

Higher
Education
Regulation
Review
Group

*Less regulated:
more accountable*

Final Report 2006

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CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW



Over-regulation grows by degrees. Of course best practice should be shared; but when does that turn into targets which substitute box ticking for making decisions? Of course standards must be improved; but is this best achieved by checking process or outcomes? Of course universities and colleges must account for the £17 billion of public and private money which funds them; but is this best done by centralised control, or by strong management, audit and governance inside institutions, within a light touch, risk-based framework?

These questions must be kept before us, or apparently sensible measures end by loading universities with unnecessary costs and stifle initiative in teaching and research. Higher education

is vital to our culture, society and economy and, in such a fast changing and competitive field, we should not hamper innovation and leadership.

When the Higher Education Regulation Review Group was set up in 2004, it inherited this powerful analysis from its predecessor, evidence of understanding in some leading agencies and demand for further change from the sector. With support from the DfES, we became not only a filter for new demands but set about helping to drive the reduction of current burdens.

Three problems soon became apparent:

- Governments tackle each new issue with a fresh initiative, adding to the duties of existing agencies or creating new ones;
- agencies design new processes to demonstrate delivery, centralising control and bureaucratising management; and
- institutions, concerned about their income, over-engineer their response.

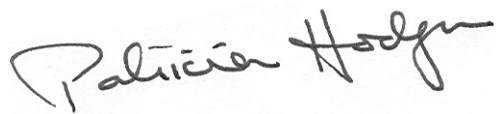
But we saw a real opportunity to build on the growing consensus that this must stop. The solution lies in the ability of universities and colleges themselves to respond to society's needs. Performance over the past decade speaks for itself. The introduction of tuition fees and full economic costing for research add extra incentives for good management. It becomes possible to develop a much lighter touch framework for monitoring and national policy.

Our vision is of a sector to which trust has been restored; where decisions are informed by data collected once by universities and colleges for their own and government purposes;

where public funding is handled by agencies able to rely on the management and governance of the vast majority of the institutions they choose to fund and where standards are driven by a focus on outcomes; that is, on the quality of research and of degrees.

The Higher Education Concordat, launched in May 2006, is rooted in these ideas. It commits the DfES and the Department of Health, along with their funding and inspection agencies, and other relevant statutory bodies, to take forward these principles and creates a ratchet to roll back bureaucracy year by year. We do not propose sudden and dislocating change. Total restructuring of the framework would threaten too many unintended consequences. Nor do we seek to dictate how agencies should do their jobs. Each signatory will produce its own business plan for implementing change on an annual basis. Over five years, the simplifications set in train through the Concordat, in parallel with market pressures shaping the sector, will reduce bureaucracy and free our colleges and universities to deliver their prime purposes with ever greater success.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Group for their wisdom and energy and the many senior figures in the sector who have helped us on the journey. It is with optimism that I hand on the baton to the implementation group that will help take our agenda forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patricia Hodgson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Contents

Section	Page	
1	Summary of Recommendations	1
2	Better Regulation	5
2.1	The challenges of Higher Education	5
2.2	The role of HERRG	5
2.3	Correcting the Balance	7
2.4	Year One	7
2.5	Year Two	8
2.6	Beyond the Concordat	10
3	HERRG's activities and concerns	11
3.1	Measuring HERRG's success	11
3.2	Consultation	11
3.3	Higher and Further Education	12
3.4	Sector Skills Council	13
3.5	The Research Assessment Exercise	14
3.6	TQI & NSS	14
3.7	Health & Safety	15
3.8	Review of Student Finance Delivery in England	15
3.9	The Charities Bill	15
3.10	The Housing Act 2004 and the Student Accommodation Code of Practice	16
3.11	Leadership, Governance and Management	17
3.12	Input on HEFCE Strategic Plan 2006-11	18
3.13	Sustainability	18
3.14	Quality Assurance Framework on Healthcare Education	18
3.15	Other issues	19
3.16	Conclusion	19

Annexes

1	The HE Concordat on quality assurance arrangements and data collection	20
2	The Gatekeeper role	21
3	Membership of the Higher Education Regulation Review Group 2005-06	26
4	Glossary	29

1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

- 1.1 The growing strength of management, audit and governance functions within the UK's universities and colleges now gives government the opportunity to step back from centralised intervention. We recommend that the work of funding and inspection agencies is tested against three principles of better regulation:
- Designing better processes that reduce the cost of reporting and inspection, freeing universities to get on with their main jobs of teaching and research;
 - Unless or until an institution is at risk of failure, funding bodies should be expected to place greater reliance on management, audit and governance within universities themselves, with extra reporting by exception and only when justified by extra risk;
 - Universities and colleges should guard against 'gold-plating' in meeting regulatory demands.

Recommendation 2

- 1.2 HERRG's successor group should continue to monitor implementation by HEFCE of the single conversation and other funding changes announced in January 2005. (Para 2.4.1)

Recommendation 3

- 1.3 Ministers in all relevant Departments should give clear political support to the Higher Education Concordat for Better Regulation, including promoting its principles and approach in their directives, such as annual grant letters, to their agencies and NDPBs. (Paras 2.5.8 and 2.5.10)

Recommendation 4

- 1.4 HERRG's successor should extend Concordat membership by encouraging appropriate new signatories, in particular to key Professional and Statutory Bodies which accredit qualifications. (Para 2.5.6)

Recommendation 5

- 1.5 HERRG's successor group should monitor progress by Concordat signatories in meeting the targets they have set and hold them to account in delivering its principles. (Para 2.5.7)

Recommendation 6

- 1.6 HERRG's successor and its Chair to have a clear remit to remain independent, with freedom to publicise lack of progress, especially in relation to the HE Concordat. (Paras 2.5.8 and 2.5.9)

Recommendation 7

- 1.7 HE institutions should not hesitate to complain about activity which is inconsistent with the Concordat's principles. HERRG's successor group should establish and publicise appropriate procedures. (Para 2.5.10)

Recommendation 8

- 1.8 HERRG should explore the scope for a complementary concordat, applying the principles to the provision of data concerning research activity and the exploitation of research. (Para 2.6.2)

Recommendation 9

- 1.9 DfES and other Departments should consider more radical options to reduce the number of bodies with responsibilities for overseeing higher education in relation to data collection, inspection, standards, validation of qualifications and best practice - streamlining their activities through merger, integration or even abolition - if substantial progress in lightening bureaucratic burdens is not achieved within three years. (Para 2.5.4)

