaching	**2005**	**72**	**12**	**16**
	2003	*74*	*26*	*0*
C. Support for widening participation	**2005**	**77**	**14**	**10**
	2003	*65*	*35*	*0*
D. Support for the enhancement of research	**2005**	**63**	**16**	**21**
	2003	*44*	*56*	*0*
E. Support for links with businesses and the community	**2005**	**47**	**30**	**23**
	2003	*60*	*40*	*0*
F. Support for leadership, governance and management	**2005**	**62**	**16**	**22**
	2003	*58*	*42*	*0*
G. Higher education policy development	**2005**	**73**	**15**	**12**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
H. Minimising the accountability burden	**2005**	**38**	**37**	**25**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
I. Promoting sustainability	**2005**	**35**	**30**	**34**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
J. Supporting higher education institutions in difficulty	**2005**	**59**	**7**	**33**
	2003	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

3. RELATIONSHIP WITH HEFCE

Q11 **How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your relationship with HEFCE?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

HEFCE…

	Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %	N/A %
A. Makes you feel valued	**18**	**44**	**18**	**13**	**3**	**1**	**5**
B. Understands the needs of your organisation	**16**	**44**	**21**	**12**	**4**	**1**	**3**
C. Consults you on its plans and policies	**14**	**51**	**18**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**5**
D. Listens to your views	**19**	**48**	**14**	**11**	**4**	**0**	**4**
E. Collaborates effectively with your organisation on shared objectives	**22**	**45**	**16**	**8**	**4**	**0**	**5**
F. Has input into your organisation's plans and policies	**13**	**36**	**22**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**18**
G. Works in partnership with your organisation	**24**	**49**	**12**	**6**	**2**	**1**	**5**

Q12 **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the relationship your organisation has with HEFCE?**

	2005 %	*2003* %
Very satisfied / Fairly satisfied	**77**	*65*
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	**15**	*25*
Fairly dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied	**8**	*4*

Q13 **And, to what extent do you feel your relationship with HEFCE has got better or worse over the last three years (or since you have been working with HEFCE if less than three years)?**

NB: Wording used in 2003 survey shown in brackets

	2005 %	*2003* %
Much better / slightly better *(A little/a lot better)*	**64**	*46*
No change *(Neither better nor worse)*	**18**	*47*
Slightly worse / much worse *(A little/a lot worse)*	**9**	*7*
Not applicable – I haven't been dealing with HEFCE long enough to say	**8**	*N/A*

Q14 **Have the following areas of your relationship with HEFCE improved, stayed the same or deteriorated over the last three years?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

Base: All except for those who have been dealing with HEFCE for less than three years (142)	Improved %	Stayed the same %	Deterior-ated %	Don't know %	N/A %
A. Valuing your organisation	**36**	**46**	**11**	**4**	**4**
B. Understanding the needs of your organisation	**39**	**45**	**8**	**5**	**3**
C. Consulting you on its plans and policies	**32**	**53**	**8**	**4**	**3**
D. Listening to your views	**37**	**51**	**8**	**3**	**2**
E. Collaborating effectively with your organisation on shared objectives	**48**	**36**	**8**	**3**	**5**
F. Having input into your organisation's plans and policies	**20**	**51**	**9**	**4**	**15**
G. Working in partnership with your organisation	**46**	**38**	**11**	**2**	**4**

4. CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION WITH HEFCE

Q15 **Which of the following best describes how frequently you have personally been in direct contact with HEFCE over the past 12 months? By direct contact we mean direct verbal or written (including email) communication with HEFCE staff.**

Q16 **How often would you ideally like to have direct contact with HEFCE?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	Q15	Q16
	%	%
Daily contact	**1**	**2**
Weekly contact	**31**	**29**
Monthly contact	**44**	**38**
Quarterly contact	**19**	**18**
Six monthly contact	**3**	**2**
Annual contact	**1**	**0**
As required/ appropriate	**N/A**	**10**
No contact at all	**1**	**0**
Other	**N/A**	**2**

Q17 **With which, if any, of the following in HEFCE have you had direct contact in the past 12 months?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey
Base: All who have had some direct contact with HEFCE over past 12 months (152)

