September 2006/35

Good practice

Guidance

This report is for information and guidance

This good practice guide is intended to help higher education institutions to assess the HEFCE-funded activities that support their learning and teaching strategies, so that they can maximise the impact of those activities and embed them in a sustainable way. Institutions can adapt the self-assessment questions to suit their own context.

Embedding learning and teaching strategies

An approach to self-assessment by higher education institutions

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND

Embedding learning and teaching strategies

An approach to self-assessment by higher education institutions

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of universities in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Learning and teaching, Strategic planning, Finance
Reference	2006/**35**
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Executive summary

Purpose

1. This good practice guide is intended to help higher education institutions (HEIs) to assess the HEFCE-funded activities that support their learning and teaching strategies, so that they can maximise the impact of those activities and embed them in a sustainable way.

Key points

2. Through our Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) we are providing funds over the next three years to ensure that strategies for learning and teaching, and the activities to achieve them, become fully embedded within institutions and across the sector (see HEFCE 2006/11).

3. From 2009-10 we intend to incorporate this funding into mainstream grants for teaching, through a mechanism that supports continuous improvement. We believe the most effective way to achieve this is for HEIs themselves to identify their strengths and areas for development, through self-assessment.

4. The guide has been piloted with a number of HEIs, and can be adapted to suit different needs and contexts. The primary audiences are those in institutions who are responsible for implementing and managing TQEF-funded activities and learning and teaching strategies more broadly.

Action required

5. This document is for information and guidance.

Context

6. One of the major challenges for higher education institutions (HEIs) in enhancing learning and teaching is to ensure that best value is achieved from the substantial investment of both money and time in development and innovation. Among other things, this involves effective implementation of planned activities, assessing the impact of funding, and ensuring that initiatives undertaken are sustainable in the long term.

7. Over the next three years we are supporting the development of learning and teaching through our Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF); see HEFCE 2006/11. The aim of the funding is to ensure that learning and teaching strategies, and activities to achieve these strategies, become fully embedded within institutions and across the sector.

8. From 2009-10 we intend to incorporate TQEF funds into mainstream teaching funding through a mechanism that supports continuous improvement by HEIs. We believe this is most likely to be achieved if institutions themselves identify their strengths and areas for development through self-assessment.

9. We therefore commissioned The Higher Education Consultancy Group and CHEMS Consulting to develop a framework for self-assessment that can be adapted by HEIs to match their own context and systems. This good practice guide is intended to help HEIs to assess the activities funded through the TQEF that support their learning and teaching strategies, so that they can maximise the impact of those activities and embed them in a sustainable way.

10. This framework – described here as a good practice guide – has been successfully piloted with a sample of institutions. Some HEIs already have effective systems for measuring impact, while others do not yet have a clear understanding of what has been successful and why. Both groups were represented among the institutions involved in the pilot, and both groups found the guide of value.

11. The good practice guide covers all three strands of the TQEF. It encourages HEIs to reflect on whether they are maximising the potential benefits from the outputs of each strand in achieving their learning and teaching strategies. The strands of the TQEF are:

- the institutional strand – formula funding to support the development and implementation of institutional learning and teaching strategies, and our investment in Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs)
- the subject strand – supporting a network of subject centres (now co-ordinated by the Higher Education Academy, HEA), and the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL). From 2006-07, this is the ‘sector wide’ strand to acknowledge the broader work of the academy
- the individual strand –the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

Purpose and scope of the guide

12. Many HEIs have found that embedding learning and teaching strategies is a long and complex process. It frequently goes through a cycle, starting with enthusiasts (often involved in project work), followed by limited adoption and then by the development of institutional systems that aim to mainstream good practice. Thus without effective institutional support and monitoring, many development activities are unlikely to have the intended impact.

13. This self-assessment guide aims to support HEIs in these processes, specifically to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of TQEF-funded activities to date, and their impact within the institution, including on its learning and teaching strategy
- identify what (if anything) remains to be done in relation to meeting and embedding existing TQEF objectives
- plan how TQEF funds for 2006-09 can be used most effectively to sustain activities
- reflect on how new TQEF-funded activities from 2006 onwards can be implemented and embedded effectively.

14. The guide aims to encourage institutions to undertake their own self-reflection, in order to take forward and embed their strategies. It is not intended to secure accountability for TQEF funding from HEIs to HEFCE.

Primary audiences

15. The primary audiences for this document are those in HEIs who have responsibility for implementing and managing learning and teaching strategies. Typically, these include: pro vice-chancellors academic (or equivalent); units concerned with enhancing learning and teaching, educational development, and academic quality; and deans and heads of department. The guide might also serve other purposes, for example to demonstrate to governing bodies the importance of continued investment in learning and teaching at a time of competitive pressures on funding.

16. We are providing TQEF funds to further education colleges (FECs) for the first time. Although the guide is not written with FECs specifically in mind, we expect they will find some of the self-assessment questions useful.