Recommendation 10

- 1.10 HERRG's successor group should continue to scrutinise HEFCE and hold them to account for all of its areas of work, using the Concordat's principles as a starting point and consider extending the scope of the Concordat to funding and associated activity. (Para 2.6.2)

Recommendation 11

- 1.11 The Cabinet Office Better Regulation Executive should periodically repeat the MORI survey of perceptions of bureaucracy by those working in HE institutions. (Para 3.1.1)

Recommendation 12

- 1.12 DfES should endorse HERRG's principles for consultation in relation to HE institutions (paras 3.2.1) and should develop an effective consultation strategy aimed at controlling unnecessary consultation. (Para 3.2.2)

Recommendation 13

- 1.13 DfES should keep an up to date list of consultations on its web-site and should review their effectiveness with its Agencies on an annual basis. (Para 3.2.1)

Recommendation 14

- 1.14 DfES should give a lead to ensure that the bureaucratic burdens of HEIs delivering FE and FECs delivering HE is effectively addressed and then provide consistent support for the process, clarifying the respective responsibilities of their two Directorates and the remits of their two gatekeeper groups. (Para 3.3.4)

Recommendation 15

- 1.15 DfES should act to ensure useful initiatives by Sector Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Development Agency are not compromised by duplication and parallel or, even, conflicting processes. (Para 3.4.1)

Recommendation 16

- 1.16 DfES should take action to ensure the expectations of the relevant SSCs are built into processes jointly developed by the QAA and professional bodies which provide endorsement for qualifications. (Para 3.4.2)

Recommendation 17

- 1.17 Membership of the Higher Education Safety and Health Forum should include more representatives from HEIs who are actively involved with health and safety issues. (Para 3.7.1)

Recommendation 18

- 1.18 DCLG should accept HERRG's principles for regulation in respect of their Student Accommodation Code of Practice – that all HEIs are well managed and run and should therefore be trusted to comply with legislation. (Para 3.10.4)

Recommendation 19

- 1.19 HERRG's successor group should monitor the development of the Healthcare Education Partnership and its quality assurance framework, ensuring this meets its objectives of producing a simplified, more rational and less burdensome process. (Para 3.14.2)

Recommendation 20

- 1.20 HESA and HEFCE should consider HERRG's proposals for reducing the bureaucratic burden of the Survey of the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education. (Annex 2, para 8)

Recommendation 21

- 1.21 HEFCE should, in consultation with the CRE, amend its requirement for HE institutions to monitor ethnicity in such a detailed and comprehensive way, giving more proportionate guidance to HEIs on how they can meet the objectives of the legislation. (Annex 2, para 23)

Recommendation 22

- 1.22 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs should ensure HE institutions do not have inflicted on them a significant and unnecessary increase in administrative work as a result of changes in Corporation Tax law. (Annex 2, para 24)

Recommendation 23

- 1.23 HEFCE should avoid micro-managing HE institutions and ensure they do not seek

to interfere in areas which should be the sole concern of the management in HEIs.
(Para 3.13.1, but also a more general point)

Recommendation 24

- 1.24 HERRG's successor group should continue to undertake HERRG's gatekeeping role.

2. BETTER REGULATION

As higher education develops in a more competitive world, the accountability framework needs to change with it. The aim must be lighter touch standard setting at national level, rooted in effective self evaluation and risk management in institutions that combine autonomy with a real focus on the needs of partners and students.

2.1 The challenges to higher education

2.1.1 Universities and colleges are taking an increasing leadership role in supporting the quality of life and economic success of their communities. Knowledge and learning is a good in itself. It also shapes everything we do or can aspire to. The market for higher education is international and the future for any society depends on the level of skills and innovation within the knowledge economy.

2.1.2 Successive governments have been alert to this challenge. The number of young people experiencing higher education has grown since 1989 from 20% to around 45% of the cohort. This year, revenues in the sector reach nearly £17 billion, 60% of that public money, but with substantial contributions from charities, business and students' own tuition fees. Government, students and other funders need to know their money is effectively managed and delivers the highest standards.

2.1.3 Over the past decade and a half, initiatives to support the growth and professionalism of the sector and ensure accountability have multiplied. They have helped to shape one of Britain's success stories, but they also created considerable costs and have the capacity to stifle the innovation at the heart of success. It is all too easy for policy makers to suppose that they can bring about improved outcomes through centrally-led initiatives rather than by harnessing the professional abilities of those experienced in delivering services. There is wide recognition of the opportunity now to benefit from the growing strength of management, audit and governance within institutions and move to a lighter touch.

2.2 The role of the HERRG

2.2.1 The Higher Education Regulation Review Group (HERRG) was set up in the summer of 2004 to take forward this agenda. It benefited from a clear sense of direction and effective terms of reference set by its predecessor group and it was strongly supported at its inception by the DfES. Its membership included university finance directors and registrars with direct experience of the daily burden of unnecessary red tape, as well as a recent chairman of university governors, who understood the reality of effective governance. Over the two years of its activities it took evidence from Vice Chancellors and senior leaders in the sector in all parts of the country, as well as from all the leading agencies involved with the sector, whichever of the funding departments they reported to: the DfES, Department of Health or Department of Trade and Industry.

2.2.2 Early in our work, we distilled three principles of better regulation for the sector:

- The core aim is better processes that reduce the cost of reporting and inspection, freeing universities to get on with their main jobs.
- Unless or until an institution is at risk of failure, funding bodies should expect to place greater reliance on management, audit and governance arrangements within universities themselves, with extra reporting by exception and only where justified by extra risk.
- Universities and colleges must guard against 'gold-plating' in meeting regulatory demands. There is a risk that managers in institutions can over-egg the supposed requirements of a regulator, or treat best practice guidance as a mandatory requirement, because doing so plays to their own personal area of expertise.

2.2.3 Changes in this direction were underway in some important areas when the Group started work. Most recently, both the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) have incorporated these ideas into their strategic plans. HEFCE has set targets for reducing the costs of bureaucracy by thirty percent over five years. The QAA is introducing a new Institutional Audit method in England and Northern Ireland (in 2006-07) which aims to lighten the burden on institutions of assurance and focus more than before on enhancement, with most HEIs subject to a full audit visit every six years. This shifts the balance from inspection towards enhancement of quality.