	%
Director level contact	**69**
Regional consultant(s)	**56**
Staff responsible for policy development	**51**
Chief Executive	**49**
Higher education adviser(s)	**45**
Regional advisor(s)	**39**
Board members	**30**
Switchboard or reception staff	**30**
Staff responsible for corporate communications (e.g. PR and publications)	**28**
Finance staff	**24**
Staff responsible for analytical services (statistics and data collection)	**22**
Chairman	**18**
Staff responsible for institutional risk and audit	**17**
Staff responsible for estates	**8**
Staff responsible for dealing with enquiries (the HEFCE Knowledge Centre	**4**
Don't know	**1**

Q18 **How would you rate the quality of dealings you have had with HEFCE staff over the past 12 months?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	%
Very good	**42**
Fairly good	**41**
Some good, some poor	**16**
Fairly poor	**0**
Very poor	**1**

Q19 **What are your main methods of communicating with staff at HEFCE?**

Q20 **In which two or three ways would you prefer to communicate with staff at HEFCE?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	Q19 %	**Q20** %
By email	**90**	**74**
In person – formal meeting	**79**	**47**
By telephone	**78**	**56**
In person – informal meeting	**73**	**74**
At conferences/workshops/ Seminars	**56**	**19**
In writing (other than email)	**27**	**4**
Not applicable – I never communicate with HEFCE staff	**1**	**N/A**
Not applicable – I would never need to communicate with HEFCE staff	**N/A**	**0**
Other	**2**	**3**

Q21 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following…?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly agree %	dk %
A. I would like contact with HEFCE staff at a more senior level	**3**	**12**	**45**	**27**	**11**	**2**
B. HEFCE staff are accessible	**23**	**58**	**12**	**5**	**1**	**1**
C. I do not understand the organisational structure of HEFCE	**6**	**21**	**17**	**36**	**19**	**1**
D. I know who to contact at HEFCE if I have any queries	**36**	**47**	**6**	**9**	**1**	**0**
E. The contact I have with HEFCE is frequent enough	**31**	**47**	**14**	**6**	**1**	**0**

Q22 **Overall, how well or poorly does HEFCE communicate with your organisation?**

	2005	*2003*
	%	%
Very well/ fairly well	**89**	*93*
Fairly poorly/ Very poorly	**10**	*7*
Don't know	**1**	*0*

5. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM HEFCE

Q23 **To what extent, if at all, does HEFCE keep you informed about its activities?**

NB: Not asked in 2003 survey

HEFCE keeps me….

	%
Very well informed	**14**
Fairly well informed	**62**
Gives me only a limited amount of information	**19**
Doesn't tell me much at about what it does	**5**
Don't know	**1**

Q24 **Where do you currently get your information from about HEFCE's activities?**

Q25 **How would you prefer to be kept informed about HEFCE's activities?**

	Q24 Current	**Q25 Prefer**
	%	%
Contact with HEFCE staff	**90**	**84**
HEFCE website	**60**	**45**
Informal contact with colleagues	**56**	**42**
HEFCE publications and reports	**55**	**28**
Education press	**47**	**12**
HEFCE Council Briefing (Newsletter)	**42**	**27**
HEFCE publications available electronically (on the website)	**40**	**31**
Meetings in your own organisation	**38**	**19**
HEFCE Annual Report	**34**	**7**
HEFCE conferences/ seminars/ meetings	**32**	**29**
Admin-hefce (the Council's email alert service)	**21**	**29**
HEFCE Guide to Funding	**9**	**4**
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN)	**4**	**3**
I do not get any information about HEFCE's activities	**-**	**N/A**
No preference	**N/A**	**5**

Q26 **How often, if at all, do <u>you</u> access HEFCE's website (www.hefce.ac.uk)?**

	2005	*2003*
	%	%
At least once a week / At least once a month	**53**	*58*
A few times a year / Never accessed it	**47**	*42*