Using this guide

17. The good practice guide, and specifically the self-assessment questions, have been designed to be helpful to institutions in reviewing their learning and teaching strategies including TQEF-funded activities. It is brief, simple and flexible to use.

18. The price of brevity is that the guide cannot hope to be comprehensive. Accordingly, **HEIs are encouraged to add questions appropriate to their own needs, and to drop or adapt those that are less relevant.**

19. HEIs may wish to view the impact of their TQEF-funded activity in the context of their learning and teaching strategies at all levels in institutions, and how materials intended to support quality enhancement are used – for example materials disseminated by the HEA's subject centres or by projects supported by the FDTL. The guide does not cover detailed implementation at a subject level (for example, whether an academic department takes account of work by its relevant subject centre or FDTL projects).

20. Diverse audiences for the guide and its use in diverse contexts mean that it is not prescriptive about the evidence and data that institutions will need to collect to judge the effectiveness of their learning and teaching strategies and TQEF-funded activities. **There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers: HEIs can vary the amount of detail depending upon the importance to them of a particular topic.** However, in general, the quantitative and qualitative evidence is likely to focus on at least three levels:

- effectiveness of specific activities supported through TQEF
- achievement of key elements of institutional learning and teaching strategies
- enhancing the student learning experience.

Structure of the guide

21. The guide contains open questions, organised into six themes. We took this approach because:

- the majority of HEIs that piloted the guidance preferred open questions
- the complexity of enhancement activity throughout an HEI means that progress is likely to be variable, so answers to simple quantitative questions may be misleading
- as the data collected are for the sole use of HEIs, open questions provide an opportunity to collect robust performance-oriented data, that do not have to be shown to external bodies.

22. The six themes are presented in a logical order, starting with implementation of an overall learning and teaching strategy, moving on to institutional activity arising from the three strands of TQEF, and finally looking forward to 2009 and how activities supported from TQEF funds for this period can best be implemented and embedded. This final section enables HEIs with CETLs to reflect on their impact on enhancing learning and teaching in the institution more generally.

23. Annex 1 contains an additional activity to summarise existing achievements quantitatively as a spidergraph or radar chart.

24. Annex 2 lists some of the generic outcomes from work by the HEA's subject centres. This is a quick reference for HEIs, enabling them to assess the extent of their own use of resources that have been developed and disseminated for the sector.

A. The effectiveness of our learning and teaching strategy

This section enables HEIs to reflect upon their current learning and teaching (L&T) strategy, how it has been implemented, the extent to which key elements have been achieved, and what changes are required to meet future challenges.

A.1 Looking at our institution's current L&T strategy, to what extent have the objectives and key elements been achieved, and what remains to be done? (To summarise this in a quantitative way, there is an additional activity in Annex 1.)

A.2 What have been the main issues concerning the implementation of our L&T strategy throughout the institution? What problems have occurred, and how successful has been the action taken?

A.3 Who has been responsible for managing the implementation of our L&T strategy? How effective has this arrangement been, and what are its advantages and drawbacks?

A.4 To what extent is our L&T strategy integrated with other institutional strategies: eg, for e-learning, research and widening participation? What needs to be done (if anything) to ensure better links?

A.5 What is the relationship between our L&T strategy and our TQEF-funded activities (eg, are they completely integrated, completely separate, or a mixture of both)? On reflection, is this relationship appropriate?

A.6 What has been the effect – if any – of our L&T strategy in encouraging cultural change to support and give more prominence to enhancing learning and teaching?

A.7 What mechanisms have we used to assess the impact of our L&T strategy on actual learning and teaching, and are these satisfactory? Have these included staff and student feedback, and if so what has been its value?

A.8 In what ways has the student experience been improved because of our L&T strategy, and (where appropriate) has this improvement been consistent across our institution? If not, why not?

A.9 What changes to human resource management have taken place (if any) to encourage the achievement of our L&T strategy: eg, promotion criteria, creation of new career pathways, staff development, probation, support for part-time staff, and suitable arrangements for staff on short term contracts? What else do we still need to do in this area?

A.10 When we next revise our L&T strategy, what are the main changes necessary to ensure that it is fit for purpose in the future?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to review the effectiveness of our institution's current L&T strategy?

B. The effectiveness of our previous TQEF-funded activity

This section enables HEIs to reflect on the extent to which previous TQEF-funded activity (2005-06 and before) has been effectively undertaken, and whether key objectives have been met. The actual impact and embedding of TQEF-funded activity is addressed in Section C. If TQEF-funded activities are completely integrated into the L&T strategy in your institution then you may find that you have answered some of the following questions in Section A. Questions concerning new TQEF priorities from 2006-07 onwards are dealt with in Section F.

B.1 Looking at our institution's previous TQEF-funded activities (2005-06 and before), to what extent have the objectives and key elements been achieved, and what still remains to be done? (To summarise this in a quantitative way, there is an additional activity in Annex 1.)

B.2 What have been the main issues concerning the implementation of our TQEF-funded activity throughout the institution? What problems have occurred, and how successful has been the action taken?