2.2.4 Clearly, these changes are made possible when institutions' own quality control is effective and transparent. This means developing information - whether in the form of business plans, reports and accounts or data about students and academic outcomes - that serves the purposes of the institutions themselves as well as high-level monitoring by government. Above all, that information should help to inform decisions taken by the people who seek to study or work in the sector or develop partnerships with it at home and abroad. The competitive changes of recent years, which have helped to drive the introduction of tuition fees and of full economic costing for research, mean that by the end of the decade higher education will begin to operate in more of a market. For markets to work properly, information must be accurate and accessible.

2.2.5 To this end, the Group has encouraged the universities, through their representative bodies, to improve the service of data collection provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency - which they own - and urged the funding agencies and other users to specify and share the same information, on the principle of 'one source, many uses'. We have sought to bring together inspection agencies and encourage shared information and procedures, in a manner already being pioneered by the QAA and a few leading professional bodies. These initiatives bore fruit in the form of the Higher Education Concordat, signed in May 2006 by the main data collection and inspection agencies, associated bodies and their sponsoring Departments.

2.2.6 The Concordat rests on the plans of its signatory bodies to simplify and

their procedures on the principles described. It creates a ratchet for removing unnecessary bureaucracy as the sector evolves, freeing universities and colleges to focus on their main purpose of learning, teaching and research.

2.3 Correcting the Balance

2.3.1 HERRG has been helped during its life by the increasingly high profile given across government to the reduction of regulation, including the strengthened central direction given by the creation of the Better Regulation Executive in May 2005 and the Better Regulation Commission at the beginning of this year. The costs of unnecessary bureaucracy and the dangers of the dependency culture associated with over-regulation, identified in our first report, were now under a brighter spotlight.

In two years, the Group helped to deliver some important successes:

2.4 Year One

2.4.1 **Funding** In collaboration with the Group, HEFCE announced in January 2005 changes in its approach to funding, monitoring and data collection:

- ❑ cutting the number of special funding streams requiring separate bids from institutions to a maximum of six over time;
- ❑ establishing the principle that any new streams must replace and not add to those on the list;
- ❑ moving to a 'single conversation' with universities and colleges using their own annual forecasts, abolishing multiple data demands during the year, except for institutions at risk; and
- ❑ monitoring by exception, so that institutions need only report on failures to meet particular regulatory requirements.

Our successor Group will monitor implementation during the coming year.

2.4.2 **Legislation** The Group saw no new legislation specifically aimed at HE or affecting it in a major way. However, we raised concerns about the Charities Bill and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, highlighting how HEIs can be affected by proposals not directly aimed at them. There is an important public policy concern here. As HEIs become increasingly important to the economy and society, so too it becomes essential that their status and value are understood by decision makers across the public sector. We were generally pleased by the government's response to our concerns and its willingness to rely on institutions' own reporting arrangements - eg their Annual Reports and Accounts - rather than requiring extra detail, but wait to see this implemented.

2.4.3 **Initiatives** We commented to government departments, HEFCE, HESA and other bodies on practices and proposals, ranging from unnecessary data collection to inappropriately prescriptive guidance. While this activity happens with good intentions, we are clear that much of it was adding little value to higher education,

and we pointed this out as unnecessary.

2.5 Year Two

- 2.5.1 Embedding Change** The next challenge was to seek to ensure that funding, inspection and other relevant agencies were building the principles of lighter touch, risk based activity into their forward plans. We were pleased to see that HEFCE, QAA and Ofsted were all conscious of a need to change in this way and each - in their own way – was seeking to embed into their operational planning changes that would reduce the bureaucratic burden on HEIs. In particular, HEFCE included in its recently-published 5-year Strategic Plan¹ a specific objective “to sustain stakeholder confidence in HE through a risk-based accountability framework which places greater reliance on institutions’ own accountability processes and demonstrates a well led, managed and governed sector”. They expect their approach to regulation to continuously improve and they are committed to reducing the costs to both the institutions and themselves. The DfES made clear in its annual grant letter to HEFCE for 2006-07 that continuing commitment to the deregulation agenda was a high priority for Ministers.
- 2.5.2 A Better Regulation Concordat** A major issue in the sector is the number of bodies with responsibility for funding, data collection, inspection, standards, validation of qualifications and best practice generally. These comprise public funding agencies reporting to the DfES, Department of Health and DTI respectively, allied standards bodies, agencies established to develop best practice, professional bodies charged with supervising teaching and qualifications and bodies established to promote greater employer engagement with higher education.
- 2.5.3** Each may serve a perfectly proper purpose, but the accretion of data requirements, inspection and target setting now involves an overlapping and bureaucratic burden on institutions which is both expensive in itself but, more importantly, too often suggests that making regulatory returns is a substitute for good management.
- 2.5.4** One option would be legislation to integrate this large number of bodies with the aim of simplifying procedure. But, over the years, higher education has been well served by relatively small and specialised agencies supporting progress to achieve the present strengths of the sector. It is time to reap the benefits of this progress, whilst dismantling some associated problems, rather than reinventing a national framework, with all the dangers of new burdens as legislation is considered. The present structure should be reformed and improved, on a timescale that wins hearts and minds, and not – unless reform proves impossible – be replaced. The future, therefore, is in the hands of the agencies involved. Of course, if progress is not made, or is too slow, the radical option remains.
- 2.5.5** To this end, HERRG borrowed from an idea pioneered in Health and spent a good

¹ “HEFCE Strategic Plan, 2006-11” March 2006
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_13/06_13.pdf

deal of its second year negotiating a Better Regulation Concordat, with the DfES, the Department of Health, the DTI and their agencies, committing them to collaboration in data collection and inspection, to streamlining their processes on the basis of risk based regulation and to eradicating overlap and duplication. Several pioneering professional bodies also signed and are in discussions with the QAA to agree sharing data or a lead body for inspection purposes. As noted above, HEFCE has built the principles of a lighter touch into its new five year plan and committed itself to cutting the burden on universities and colleges by 30% over the period. We believe this target should be embraced by all signatories.