Q27 **How useful do you personally find the following….?**

		Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know	N/A
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All who access HEFCE website at least a few times a year (136)	**A. Publications relating to Council business**	**10**	**43**	**10**	**1**	**16**	**20**
	B. Research and Evaluation reports on the HEFCE website	**13**	**41**	**8**	**2**	**18**	**18**
	C. The HEFCE website	**28**	**60**	**5**	**1**	**3**	**3**
	D. 'Admin-hefce' (the Council's email alert service)	**8**	**15**	**5**	**1**	**29**	**43**
	E. Council Briefing	**6**	**39**	**12**	**2**	**18**	**23**
	F. HEFCE's annual reports	**4**	**39**	**24**	**3**	**17**	**13**
	G. Annual meeting	**4**	**12**	**13**	**6**	**21**	**45**

Q28 **Taking into account all the areas covered in this survey - the service you receive, the quality of communications, accessibility, level of contact and relationship between your organisation and HEFCE - in your view, what should be HEFCE's 3 key priorities for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years?** UNPROMPTED

Base: All suggesting an improvement	*(104) %*
Ensure stakeholders are consulted early on about policy issues/ more meaningful/ effective consultation with stakeholders/ feedback results	**24**
Adopt a lead at regional level/ more regular and structured regional meetings	**18**
Improve communications/ more regular information briefings	**18**
Clarify HEFCE's role/ priorities	**13**
A partnership approach to working with stakeholders/ listen to stakeholders	**12**
Less bureaucracy/ more streamlined approach/ lessen duplication and burden of accountability	**12**
More transparency/ flexibility/ equality in regards to funding	**10**
Independence from DfES/ define relationship with DfES/ need to fight the cause of the HE sector	**9**
HEFCE should be a planning body/ should think more strategically	**8**
HEFCE to be more proactive in its communication with stakeholders	**7**
HEFCE needs to understand stakeholders'/ sector priorities and views better	**7**
Lighter touch/ be less prescriptive or controlling	**7**
Speed up processes/ policy and planning processes should be quicker	**6**
Improve the website content/ ensure new articles are flagged up/ provide contact details	**6**

More transparency/ openness in relationships with stakeholders	**6**
Better dialogue with HE and FE sectors	**4**
More contact between senior stakeholders and senior staff at HEFCE	**4**
Consistency of communication with stakeholders throughout all divisions within HEFCE	**3**
Ensure stakeholders have named contact within HEFCE	**2**
Make available more and clearer information for stakeholders/ signpost what is new or important	**2**
Broaden network/ catchment area	**2**
More specific/ tailored advice and guidance	**2**
More diverse/ specialised staff	**2**
Shorter/clearer consultation documents/exercises	**1**
Others	**29**
No opinion/ suggestions	**5**

Q29 **Which role do you mainly hold in your organisation currently?**

	%
Chief Executive	**25**
Director	**24**
Manager	**16**
Head of Department	**13**
Advisor	**5**
Chairman	**3**
Deputy CEO	**3**
Administrator	**4**
Company Secretary	**1**
Head of Finance	**1**
Statistician	**1**
Consultant	**3**

Q30 **Would you be willing to be recontacted by MORI about this survey in the future?**

	%
Yes – willing to be re-contacted by MORI	**64**
No – not willing	**36**

Q31 **When writing up these results, MORI may wish to attribute some of your comments. Would you be willing to have your comments attributed to the following?**

	%
Yes, attribute comments to me	**17**
No, do not attribute my comments	**83**

Q32 **Would you be willing to discuss your responses with HEFCE?**

Base: All willing for comments to be attributed (26)

	%
Yes	**96**
No	**4**

E. Marked-Up Staff Questionnaire

FINAL TOPLINE – 26 AUGUST 2005

- MORI interviewed 193 members of HEFCE staff via an online survey on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Sample details were provided by HEFCE
- Fieldwork took place between 20 June – 22 July 2005
- Where results do not sum to 100, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated
- Results are based on all respondents (193) unless otherwise stated
- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one half or one percent, but not zero

1. VIEWS OF HEFCE

Q1 **Below are some phrases or adjectives which may or may not describe HEFCE. Thinking of HEFCE overall, on the scale below, please select the option that comes closest to <u>your own</u> opinion.**