B.3 Who has been responsible for managing the implementation of our TQEF-funded activities? How effective has this arrangement been, and what are its advantages and drawbacks?

B.4 What has been the effect – if any – of our TQEF-funded activity in encouraging cultural change to support and give more prominence to enhancing learning and teaching? In what way – if any – has the impact of this activity differed from the impact of our L&T strategy?

B.5 In what way has our spending pattern on TQEF-funded activity changed in the last few years and why? For example, has there been significantly increased spending in one area, and if so have any original plans or commitments been changed?

B.6 How successful have we been in integrating our work across the three strands of TQEF and achieving synergy between them? What issues have arisen, and do we need to take any further action?

B.7 Has TQEF-funded activity led to any changes in the way that resources for learning and teaching are allocated internally? If so, what effect have these changes had on supporting impact and embedding? If not, what barriers – if any – has resource allocation provided to supporting impact and embedding?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to review the effectiveness of our institution's previous TQEF-funded activity?

C. Embedding our previous TQEF-funded activity

This section enables HEIs to reflect upon the impact of previous (2005-06 and before) TQEF-funded activities, and (where appropriate) the extent to which they have become embedded in practice. Questions concerning embedding TQEF priorities from 2006-07 onwards are dealt with in Section F.

C.1 Overall, how effectively has the institution adopted the outcomes of TQEF-funded activity to date, and (where appropriate) consistently embedded them in practice?

C.2 What have been our most successful TQEF-funded activities in terms of impact and embedding, and why?

C.3 What have been our least successful TQEF-funded activities in terms of impact and embedding, and why? What plans do we have to address them?

C.4 What management and support activities have been most successful in encouraging impact and embedding, and why?

C.5 What mechanisms have we used to assess the impact of our TQEF-funded activity on actual learning and teaching, and are these satisfactory? Have these included staff and student feedback, and if so what has been its value?

C.6 In what ways have we sought to improve the student experience through our TQEF-funded activity, and (where appropriate) has this improvement been consistent across the institution? If not, why not?

C.7 How do we get robust and realistic evidence on what is happening to embed TQEF-funded activities within schools and departments (or their equivalent), and are these approaches satisfactory?

C.8 What plans do we have to make sure that previous and current TQEF-funded activities can be sustained and supported in the future? In what ways might these be affected if TQEF funding were no longer to be earmarked by HEFCE after 2009?

C.9 What else is still to be done to extend the adoption and embedding of TQEF-funded activity, and how will we do it?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to review the impact, adoption, embedding and sustainability of our previous TQEF-funded activity?

D. The institutional impact to date of work by our National Teaching Fellows and the Higher Education Academy subject centres/FDTL projects that we host

This section enables the HEI to think about the extent to which it has benefited from the work of its National Teaching Fellows, and any HEA subject centres or FDTL projects it hosts. Questions about the potential benefits of CETLs are asked in Section F.

D.1 If we host (or collaborate in hosting) any of the subject centres co-ordinated through the HEA, how effective have we been in ensuring that the work of the centre(s) has been considered for adoption by relevant academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the impact in the subjects concerned?

D.2 If we host (or collaborate in hosting) one of the HEA subject centres, how effective have we been in ensuring that any successful generic work of the centre(s) has become known to other academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the awareness of any such generic work outside the subjects immediately concerned?

D.3 If we have hosted (or have collaborated in hosting) any FDTL projects, how effective have we been in ensuring that their work has been considered for adoption by relevant academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the impact in the subjects concerned?

D.4 If we have hosted (or have collaborated in hosting) any FDTL projects, how effective have we been in ensuring that any generic work arising has been considered by other academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the awareness of any such generic work outside the subjects immediately concerned?

D.5 If we have been awarded any National Teaching Fellowships, how effective have we been in ensuring that the work of the Fellow(s) has been considered for adoption by relevant academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the impact in the subjects concerned?

D.6 If we have been awarded any National Teaching Fellowships how effective have we been in ensuring that any generic work of the Fellow(s) has been considered by other academic subjects in our institution? What more might we reasonably have done to increase the awareness of any such generic work outside the subjects immediately concerned?

D.7 How effective is the interaction between our local teaching fellowship or awards scheme (or equivalent) and the National Teaching Fellowships scheme?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to review the impact, adoption, embedding and sustainability of the work of our National Teaching Fellows, HEA subject centres or FDTL projects that we host?

E. The impact to date for us of TQEF-funded resources hosted outside our institution

This section enables the institution to reflect upon the extent to which it has used TQEF resources produced by other HEIs, and that are available more widely in the higher education sector.

E.1 Have we got effective means of incorporating the value and relevance of the outcomes of TQEF-funded activity undertaken elsewhere (for example, HEA subject centres, FDTL projects, and published work from National Teaching Fellows) in the priorities for our own learning and teaching strategy? If so, how effective are we in ensuring that we use these resources to best effect? How might we make better use of such resources?