- 2.5.6** The Concordat will be successful if its initial signatories commit themselves to delivering both its words and its spirit, as these bodies between them have the greatest impact across the sector. However, its impact will be far more profound and long-lasting if the large number of professional bodies which accredit qualifications, ranging from accountancy to health, are brought within the scope of the Concordat. It must therefore be an early target for our successors to add to the early signatories, but they must also encourage rapid progress by those who have already committed.
- 2.5.7** Although the prime responsibility for pushing the Concordat forward and ensuring that its principles can be delivered in practice rest with its signatories, HERRG's successor group will continue to monitor progress. They must hold the signatories to account for meeting the targets they have set themselves, help them review and develop their business plans in the light of progress to further reduce unnecessary demands made on HEIs and highlight publicly any obstacles to this progress. The next section of this Report indicates just how many agencies and initiatives are active in higher education. Unless the Concordat is effective over time in simplifying this framework, the blunter instrument of legislative reform will be necessary.
- 2.5.8** But the Concordat can work if it gets the political support it will need and the Minister's appointee has freedom to publicise progress or, more importantly, any lack of it. The Group will also have an important role in advising on how much progress in meeting the Concordat's principles is actually being experienced by the administrators and managers in HE institutions, as well as encouraging other organisations to join in with the initial signatories – especially the many public and statutory regulatory bodies who play a part within the HE sector.
- 2.5.9** Experience suggests that the powers and terms of reference for HERRG's successor will be crucial. We are therefore pleased that Ministers have agreed that HERRG's work should continue with a reconstituted group. In particular, the arrangements which enable the sector to blow the whistle where progress is not being made and, crucially, give HERRG the ability to go public should that ever be necessary, are vital to its success
- 2.5.10** The Concordat should also be seen as an important charter for individual institutions. Where the individual actions of one agency or the combined actions of several are inconsistent with Concordat principles, institutions should not hesitate to say so. It is surely inevitable that mistakes will be made from time to

time, and the best thing in such a case is that those who have infringed the Concordat change course with good grace. But where this does not happen, recourse to the HERRG may well be appropriate. Above all, success will depend on Ministers' willingness in the relevant Departments to continue to embrace the agenda and support it in their annual grant letters or similar directives to agencies.

2.6 Beyond the Concordat

- 2.6.1 As the Concordat process delivers results and encompasses further signatories, it will have a significant impact on the current administrative burden imposed on universities. However, the Concordat only covers data collection and quality assurance. There are many other areas where overlap and duplication imposes unnecessary work on HE institutions. Each individual activity might seem minor in itself, but the cumulative impact – diverting the resources of university administrators from their principal task of running their institutions effectively – cannot be underestimated. For example, during a single three-month period the University of one HERRG member faced three separate audits of their initiatives, systems and effectiveness in monitoring and ensuring equality and diversity – two separate ones by Ofsted (as part of primary teacher training inspection and within a 16-18 FE provision inspection) and the third by QAA for institutional audit. Just a little co-ordination could have halved the burden on the institution and probably also made the audits themselves more effective while requiring less work by the Agencies themselves. What happened was clearly unacceptable, and inconsistent with the Concordat's principles as well as common sense. Institutions should be encouraged to complain in these circumstances, to those imposing the requirements and if necessary to the HERRG.
- 2.6.2 In the process of agreeing the Concordat itself, Research Councils UK helpfully identified the benefits that could result from applying the Concordat's principles to the provision of data concerning research activity and the exploitation of research and the scope for a complementary concordat in this area will be explored during the coming year. But the scope for the imposition or the unwitting and unplanned cumulative development of unnecessary burdens is wider still – sometimes it appears almost infinite – and our successor should give serious consideration to whether the Concordat is sufficient in its focus. There is a good argument for extending its coverage to funding and associated activity. Our successor group must continue to scrutinise HEFCE and hold them to account for all of its areas of work and the Concordat's principles provide a good starting point for so doing.

3 HERRG'S ACTIVITIES AND CONCERNS

3.1 Measuring HERRG's success.

- 3.1.1 Change, in a sector as large and diverse as higher education, is the product of leadership in many places and depends on creating and moving forward a substantial degree of consensus. HERRG cannot claim all the credit for progress over its lifetime. Key factors have included high profile government initiatives to roll back regulation elsewhere combined with real leadership in a number of key agencies. But HERRG has been able to contribute to a constructive mood and help move it forward. The main measures should be the evidence of changed behaviour and simplified processes catalogued in this report. We were encouraged by perceptions on the ground identified in a MORI survey conducted for the Better Regulation Executive in the Cabinet Office and recommend this is repeated on a regular basis.
- 3.1.2 In a few areas, including that of public consultations however, less progress was made, as we set out below.

3.2 Consultations.

- 3.2.1 Consultations have presented considerable cause for concern. We found universities and colleges had been faced with more than sixty approaches during 2003, varying from major issues of principle to technical aspects of implementation. The requirement to consult before introducing major policy change is a step forward. But universities and colleges told us that the culture of consultation was too often a problem rather than a solution. There was cynicism about consultations designed to manage the response to policy decisions already taken and work created by lazy consultation about technical issues that should have been brokered at professional level. The Group recommended that the following principles should be applied to higher education:
- The Department and its agencies should each establish a formal filter to ensure more targeted and proportionate approach to consulting; usually proceeding by one of three routes:
 - ❑ major issues involving a range of options require full consultation;
 - ❑ technical issues require a professional response, with clear sign-posting as to who would be best placed to respond; in some cases, responses might be co-ordinated through representative bodies, with an opportunity on a web-site for others to respond if they wished;
 - ❑ the department or agency concerned should be prepared to make informed judgements on matters within their day-to-day responsibility.
 - Full consultations should pass the test of being meaningful and worthwhile for stakeholders. They should be straightforward about aspects of policy that have already been decided and where consultation is genuine. Outcomes should be

explained in terms of the responses received. Decisions and rejected suggestions should be explained in terms of the responses received. A process for dealing with complaints regarding the conduct of a consultation should be established, directed to a senior member of staff in the Department who is identified in the consultation document and separate from the responsible policy officials.

- As part of its co-ordinating policy responsibility and to inform the sector, the DfES should keep an up to date list of consultations on its web-site and should review their effectiveness with its Agencies on an annual basis. This list also forms part of the Cabinet Office Consultation Annual Report, which measures departments' compliance with the Code.

3.2.2 We were pleased to see HEFCE embracing this approach in its reissued guidance on its own practice, though change on the ground is proving harder to achieve. We were concerned, however, that over the two years of our activity we were unable to identify an effective locus for taking these matters forward in the DfES or real evidence of willingness to engage with the problem. One of the members of HERRG was able to count 45 separate consultations sent by government departments and other bodies to his university during 2005. Although few of these were from DfES itself, many did result from the Department's requirements being taken forward by, for example, HEFCE or UUK. While DfES quite rightly encourages proper consultation with those affected by its policies, it does not appear to have any kind of policy to even assess, never mind control, the total number of consultations that they directly or indirectly initiate, nor to discourage or minimize unnecessary consultations. Nor does it have any system that looks at the impact on individual sectors (eg HE) of all consultations from the whole range of Government Departments, their agencies and representative bodies consulting on behalf of Government. This should be a priority for our successors, to engage with the Department's newly-appointed Director of Communications and encourage effective management of the impact of communications on HEIs.