HEFCE is…

Approachable/Unapproachable

	%
Very approachable	38
Fairly approachable	54
Neither approachable nor approachable	2
Fairly unapproachable	2
Very unapproachable	1
No opinion	3

Effective/Ineffective

	%
Very effective	22
Fairly effective	70
Neither effective nor ineffective	2
Fairly ineffective	2
Very ineffective	1
No opinion	4

Flexible/Inflexible

	%
Very flexible	13
Fairly flexible	59
Neither flexible nor inflexible	11
Fairly inflexible	12
Very inflexible	1
No opinion	4

Innovative/Slow to change

	%
Very innovative	10
Fairly innovative	48
Neither innovative nor slow to change	16
Fairy slow to change	22
Very slow to change	3
No opinion	3

Reactive /Proactive

	%
Very reactive	5
Fairly reactive	36
Neither reactive nor proactive	18
Fairly proactive	32
Very proactive	6
No opinion	3

Not respected/Respected

	%
Not at all respected	1
Not very respected	10
Neither respected/not respected	11
Fairly respected	56
Very respected	18
No opinion	5

Not transparent/Transparent

	%
Not at all transparent	1
Not very transparent	17
Neither transparent/not transparent	10
Fairly transparent	52
Very transparent	13
No opinion	7

Q2 From your knowledge and experience of HEFCE how would you <u>personally</u> rate each of the following?

	Very good	Fairly good	Some good, some poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know	NA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A. Quality of HEFCE senior management	22	40	30	2	1	3	2
B. Quality of HEFCE staff overall	32	46	20	1	1	1	1
C. Effectiveness of the HEFCE board	10	41	13	2	0	30	4
D. Positive coverage of HEFCE in the media	3	33	35	14	2	11	3
E. Reputation amongst HE institutions in general	7	46	30	5	1	10	2
F. Reputation amongst bodies with an interest in Higher Education other than HE institutions	16	48	16	2	0	17	3

Q3 **Which one of the phrases below best describes the way you would speak of HEFCE to people outside of the organisation?**

	%
Speak highly without being asked	25
Speak highly if asked	44
Would be neutral	23
Would be critical if asked	4
Would be critical without being asked	1
Don't know	4

2. HEFCE's ROLE

Q4 **Thinking about HEFCE's current role, how strongly do you <u>personally</u> agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	DK
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A. HEFCE is an agent of the government	21	54	15	6	2	3
B. HEFCE is an advocate or spokesperson for the HE sector	17	40	20	17	2	4
C. HEFCE is primarily a regulatory body	3	24	17	42	5	10
D. HEFCE is increasingly a planning agency	1	42	25	17	2	12
E. HEFCE effectively consults bodies with an interest in higher education	18	51	16	6	1	8
F. HEFCE acts in the public interest	25	47	14	6	0	8
G. HEFCE actively collaborates to bring about improvements in higher education	31	51	12	2	0	5
H. HEFCE effectively works in partnership with bodies with an interest in higher education	17	60	11	5	0	7

Q5 **To what extent, if at all, do you feel the following aspects of HEFCE's activities are carried out effectively?**

	Very effectively	Fairly effectively	Not very effectively	Not at all effectively	DK
	%	%	%	%	%
A. Support for the strategic development of universities and colleges	15	58	6	2	20
B. Support for the enhancement of learning and teaching	18	55	7	1	20
C. Support for widening participation	23	53	10	0	14
D. Support for the enhancement of research	23	49	7	1	20
E. Support for links with businesses and the community	20	50	8	1	22
F. Support for leadership, governance and management	13	46	9	2	29
G. Higher education policy development	12	58	11	0	18
H. Minimising the accountability burden	18	48	17	1	16
I. Promoting sustainability	7	42	23	3	26
J. Supporting higher education institutions in difficulty	37	45	2	0	16

Q6 **HEFCE Stakeholder Relations Contacts (SRCs) are colleagues whose role involves overseeing relations between HEFCE and a particular stakeholder or stakeholders. With this in mind, please select the option below which best applies to you.**