E.2 Do we have an effective process for ensuring that our subject departments (or equivalent) take advantage of TQEF-funded resources produced by the HEA subject centres and FDTL projects hosted elsewhere? If not, how do we know whether subject-based TQEF outcomes are being considered by our own departments? Is there any action we need to take?

E.3 The HEA produces a range of material and advice on a number of generic cross-cutting themes (such as employability), some of which is funded through TQEF. How effective are we in ensuring best use of these sources, and what more might we do to increase awareness of them within the institution? (*Note: A sample of this generic work is in Annex 2; you may find it helpful to look through it and consider what activities are relevant to your institution's corporate and L&T strategy priorities.)*

E.4 Many HEIs assume that their subject departments are closely in touch with relevant professional bodies, and that any emerging teaching quality or professional practice requirements are incorporated into academic activity. Can we be sure that this is the case in our departments (or equivalent), and if not what action do we need to take?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to review the impact, adoption, embedding and sustainability of relevant work undertaken elsewhere but funded by TQEF?

F. Our future TQEF activities to 2008-09

In the summer of 2006 English HEIs submitted to HEFCE their planned TQEF-funded activities for the period up to 2008-09. This section enables the institution to consider the implementation and embedding issues that will arise from these new priorities. Questions are also included about links with Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs).

F.1 Looking at our institutional priorities for TQEF-funded activity for the next three years, what are the main issues in relation to implementing, embedding, and sustaining them?

F.2 Looking back at our implementation and embedding of outcomes from TQEF-funded activities since 1999, what are the main lessons that might guide the implementation and adoption of newly prioritised activities up to 2008-09?

F.3 If HEFCE ceased to earmark TQEF funding in 2009, what issues might we need to address to ensure that activity currently supported through TQEF funds continued to be supported in our institution? (See also Question C.8.)

F.4 In the next three years what are the main barriers to further enhancing learning and teaching that we might expect to have to address? What action might be taken on each of the issues raised?

F.5 If we have a CETL, how do we ensure that the outcomes of its work influence academic subjects in our institution?

F.6 If we have a CETL, how do we ensure that the generic outcomes of its work more broadly influence our institution outside the subjects immediately concerned?

F.7 How will we ensure that our institution as a whole is aware of the general outcomes of work by all CETLs to enhance its own learning and teaching? How might this best be done?

What other questions do we need to ask (or what other data do we need to collect) in order to plan TQEF activity up to 2009?

Annex 1: Summarising what has been achieved by our L&T strategy

Question A.1 asked to what extent the objectives and key elements of the L&T strategy have been achieved, and some HEIs might like to summarise the answer quantitatively. One way of doing this is to draw a spidergraph or radar chart from the resulting information. Looking at the profile can raise additional issues about the way an L&T strategy is being implemented.

The technique works best where different versions of the same diagram are produced and the similarities and differences compared by overlaying one diagram on another. For example, HEIs could compare the diagrams for different key people in the implementation of the L&T strategy, or for different academic schools or departments and other contributory services.

A radar chart can easily be produced using Microsoft Excel, and the framework diagram should be similar to the example below. To create a diagram take the following steps:

a) Identify the key objectives or elements in the current L&T strategy (not more than eight).

b) Rate the successful completion of each objective on a 0-10 scale, where 0 = no completion or implementation across the whole HEI and 10 = fully completed and implemented across the whole HEI. (You can change the definition of the measure to suit your own purposes.)

c) Using Microsoft Excel, create the diagram. Enter the data in a standard Excel format, and then select 'insert' and 'chart' commands. Select the specific form of radar chart that you require.

d) Compare your diagram with those of others involved in implementing the L&T strategy. When you overlap your diagram with those of others, what accounts for the different patterns that are likely to result, and what are the implications for any assessment of the effectiveness of the L&T strategy?

You might also find it useful to complete a separate chart for the implementation of specific TQEF activities (where these are separate from key L&T strategy objectives). To do this simply repeat the steps outlined above, but in relation to up to eight key objectives for TQEF.

Sample framework for radar chart

Insert summary of Objective A:

Insert summary of Objective B:

Insert summary of Objective C:

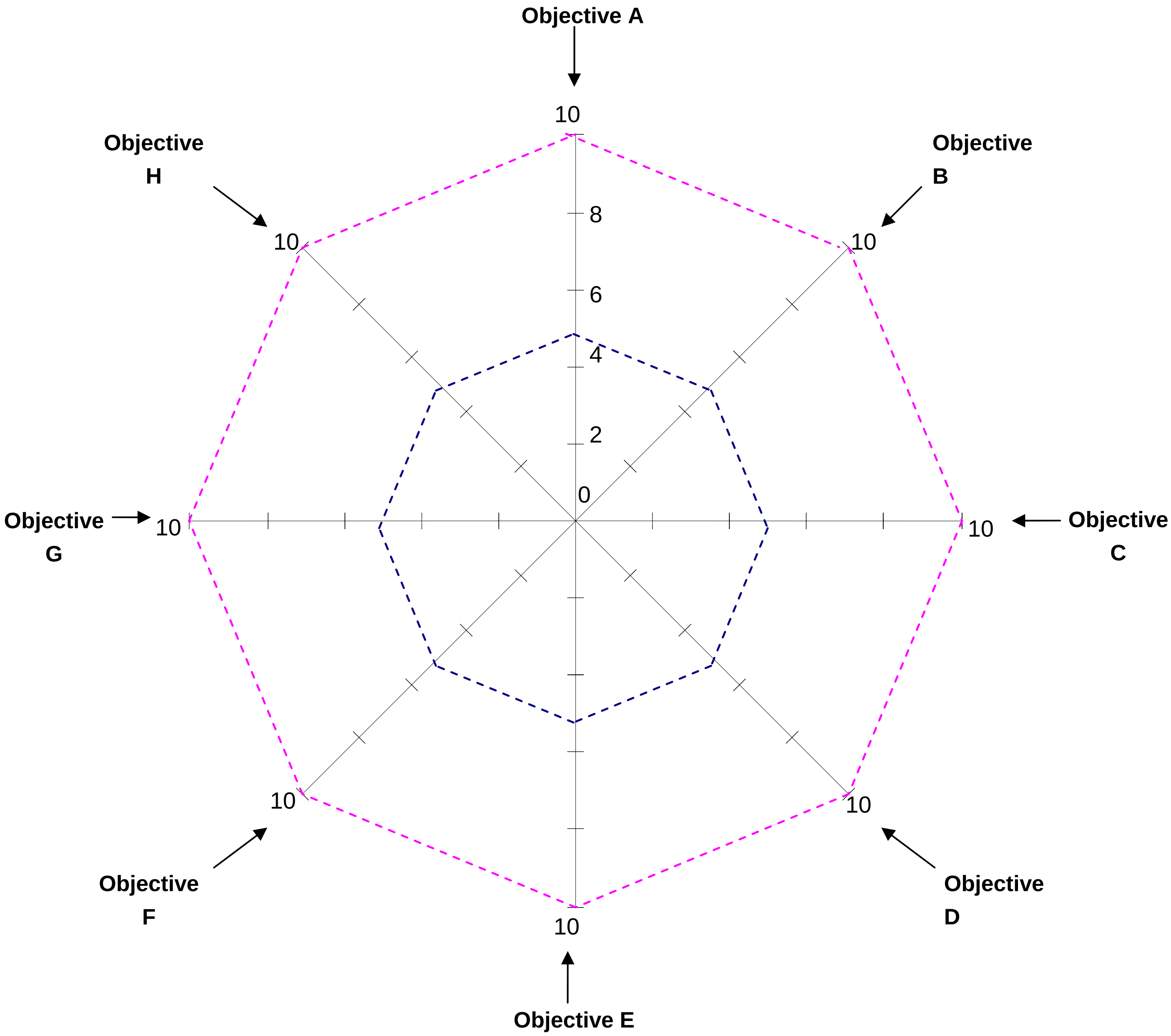
Insert summary of Objective D:

Insert summary of Objective E:

Insert summary of Objective F:

Insert summary of Objective G:

Insert summary of Objective H:



Annex 2: Generic subject centre outputs

This annex lists generic outcomes of work from a selection of HEA subject centres that may be of interest to all HEIs. The information has been provided by centres, and is classified under four headings: assessment, employability, curriculum design, and other aspects of learning and teaching. The information is not comprehensive and fuller details of the work of all subject centres may be found on the web: *www.heacademy.ac.uk/SubjectNetwork.htm*

Assessment

1 Assessment of the 'Vertical Project' - integrated peer assessment of a group project to provide an individual grade for students This case study describes the 'Virtual Project', which provides an opportunity for students at all levels of the programme to work together in a realistic fashion on real environmental problems. This allows students to link their learning at each level, through knowledge and understanding of content, relevant issues and career and practice-based skills. The projects cover a wide range of subjects linked to the interdisciplinary nature of an environment programme. The student teams consist of final year students undertaking management and leadership roles, with other students participating in planning and execution. An assessment plan is described which takes the wide range of activities, interests and knowledge of the teams into account.
http://goodpractice.gees.ac.uk/cgi-bin/searchspec.pl?terms=206

2 Assessment Plus (A+) This is a project to develop and evaluate evidence-based educational resources linked to core assessment criteria for written work. Those resources include a students' guide to assessment, workshops to promote complex skills, and a benchmarking manual for student assessment. The project is psychology-based but the focus is on generic rather than subject-specific criteria, so the project outcomes are intended to be adaptable to other disciplines.
www.assessmentplus.net