3.3 Higher and Further Education.

3.3.1 During its work, HERRG consulted sister bodies working on issues affecting Further Education. Their work is reported on by Sir Andrew Foster² as well as the Bureaucracy Reduction Group³ and their recommendations are helping to inform legislation in the field. HERRG strongly supports their recommendations for:

- bringing together data collection to shared specifications across HE and FE and
- arrangements for working to eliminate unnecessary overlaps between the different inspection regimes for HE and FE.

2 "Realising the Potential – a review of the future role of further education colleges", November 2005
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/furthereducation/fereview/downloads/REALISING06.pdf>

3 "Bureaucracy Reduction Group Annual Progress Report, 2005"
<http://www.successforall.gov.uk/downloads/annualprogressreport2005-251-380.pdf>

- 3.3.2 Good work has been done, but progress has been slowed by a problem of co-ordination within the Department, where responsibility often falls between two Directorates – it would seem, sometimes missing both of them. It is important this is addressed alongside the incoming legislation.
- 3.3.3 The Department is not unique in this respect. QAA consulted our Group about their proposals for improving and rationalising the arrangements for assuring the quality of HE delivered by FE Colleges, but the main impact will be felt in the Colleges themselves, rather than HEIs that may be linked, yet QAA did not approach the Bureaucracy Reduction Group (BRG), our sister group responsible for FE. HERRG's comments on the consultation were, however, copied to the BRG.
- 3.3.4 To ensure that the bureaucratic burdens of HEIs delivering FE and FECs delivering HE is effectively addressed, we believe DfES needs to give a lead and then consistent support for the process. The respective responsibilities of their two Directorates needs to be clarified and they need to liaise and co-ordinate where they might overlap or have an impact in the other's area. And they should give a similar remit to their two gatekeeper groups. We believe HERRG should be responsible for investigating the bureaucratic impact of all activities - including FE - within HEIs and the BRG's role should be the same for FECs, but with the two groups required to liaise and ensure solutions for one side of this Mixed Economy do not adversely impact on the other.

3.4 Sector Skills Councils.

- 3.4.1 A particular area where worthwhile initiatives threaten to create unintended bureaucratic burdens is in the area of Sector Skills Councils and of drives to involve regional agencies and businesses in influencing university courses and qualifications. Their purposes are unimpeachable. Skills must relate to the needs of employers. The problem lies in co-ordinating practice amongst a wide range of local and business bodies, each with their own agenda. HERRG welcomes the commitment to the HE Concordat of the Skills for Business network (which brings together all 25 Sector Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Development Agency) as a demonstration that the SSCs wish to fulfill their remit without imposing unnecessary burdens on HEIs, but urges the DfES to help ensure useful initiatives are not compromised by duplication and parallel or, even, conflicting processes. In particular, powers to charge for evaluating and endorsing courses tempt agencies to duplicate inspection that is already or could be carried out by others.
- 3.4.2 Although the Government is encouraging employer engagement with HE, not all parts of the sector appear to understand the implications; and lack of understanding can often be the cause of developing unnecessary bureaucracy. We therefore recommend that the expectations of the relevant SSCs are built into processes jointly developed by the QAA and professional bodies which provide endorsement for qualifications. The group heard of a good example of this, where the Automotive Academy has developed a model for work-based learning that involves both employers and educational institutions in assessing the areas where they were expert (work and academic content, respectively). This leads to the

award of both HE and vocational qualifications and, with appropriate additional assessment, to the award of professional status.

3.4.3 This kind of integrated approach by employers, academic institutions and professional bodies working together seems to us an essential first step in avoiding duplication and the model ought to be applied more widely. As this report went to press, HERRG was brokering an initial discussion between the QAA, the SSDA and the Council for Industry & Higher Education (CIHE) to consider how this approach might be developed and how professional bodies might be brought in.

3.5 The Research Assessment Exercise.

3.5.1 The Group took evidence on attitudes to the Research Assessment Exercise at the beginning and towards the end of its programme of work. It recognised that the RAE involves substantial administrative costs and has some undesirable side-effects in relation to staff recruitment and publishing. In our sessions we heard that the direct costs of the 2001 RAE amounted to some £5.6M but that, together with indirect costs, it could have cost as much as £45million. The RAE exercise would influence the allocation of research funds of between £8 and £10 billion over a six year period. It proved difficult to determine the precise impact of RAE findings on the allocation of funds between one institution and another, but there were informal estimates that as little as 10% actually depended on the results of the RAE. However, we were struck by the differences of opinion in the sector, the degree of support for peer review and plans being developed by HEFCE to introduce major changes and simplifications after the 2008 exercise. The Group welcomed the Chancellor's initiative to bring forward simplification, provided key differences between institutions and subjects could be accommodated, and were pleased to see recommendations for implementation in the hands of a group chaired by Professor David Eastwood, Chief Executive-designate of HEFCE and Sir Alan Wilson, Director General for Higher Education at DfES.

3.6 TQI & NSS

3.6.1 The HERRG commends the work of the Quality Assurance Framework Review Group (QAFRG) Chaired by Dame Sandra Burslem. Providing the right information to students as consumers in the HE market is key, but this needs to be fit for purpose. The Group has been involved in discussions with the QAFRG about its work. This was a two stage process based on recommendations from the Better Regulation Task Force: (i) review of QAA institutional audit methodology; and (ii) examination of utility of teaching quality information (TQI) and national student survey (NSS).

3.6.2 Following the QAFRG's report and recommendations published in July 2005, the QAA revised its audit method to take account of the recommendations as far as possible. In particular, discipline audit trails, which had caused concern in institutions as causing burden and not being value for money, were no longer included.

3.7 Health & Safety

3.7.1 HERRG members had expressed concern at the increasing burden of health and safety regulations on HEIs, coupled with a feeling that HSE could do more to consult with the HE sector. HSE representatives met HERRG and suggested the difficulty, to some extent, was caused by HEIs misinterpreting requests from the HSE and thus generating unnecessary burdens for themselves. The HSE's main interface with the sector is through the Higher Education Safety and Health Forum (HESH). This forum has recently been established to act as HSE's gateway to the sector, allowing for an exchange of views between HSE and HE. HERRG has suggested that the membership of HESH should include more representatives from HEIs who were actively involved with health and safety issues – in senior management positions, as well as at safety officer level. HERRG will discuss this with UCEA, their employers' association.