	%
I am currently an SRC	24
I am not sure if I am an SRC	12
I am not currently an SRC and do not want to be an SRC	48
I am not currently an SRC but I would be interested in finding out more about the role of SRCs	17

3. HEFCE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Q7A **Thinking about HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders other than higher education institutions (for SRCs: thinking about HEFCE's relationship with a specific stakeholder), to what extent do you agree or disagree that**

HEFCE…

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A. Understands the needs of [STAKEHOLDER]?	12	43	18	8	1	17
B. Consults [STAKEHOLDER] on HEFCE's plans and policies?	22	44	11	6	1	17
C. Listens to the views of [STAKEHOLDER]?	19	47	16	3	1	15
D. Has input into [STAKEHOLDER'S] plans and policies?	8	33	21	11	2	25
E. Works in partnership with [STAKEHOLDER]?	14	51	16	5	1	12
F. Collaborates effectively with [STAKEHOLDER] on shared objectives?	14	44	17	6	1	18
G. Makes an effort to make [STAKEHOLDER] feel valued?	13	38	18	8	2	21

Q8 **Overall, how would you describe the relationship HEFCE has with stakeholders other than higher education institutions (SRCs: the relationship HEFCE has with a specific stakeholder)?**

	%
Very good	17
Fairly good	48
Neither good nor poor	16
Fairly poor	5
Very poor	0
Don't know	14

Q9 **And to what extent do you feel HEFCE's relationship with [STAKEHOLDER] has got better or worse over the last three years (or since you have known the stakeholder if less than three years)?**

Base: SRCs/ Some contact (45)	%
Much better	18
Slightly better	40
No change	24
Slightly worse	9
Much worse	2
Don't know	4
Not applicable, HEFCE has not been dealing with the stakeholder organisation long enough to say	2

4. STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS CONTACT

Q10 **How frequently, if at all, have you been in direct contact with [STAKEHOLDER] over the past 12 months? By direct contact we mean direct verbal or written communication (including email) with staff at that organisation.**

Q11 **How often would you ideally like to have direct contact with [STAKEHOLDER]?**

Base: SRCs/ Some contact (45)	Q10 %	Q11 %
Daily contact	4	4
Weekly contact	29	33
Monthly contact	51	38
Quarterly contact	2	2
Six monthly contact	4	7
Annual contact	4	2
No contact at all	4	4
Other	N/A	9

Q12 **How often, if at all, do you review and evaluate stakeholder relations with [STAKEHOLDER]…**
a. …with your line manager/ director?
b. …with [INSERT NAME OF STAKEHOLDER]?

Base: SRCs/ Some contact (45)	12a %	12b %
At least once every three months	18	11
Once every three to six months	18	9
Once every six months to year	42	47
Less often than once a year	7	4
Never	16	29

Q13 **Thinking about your role as an SRC, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?**

Base: SRCs/ Some contact (45)	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor dis-agree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	DK %
A. I feel supported by my line manager in my role as an SRC	38	29	13	9	2	9
B. I feel supported by the relevant director in my role as an SRC	42	22	18	4	4	9
C. I have a good understanding of what is expected of me as an SRC	22	42	7	18	2	9
D. I do not have the necessary time to carry out my role as an SRC	4	31	27	24	4	9
E. I would benefit from training to carry out my SRC role more effectively	2	27	27	22	9	13
F. I know enough about [ORGANISATION] to do justice to the relationship	38	42	2	7	4	7
G. I see stakeholder relations management as a core part of my job	36	36	13	7	2	7
H. I feel my nomination as SRC is appropriate	51	24	4	9	-	11

Q13 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?**

Base: Non-SRCs/ Non Some contact (148)	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor dis-agree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	DK %
I. I know enough about stakeholders to do justice to my contact with them	8	43	16	15	3	14
J. I see stakeholder relations as an important part of my job	26	39	13	9	4	9

Q14 **Thinking about your colleagues, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?**