3 Essays are not the only way - a case study report on the benefits of authentic assessment Authentic assessments resemble the tasks that graduates will be required to perform in the workplace. This report compares grades obtained for essays with those for two authentic assessments, namely, the presentation of a poster and the publication of an information pack. Implementation of authentic assessments requires carefully devised assessment criteria, co-operative staff, and students who have been coached on the requirements of style and content. The authentic assessments reported here are valid, reliable, fulfilling and capable of motivating students to achieve. The results are set in the context of marking workload, didactic benefits, and student and lecturer job satisfaction. The data illustrate some of the difficulties encountered in ‘action research’ in the classroom.
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/miniproject_details.asp?id=3

4 The mock exam as a low cost, high return revision exercise You might think that running a mock exam entails extra marking that is ultimately not assessed. Not so. This

project has successfully used the following exercise for five years, without any additional marking. Attendance has been close to 100 per cent and the comments of students have been overwhelmingly positive. The exercise requires at least three hours of continuous contact time a couple of weeks before the actual exam. It has been used primarily as preparation for a three hour exam in which students are required to answer three out of nine essay-type questions.
www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/copestake_mock.htm

5 Stimulating the participation of the audience in student presentations In many departments, students give presentations either singly or, more often, in groups. These are normally assessed. This study describes the use of presentations to stimulate the participation of the audience. Presentations were to count for 20 marks out of the 25. This came from a balance of aspects such as content, communication skills and group-working skill. Two innovations were introduced. Five per cent was awarded for questions. Students were to work in teams after a presentation to create questions for the presenting team. The second innovation was to keep a record of attendance for the six weeks during which presentations were given and use it as an attendance factor.
www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/stead_presentations.htm

6 Portfolio assessments Portfolios have been around for a long time, either as collections of artefacts in an artist's portfolio or as documentation of teaching practice and staff development in a teaching or professional portfolio. However portfolios are finding a wider application as a form of educational assessment. Even though they may vary in format, educational portfolios distinguish themselves from other portfolios by including reflective elements. This study begins with an overview of portfolios, followed by a look at the portfolio model which emerged from the TransLang project. It concludes with a summary of findings common to the individual case studies.
www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=1441

7 Assessment audit tool Assessment of students occupies a great deal of staff and student time and is often a contentious area. Two areas in particular give rise to complaints from students: the arrangement of assessment in the course, and the timing, amount or quality of the feedback available after the assessment has been returned. Through a series of structured questions, this assessment audit tool encourages individuals or course teams to re-appraise the quality of the assessment procedures on their modules and to reflect on how they could be improved. The audit has been trialled extensively in more than a dozen universities for modules in preclinical medical courses or biological or biomedical science degrees, but is readily applicable to other disciplines.
www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/Audit.htm

8 Teaching materials using case studies - assessment and evaluation of practice
This guide for lecturers describes the case-based approach to student learning, from the practice of the Department of Metallurgy & Materials at the University of Birmingham. The guide outlines why the department incorporated case studies into the teaching of the undergraduate curriculum, and also discusses methods employed by staff to develop case studies. It then provides details of a range of assessment methods used by the department (with reference to a number of specific examples), and notes how feedback from students and staff shaped the development of such practice.
www.materials.ac.uk/guides/casestudies.asp

Employability

1 Selling ideas, an enterprising activity for many modules - the elevator pitch In order to get ideas across to bosses, staff discovered that they could find the boss in the elevator and pitch their ideas in the short time the elevator was in motion: hence the concept of the 'elevator pitch'. Students are asked to create and provide a very short presentation: for example, students in a tutorial group might be asked to give one minute presentations of their proposed dissertation methodology or main argument for an essay. This concept can be used by students in different learning scenarios, with the aim being to develop student skills in selling ideas and making short, to-the-point presentations.
www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/entrep/practice/sellideas.doc

2 Enhancing the employability of psychology graduates This report explores employability issues related to psychology in higher education. It begins from the premise that psychology graduates will not develop optimal employability skills merely through contact with the discipline, and encourages academics to develop an awareness of and some focus on employability issues in the undergraduate programme. The report adapts generic material from a number of projects funded by the Learning and Teaching Support Network for specific use in psychology, as a practical resource. It provides a summary of a number of considerations and examples of useful tools.
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/reports.asp

3 Academic and professional skills for language learning This provides an overview of what academic and professional skills (APS) are and why they should be integrated in degree courses involving languages. It illustrates the rationale behind the introduction of APS, the logic behind making them compulsory, and how their integration impacts on curriculum and assessment. It also highlights the issues to address to make the embedding of APS into the languages curriculum effective. It finally provides suggestions on how to integrate APS, using the European Language Portfolio and network-based learning.
www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=1571

4 Employability audit tool The purpose of the tool is developmental: through a series of questions it provides a framework around which employability can be addressed, ideas discussed and course design and content considered. The tool is designed to take into account local priorities and limitations as well as highlighting where student employability is already being developed effectively. The Centre for Bioscience has also developed the ‘reverse employability audit tool’. This is designed around a programme handbook for a hypothetical bioscience BSc. Users identify and list areas of the course where aspects of employability could be better addressed. Both audit tools may facilitate preparation of an action plan for curriculum development/redesign.
www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/Audit.htm