3.8 Review of Student Finance Delivery in England.

3.8.1 The HERRG has been involved in discussion with the DfES about the Review of Student Finance delivery, which was carried out with a view to recommending options for improvement. The review covered both arrangements for the delivery of Government financial support to HE students and its collection from borrowers. HERRG was invited to suggest whether these activities raised any issues.

3.8.1 HERRG commended DfES for consulting on the changes to student finance delivery and for involving them at an early stage in the policy-making process. The process was a model for how the gatekeeping responsibility should be fulfilled and should be recommended to HERRG's successor group.

3.9 The Charities Bill

3.9.1 Although the remit of HERRG encompasses the activities of all government departments, DfES is the one most tuned to HERRG'S objectives. When other Departments are involved – who may have more empathy for their own delivery partners - there seems to be less commitment to HERRG's mission to reduce bureaucracy for HEIs.

3.9.2 In its first year, HERRG devoted significant time to the Home Office's Charities Bill as it moved through Parliament. Despite an approach which aimed to minimise the bureaucratic impact on HE institutions of the requirement to comply with the proposed legislation and regular updates from officials in the Home Office, HERRG had to use its own contacts with Members of the House of Lords to get a public assurance from Ministers that the Regulations would allow HEFCE to accept auditors' assurances of compliance. The Bill then fell when the 2005 General Election was called and HERRG has assiduously followed the slow process of the Bill since its resurrection after the Election; a general assurance that the previous commitment would hold was given when the Bill was proposed and HERRG hopes that this will happen in practice when the Bill becomes law. It has been planning detailed discussions with HEFCE to ensure this once the Bill is close to becoming

law; that remains the situation at the end of its second year.

3.10 The Housing Act 2004 and the Student Accommodation Code of Practice

- 3.10.1** Even more problematic for HERRG – and, potentially for bureaucratic impact on HEIs – was the approach of the ODPM (now the Department for Communities and Local Government, DCLG) toward developing a Code of Practice (CoP) to cover university-managed student accommodation following the 2004 Housing Act. ODPM initially intended to exempt student accommodation from the licensing provisions for “houses of multiple occupancy”, but under pressure during the Bill’s passage through Parliament, in particular from Shelter, NUS and Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, these controls were extended to student accommodation. It is a pity that neither the representative bodies for HEIs nor universities themselves were able to make any significant attempt to influence this legislation before it became law, since ODPM subsequently felt obliged to support a regulatory approach, once Parliament had decided to include Universities.
- 3.10.2** The Act did, however, make provision for the exception of university student accommodation covered by a Code of Management practice approved by the Minister. Several different Codes were drafted to cover different circumstances, including two for university-managed accommodation - one by ANUK (Accreditation Network UK) and a more straightforward and flexible one by Universities UK. HERRG was not consulted, but became involved toward the end of the process when it became aware of the proposed Codes and saw them as too bureaucratic and costly, apparently requiring new inspection processes to monitor compliance. ODPM seemed to believe that “self-regulation” by HEIs meant the sector had to establish its own formal regulatory mechanisms, rather than HERRG’s – and the universities’ definition – that it should be accepted that institutions are complying until there is evidence to the contrary. With HERRG’s support, UUK was encouraged to develop a Code which enables Universities to ensure they meet the legislation’s requirements without a significant bureaucratic burden and, eventually, ODPM was persuaded to accept this Code as meeting the Act’s requirements.
- 3.10.3** Most if not all Universities aim to provide good quality accommodation for their students without any need for legislation – indeed, as surveys of students and potential students demonstrate, to do otherwise would be foolish in an increasingly “customer-led” market. Students themselves want good accommodation, but they are also aware of the economics, since University-managed student accommodation is managed on a non-profit basis. Increased costs of management are passed on to students in higher rents. Most HEIs have completely open discussions with their student unions about accommodation running costs and process and there is a great deal of joint decision-making in determining what improvements should be made to accommodation. Legislation aimed at “rogue landlords” in the private sector should not impose expensive and unnecessary burden on HEIs and the relevant Government Department ought to

understand this.

3.10.4 However, in formally approving the UUK CoP, ODPM said approval was conditional on “further development” of the UUK Code; it implied the CoP needed to be tightened and ODPM expected its convergence with the far more prescriptive and bureaucratic ANUK Code into a single Code “within three years”. HERRG will clearly need to continue to be involved in this issue to ensure that DCLG does not use this legislation to impose unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy on universities and colleges. HERRG believes it is vital for DCLG to accept its guiding principles for regulation – that all HEIs are well managed and run and should therefore be trusted to comply with legislation, with their own internal accountability arrangements processes ensuring they do, unless and until there is evidence to the contrary in relation to individual institutions; external regulation is only appropriate where there is concrete evidence of widespread infraction or if the immediate effect of failure to comply is so serious that the total impact cost of regulation is significantly exceeded by the value of the benefits that would result.

3.11 Leadership Governance and Management (LGM)

3.11.1 The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) was established to improve LGM in universities and HEFCE provides funding to the LF for this purpose, yet HEFCE continues to have its own funding stream for LGM activities, with both bodies utilising funds of around £10m each. HERRG investigated this apparent duplication several times during the year. Although HEFCE tried to provide a rational explanation for this situation, it does seem to HERRG that interfering in this quasi-managerial way is an odd task for HEFCE and yet another example of mission drift beyond their core role of allocating funding. While there may have been a need for HEFCE to promote improvement across the whole sector in the past, this is no longer true and a risk-based approach would mean them focusing only on those institutions that demonstrate the need for external support.

3.11.2 HERRG was clear that any overlap in responsibility for training in the LGM area should certainly end, while responsibility for determining what is actually needed ought to be the responsibility of individual institutions - and where development and provision beyond the institution is appropriate, it ought to be the sector’s own responsibility, for example through UUK or the LFHE. The Group offered comments on this overlap in activities to the review of the Foundation conducted by Oakleigh Consulting carried out in Spring 2006.

3.11.3 The Report found there was now little duplication in practice between HEFCE and LFHE, but reflected concern that presentationally the continued operation of the HEFCE LGM fund might be seen as undermining the work of the LFHE. They have therefore made recommendations to improve communications between HEFCE and LFHE and for them to work more closely together where their objectives overlap, to ensure clarity in their respective responsibilities and eradicate any duplication. We recommend that progress is reviewed by HERRG.