		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	DK
		%	%	%	%	%	%
	A. My line manager does not give sufficient priority to stakeholder relations management	1	5	11	35	28	20
	B. My director does not give sufficient priority to stakeholder relations management	1	5	14	22	29	30
	C. I should be kept more informed about joint activities that are being carried out with stakeholders that affect my work	12	36	23	18	2	9
	D. Stakeholder relations are not taken into account sufficiently in the way my performance is assessed (e.g. mid-year development review, annual review, using the "Relationship Enabler")	3	13	24	26	16	18
Base: SRCs/ Some contact (45)	E. I know what other colleagues are doing in relation to [ORGANISATION]	18	49	16	16	-	2
Base: Non-SRCs (148)	F. I know who the Stakeholder Relations Contact (SRC) is for the stakeholders who I deal with	11	22	10	21	16	20

5. INFORMATION ABOUT STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

Q15 **Finally, taking into account all the areas covered in this survey – your understanding of HEFCE's role, your role as an SRC (if applicable) and the quality of HEFCE's relationship with stakeholders- in your view, what should be the 3 key priorities for improving relations with stakeholders over the next three years, including support, training and the development of the role of Stakeholder Relations Contact (SRC)?** UNPROMPTED

Base: All suggesting an improvement	*(113)* *%*
More joint working with stakeholders/ involvement in policy development	26
Clarifying roles/ policies in relation to stakeholders/ SRCs	22
Improve internal communications/ more cross-council working	13
More training/ development/ support/ guidance for SRCs	12
Spend more time with stakeholders/ more time to develop individual stakeholder relationships	11
More secondments/ shadowing	10
Improve stakeholders' awareness/ understanding of HEFCE's role	10
More coordinated approach/ system for managing stakeholders	10
Make available more/ clearer information on stakeholders	9
More training/ development/ support/ guidance for staff in general	9
Understanding stakeholders' needs/ agenda/ priorities	9
More opportunities for contact with stakeholders	8
Development/ improvement in stakeholder management	8
Greater prioritisation of key stakeholders/ more information on which stakeholders are key	7
Greater understanding of our respective roles	7
Improve communication/ dialogue with stakeholders	6
Consult with stakeholders early on	5
Continued engagement with stakeholders through meetings/ briefings	4
More feedback from SRCs about their stakeholders/ activities	4
Dissemination of good practice	4
Recognise workload implications of being an effective SRC	4
Act on results/ feedback of survey	3
Revision of risk assessment procedures	2

Develop relationships with junior clients as well as senior ones	2
Rely less on representative bodies e.g. UUK, HERAs	2
Effective consultation processes	2
Some stakeholder relationships need to be more formal	2
A database that everyone can access	2
Senior management should promote stakeholder relations more actively	2
More transparency	1
Reduce accountability burden	1
Supporting/listen to AUDE	1
Greater understanding of clients' ways of working	1
Others	28
Don't know	1

Q16 **Would you be willing to be re-contacted by MORI about this survey in the next 12 months?**

	%
Yes – willing to be re-contacted by MORI	54
No – not willing	46

F. Statistical Reliability

The table below shows the statistical reliability, at the 95% confidence level for different sample sizes at the aggregate level. As the total populations of HEFCE staff and stakeholders are relatively small, data are more statistically reliable than they would be if populations were infinite. The approximate population sizes that we have assumed for the purpose of calculating sampling tolerances are shown in brackets.

Sampling tolerance applicable to results at or near these percentages bases (based on 95% confidence level)			
	10/90% ±%	**30/70%** ±%	**50%** ±%
Sample Size:			
154 stakeholders (assuming a total population no greater than 500*)	4	6	7
193 HEFCE staff (assuming a total population no greater than 260)	2	3	4
459 HEI respondents from the 2003 survey (assuming a total population no greater than 1,000*)	2	3	3

* These figures are an estimate of the number of organisations which have some direct knowledge or dealings with HEFCE, and not the total number of stakeholders

Source: MORI

If the results of the survey of 154 stakeholders show that around 51% would speak highly of HEFCE - the range within which the true figure would lie (if all stakeholders had been interviewed) is ± 7 percentage points, i.e. between 44% and 58%. In fact the true figure is likely to lie at the mid-point of the range (i.e. 51%), rather than at either extremes.