5 Creative university project - producing graduates/employees as creative thinkers and innovators This project provided the opportunity for a number of academics from a range of discipline areas to explore and develop best practice in creative thinking techniques. The academics then transferred and adapted what they had

learnt to their own teaching and learning situations, with a view to fostering creative thinking and innovation in students/graduates. Results from the project were written up by participating academics as a series of chapters in a booklet entitled 'The travelling case: how to foster creative thinking in higher education', available from the following web-link.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/3271.htm

Curriculum design

1 Placement module - applying geographic skills in the workplace This case study describes the incorporation of a final-year work placement module into a geography programme, encouraging students to become active partners in the learning process, widening their exposure to an extended range of assessment approaches, and providing them with a variety of learning resources. The expansion of such student opportunities was considered a logical curricular development due to the multi-faceted and applied nature of the discipline. The author provides background to the case study, the inter-related aims of the module and outcomes in terms of student performance. Pros and cons are discussed and further questions regarding work placements raised.
http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/seda/watkin.htm

2 Small-group teaching and learning in psychology Teaching contexts where groups of undergraduates are expected to interact in the interests of learning are a significant feature of the higher education teaching of psychology. LTSN Psychology's survey of departmental needs and practices in 2000 showed that small-group teaching, as defined above, accounts for up to 40 per cent of formal provision during the first and second years of undergraduate degree courses. All completed surveys made reference to some kind of small-group teaching strategy. Responses to a questionnaire administered to psychology heads of department in the autumn of 2001 indicate that the contribution of small-group teaching can rise to as high as 70-75 per cent in the final third and fourth years. This report examines the practice of small-group teaching in detail, and suggest how such teaching can be used effectively.
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/reports.asp

3 Psychology Applied Learning Scenarios (PALS) - a practical introduction to problem-based learning using vignettes for psychology lecturers This 44-page pack is intended to be a practical resource to help those who would like to try a problem-based learning approach in their teaching. It provides an example of how brief text-based vignettes or case study scenarios have been used by a psychology lecturer in the teaching and assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The scenarios are adaptable and can promote effective learning either in a more traditionally-based course format or as an introduction to fully-fledged problem-based learning.
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/reports.asp

4 Training students to work in teams - why and how? This report provides practical advice to academic staff on how team skills training programmes can be developed. Chapters 2 and 3 describe how team skills training has been developed within the psychology department at the University of Southampton, with an evaluation of its impact on student performance, learning outcomes, student attitudes and peer relationships**.**
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/reports.asp

5 Podcasts as a learning tool in economics This concerns the use of podcasts as a learning tool in economics during academic year 2004-05 at Lancaster University Management School. A podcast is an audio clip that is broadcast over the internet and which may be listened to at a computer or on an MP3 player. To create the podcasts, a series of three-minute clips were used based on topics in a final year undergraduate human resource economics course. These were recorded as wave files using the Windows sound recorder, and then converted to MP3 files. The files were then uploaded onto a weblog account freely hosted by blogger. The podcasts are automatically delivered to the student; the student does not have to remember to fetch them each week.
www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/johnes_podcasts.htm

6 The revision of material using noughts and crosses This concerns an adaptation of noughts and crosses as a method of revising course material with seminar groups of up to 18 students. The game helped students revise material, and playing it engendered a competitive team spirit. The game is adaptable to many subject areas. Students are assigned to one of two teams, 'noughts' and 'crosses', with each team asked to sit together. A noughts and crosses grid is shown to the students on a blackboard or overhead slide. Within each cell of the grid will be a topic from the course. The students are then asked to spend a few minutes devising questions for each cell.
www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/elliott_0x.htm

7 Integrating independent learning with the curriculum This handbook is one of six handbooks dealing with good practice in independent language learning. It introduces key concepts in learner autonomy and learner independence and a discussion of the benefits and challenges associated with independent learning. The handbook gives an overview of six elements crucial to the success of independent learning; these are then covered in more detail in the other handbooks. The final section of this handbook presents a paper relevant to independent learning by Gill Sturtridge, an international figure in the area of learner autonomy and in the design and use of self-access centres.
www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=1400

8 Facilitating reflective learning - an example of practice in TESOL teacher education Reflective learners are said to demonstrate self-awareness and motivation, awareness of the process of learning and independence. However, some learners can find the process of reflection problematic. The case study describes the impact of a specific reflective 'tool' (the statement of relevance) on a language teacher education programme. It outlines the potential of this tool to help learners work autonomously, to qualitatively enhance learners' reflection, to enable reluctant reflectors to develop the tendency to habitually look for learning from a variety of knowledge sources, and to enable learners to predict future needs more successfully.
www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=2395

9 The role of the moderators in focus group interviews - practical considerations Focus group interviews are an increasingly popular, albeit poorly documented, tool in education research. This case study details the author's first experiences of using a focus group interview in a small-scale qualitative inquiry, and documents some of the practical issues surrounding the responsibilities of focus group moderators. A redefinition of the

facilitative, recording, checking and analytical roles of the moderator and assistant moderator is considered.
www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=2399