3.12 Input on HEFCE Strategic Plan 2006-11

3.12.1 The HERRG has been involved in useful discussions with HEFCE on plans for its strategic plan 2006 -2011. The Group proposed that HEFCE had a clear statement in its strategic plan about its intention to move to a risk based approach to accountability. This was key to reducing burdensome regulation for well-run institutions.

3.13 Sustainability

3.13.1 The HERRG has been involved in discussions with HEFCE about its Sustainability Action plan. The Group was concerned that HEFCE's plans were far too broad and sought to interfere in areas which should be the sole concern of the management in HEIs (many of whom are, after all, at the forefront of the nation's response to the environmental challenges we face). If HEFCE were to be seen as responsible for sustainability in HE in the widest sense that would take it much into territory that institutions see as rightfully theirs, with scope for considerable unnecessary extra intervention.

3.14 Quality Assurance Framework on Healthcare Education

3.14.1 HERRG has been involved throughout the year in discussions with Skills for Health, who have delegated responsibility from the Department of Health for developing a quality assurance framework for all healthcare education. The framework has to cover both educational institutions and clinical practice providers and it is clearly essential it is effective in providing assurance that successful students are fit to practice. But it is also a very complex area, involving a large number of government agencies and many independent professional bodies, with the inevitable potential for overlap, duplication and, too often, rivalry.

3.14.2 The Group became increasingly concerned with the lengthening timescale for completing the framework and, more importantly, that the objectives of producing a simplified, more rational and less burdensome process may not be met. HERRG has engaged with Skills for Health's Education Partnership and hopes that the appointment of an independent chair this autumn will provide a focus and impetus to get the process back on track, but the successor group will need to carefully monitor developments. We also believe that the Department of Health need to be more active in encouraging faster progress and monitoring that this is being achieved.

3.15 Other issues

3.15.1 Over its two years, HERRG carried out its gatekeeper function by considering a wide range of proposals, issues or developments affecting HE institutions. A summary of other important issues considered during the first year's work is contained in Annex 4 of our first report⁴ and in Annex 2 below for our second year's work.

3.16 Conclusion

3.16.1 While much was achieved over two years, this Final report undoubtedly demonstrates that a challenging agenda remains for our successor Group to take forward, alongside its focus on implementing and extending the Higher Education Concordat. Our recommendations also provide challenges for Government Departments – not just DfES – and their Agencies; we hope Government will rise to these challenges, accept our recommendations in full and then ensure they are acted upon.

⁴ "Less regulated: more accountable" HERRG's Initial Report, 2005
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/HERRG_Annual_Report_2005.pdf

ANNEX 1

The HE Concordat on quality assurance arrangements and data collection

1. The Higher Education Concordat was launched in May 2006, with 16 initial signatories, although more are likely to follow in the future. The Concordat is focused on quality assurance arrangements and data collection, and is based on the general principle that good regulation is proportionate, consistent, transparent, targeted and accountable. Best practice in management and governance within autonomous higher education institutions is to be encouraged and supported. Unnecessary burdens from external bureaucracy and regulation should be reduced.
2. The key principle relating to data collection is that an institution's achievements and the value for money that it provides are demonstrated by its performance against output indicators, based on reliable, timely, transparent data. Signatory bodies are committed to collect the data which they reasonably require about higher education institutions in the least onerous way possible. They accept the general principle that data should be collected once and used many times.
3. The key principle relating to quality assurance is that an institution demonstrates its commitment to quality and standards through a culture of continuous improvement based on institutional values and the skills and attitudes of its staff. These are underpinned by the effective use of the systems and structures that it puts in place to assure and enhance the programmes of study and the learning which it provides. Signatory bodies are committed to assessing quality and standards in a co-ordinated and appropriate manner. Intervention from external agencies should be demonstrably risk-based – targeted on the weakest institutions.
4. Clearly some general principles alone, well-intentioned though they may be, are not enough to drive this agenda forward, and to make the signatory bodies accountable. Each signatory has therefore submitted an Annex which goes far beyond a mere statement that they will follow these principles. The Annexes set out where the various signatories are currently placed in terms of following the principles, what obstacles they are facing, and what steps they plan to take to overcome these obstacles. Signatories will be required to account for their progress against the plans set out in these Annexes and each will then be expected to commit to further simplification in future years. This process of monitoring and enforcement should ensure that the Concordat makes a genuine difference to higher education institutions.

The Concordat and annexes can be found at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/HE%20CONCORDAT.pdf> or for hard copies contact HERRG Secretariat on 020 7925 6814.

ANNEX 2

The Gatekeeper role

A key part of HERRG's remit was its "gatekeeper function," designed to ensure any forthcoming policy or legislative proposal which would affect the HE sector (from whatever source – Government Department, funding body or other agency) does not add to the bureaucratic burden of regulation or accountability.

The group considered and commented on a wide range of topics during its second year, including the following.

Bologna process

1. Bologna was launched in 1999 when 29 European countries signed the declaration to form the European Higher Education Area by 2010, with the creation of a common two cycle system (Bachelors and Masters) and, among other things, greater use of credits. There are now 45 signatory countries.
2. Of particular concern for its potential bureaucracy was the establishment of a European Quality Assurance System, especially around subject accreditation. At the Bergen summit in 2005 it was agreed that standards and guidelines would be set to allow autonomy and flexibility. The main challenges ahead for the UK are:
3. Continuing to widen and deepen the engagement of individual HEIs with the Bologna process;
4. Elaborating a national qualifications framework – this is being taken forward by QAA;
5. Developing a national system of credit arrangements – following the consultation on national credit arrangements, the Burgess Group considered the responses to the exercise, and developed proposals that have been put to the sector for further consultation. The final report of the Group will be published by September 2006, and it is envisaged that it will recommend the development of an English credit framework.
6. Promoting outward UK student mobility.
7. HERRG has been consulted at regular points in the Bologna process.

Survey of the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE)

8. The HERRG has commented on the DLHE survey, which provided useful information but was an onerous exercise for HEIs. HERRG endorsed a number of recommendations for change developed by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) which were discussed with HESA. HERRG was involved in meetings to discuss ways in which the burden could be reduced. These included:

reducing the response rate target from 80% to 60%; using an online questionnaire; establishing a case-by-case agreement to eliminate multiple surveys; and reducing the scope of the questionnaire so that only essential questions were being asked. HERRG suggested further that the survey could be conducted every two years (rather than annually); that it could be conducted at a later date after graduation (although the Group recognised this might unduly affect response rates); and that the survey, or at least the contacting of graduates, could be undertaken by the Inland Revenue or the Student Loans Company.