10 Learning difficulties in practical dance study The final report of a project working with students and teachers of contemporary dance technique in higher education, to identify appropriate learning and teaching strategies for use with students with specific learning difficulties in a practical dance context. The project involved interviews and workshops which led to a number of recommendations that could inform practical work of a similar nature.
www.lancs.ac.uk/palatine/dev-awards/bourne-report.htm

11 E-learning initiatives at the College of Law This case study outlines e-learning initiatives introduced at the College of Law on the vocational legal practice course - the compulsory stage of training for would-be solicitors. The initiatives are delivered to full-time and part-time students, and to those on block learning programmes. There are computer assisted exercises, together with discussion groups. The case study describes the aims and mechanics of the initiatives, as well as reflections on both tutor and student attitudes. The key aims were to make workshops more effective, add variety to student learning, and to improve students' preparation for sessions. This is a good example of the use of e-learning, which has been built on by the college, which now offers only 'virtual lectures' to its students.
www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/vtf/harvey.html

12 Virtual learning environments - Glasgow Graduate School of Law One of several case studies developed as part of a project into the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) in law, this describes the innovative VLE developed at Glasgow Graduate School of Law which involves students becoming solicitors in their own firms and undertaking transactions in a virtual community. The case study covers the development of the VLE, how students interact with it and how they have reacted to this new form of learning. It demonstrates in particular how it is possible to harness the communicative potential of the VLE to create learning applications for students which take the VLE beyond being a repository for resources or a management tool.
www.ukcle.ac.uk/vle/bespoke/ggsl

13 Learning materials at a distance This guide for lecturers is a distillation of the essential elements of distance education, and a succinct overview of how to produce effective distance learning resources. It is based on the direct experiences of the Department of Materials Engineering, in the Faculty of Technology at the Open University, and is styled as a short practitioner's pamphlet with a number of brief activities highlighted. The guide should be of importance to practitioners, given the fact that more and more students are finding themselves learning 'at a distance', even in institutions that are ostensibly face-to-face teaching establishments.
www.materials.ac.uk/guides/distance.asp

Other aspects of learning and teaching

1 Case studies on education for sustainable development This collection of case studies stems from a focus group held in 2005. The case studies all have a focus on

geography, earth and environmental sciences, or cognate disciplines, but vary in granularity. They cover a variety of mechanisms and themes: curriculum innovations, both institution-wide and programme-specific; the CETL for Education for Sustainable Development; the piloting of a higher education continuing professional development course portfolio, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government; development of distance-learning tools for sustainable development training; and the undertaking of a sustainability audit.
www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/esd/casestud.doc

2 Creating ethical research - understanding ethics committee decision making A set of workshop materials which are grounded in practice and consider such issues as: capacity and consent, costs and benefits to society, doing no harm, confidentiality, and financial rewards. These issues are presented as a series of scenarios derived from research with ethics committees, a sample of anonymised real applications, and ethical research literature. The materials comprise generic information on the formation, function and practice of ethics committees, ethics guidelines, and a set of case studies that are related to health professionals. The materials allow students to 'experience' how ethics committees process research applications, and what ethical issues need to be considered in making applications ethically sound.
www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/html/reports.asp

3 Peer tutoring in conceptual design This final report describes the experiences (through a teaching development project) of the Department of Engineering at the University of Liverpool in introducing a peer tutoring scheme to help 2nd year undergraduates tackle conceptual design problems. Formally, the students were taught through lectures, coursework and critique sessions. Peer tutors were trained to facilitate group sessions, whereby the students were able to discuss ideas, try new concepts, generate solutions, and learn to communicate effectively. The students developed problem-solving skills, became more confident, and took more responsibility for their learning. The peer tutoring process also had a positive effect on tutors.
www.materials.ac.uk/teachingdev/funded/peertutoring.asp

4 Writing for research users - briefing papers as coursework A 'research briefing paper' is a concise summary of research findings written for an informed, although not necessarily expert, audience. Typically, such papers are presented as a four-page A4-sized pamphlet: the hallmarks of a good research briefing paper are coherency and substance, all in less than 2,500 words. This case study describes the use of such papers as coursework based on small-scale fieldwork research projects designed and executed by the student. The aims are to develop student research skills and their appreciation of research in the discipline.
www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/linktr/McKendrick1.htm

5 Publishing Undergraduate Research in an Extra-Curricular House Publication: A journal was devised to offer a genuine experience of research publication to students in response to a perceived need as a significant proportion of students go on to further discipline-specific study or research when their degree is completed. Publication does not accrue academic credit. The benefits of publication to the student are considered to be the genuine experience of completing the full research cycle and the end product, a professionally produced article, which student authors can include with their curriculum

vitae and discuss at interview. Feedback from student authors also indicates that they gain a great deal of personal satisfaction and learn a great deal about scientific writing and the research and publication process.
www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/tdf/potter.htm