Full Economic Costing

9. Implementation of the full economic cost (FEC) funding model is an important part of the Government's goal to achieve a sustainable research base in UK universities and other public sector research providers. The FEC approach should improve the management of research in HEIs by improving the costing, pricing and funding of research projects, and assist in putting the UK research base onto a sustainable footing.
10. Research Councils are working to implement the FEC funding model for research. The Councils' common grant terms and conditions and application forms have been revised in accordance with Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology. Consultants have undertaken a regulatory impact report on TRAC, which was submitted to HERRG and HERRG has had discussions on this issue with both Research Councils UK and the DTI.

Post Qualification Applications (to Higher Education)

11. The HERRG has been involved in discussions about the Department's consultation on a post-qualification application process and considered the Government's conclusions and response. The Group commented on the detailed arrangements for PQA, which will cover the whole UK and be developed by a sector-led Delivery Partnership of stakeholders, including representatives from higher and further education, schools, and other interested stakeholders. The group was concerned that reduction of bureaucracy could easily become lost amongst such a wide range of potentially conflicting requirements, interests and concerns.
12. The Group recommended that measures should be in place to ensure the Delivery Partnership's task is clearly defined and that as a specific requirement they should ensure that the arrangements they agree to introduce should minimise any administrative burdens. They should liaise with the relevant gatekeeper groups during their work to help ensure this is the case. The Minister has acknowledged the reduction of administrative burdens was an underlying principle of the proposals and agreed to ensure HERRG and its sister groups are informed of progress.

Burgess group consideration of degree classification and credit framework

13. The Burgess Steering Group conducted a consultation in September 2005 on their proposed model for change. Whilst the proposals on credit transfer were broadly acceptable, the work on degree classification was less favourably received by the sector. There were considerable reservations about the model for change in degree classification that was put forward by the Burgess Group. As a result, the Burgess Group has undertaken further research, and will be issuing a second consultation in September 2006.
14. The initial consultation on the development of advisory guidelines for a credit framework in England was well received, resulting in the Burgess Group developing their proposals further. It is envisaged that the framework will form part of the QAA's academic infrastructure. The final report of the Burgess Group will be published by September 2006.
15. HERRG took an active role in both consultation exercises. In addition to submitting written comments, HERRG members met Professor Burgess to discuss both consultation exercises and were able to provide a valuable input into the process.

Langlands review – gateways to the professions

16. The Langlands review examined the “gateways” into the professions. Its report recommending action that could be taken by employers’ organisations to provide clear accessible gateways for all graduates who want to pursue a career in the professions was published on 2 November, together with the Government’s response. HERRG is being consulted as these policies are being implemented. Although it does not appear that there would be a burden placed on HEIs, HERRG have suggested that it is important for DfES to work with HEFCE in order to ensure the maximum impact on access of all the associated project work.

HEFCE bidding processes

17. The HEFCE process for bids to establish new dental schools was discussed by HERRG, to consider whether there might be broader lessons to be drawn about HEFCE bidding processes. HERRG asked HEFCE for their views, and have been assured that HEFCE are mindful of the need to avoid HEIs spending unnecessary time and money on bidding competitions where they have little or no chance of success.

Reporting on the attendance of Governors

18. HERRG was asked to look at the issue of HEFCE requiring HEIs to report in the Corporate Governance Statement on the attendance of individual governors. The Group investigated the matter further and clarified that, although this is a direction, it does not say that universities must obey the code. The code is simply best practice. The Group came to a general consensus that this was something that

governing bodies should publish, but that it was a matter for individual governing bodies; regulation was not appropriate here. Each HEI should be responsible for its own governance arrangements. Publication of governors' attendance should represent good practice, but be a voluntary undertaking.

HESA Consultation on Student Record

19. The HERRG has been involved in discussions about the activities of the Student Record Review Group (comprising HESA, DfES, HEFCE, representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) about specific new data requirements. This seems likely to lead to the collection of new data, which is needed by DfES for strategic purposes. Internal discussions are taking place within DfES to ensure these new demands will be limited to the essential requirements and that the benefits of the additional burden are greater than its costs. The group will also ensure the proposals are in line with the Concordat principles and will consult HERRG as the proposals are developed.

Equality legislation

20. Following the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Amendment in 2001 to the Race Relations Act 1976, a positive duty to promote equality for people with disabilities has been passed by Parliament and will be implemented in December 2006. HERRG has had discussions with the Disability Rights Commission to ensure guidance provided to HE is straightforward and flexible, rather than prescriptive and burdensome.
21. A similar public sector duty in respect of gender is currently before Parliament, and is expected to come into effect in April 2007. The legislation will lay a general statutory duty upon all public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
22. The Equal Opportunities Commission is responsible for overseeing the introduction of the gender duty, and is preparing guidance on the implementation of the duty. Draft guidance will be issued in Summer 2006; HERRG has been involved in discussions with the DTI from the early stages of developing this guidance and will comment on it when it is published, with a view to ensuring that it does not impose undue burdens on HEIs.
23. HERRG was also concerned that the data collection requirements for "atypical staff" apparently resulting from the Race Relations Amendment Act were excessive in relation to the need to demonstrate compliance with the legislation and has discussed this with both the CRE and HEFCE. We remain convinced that more proportionate methods of ensuring fairness for such staff are possible.

Corporation Tax

24. HERRG was made aware that proposed changes to Corporation Tax during 2006 may lead to a significant increase in administrative work for HEIs to comply with

the law, without affecting their taxation position. The proposals were made in order to deal with potential abuses elsewhere in the charity sector, without any suggestion from HMRC of abuse by the HE sector of its charitable tax privileges and is a further example of the additional burden and costs for HEIs that can unwittingly result from legislation not aimed at them. HERRG was continuing to monitor discussions between the sector and HMRC and remains ready to intervene if necessary.

ANNEX 3

Membership of the Higher Education Regulation Review Group, 2005-06

Dame Patricia Hodgson **Chair**

She began her career as a producer and journalist, later becoming Director of Policy & Planning at the BBC from 1993 to 2000 and then Chief Executive of the Independent Television Commission until 2004. Patricia is now Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, taking up her post in August 2006. She is a member of the Board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England and a Governor of the Wellcome Trust; she is a non-executive director of the Competition Commission and a Member of the Commission on Standards in Public Life.

Jonathan Baldwin **Registrar, University of Warwick (since May 2004)**

Prior to Warwick was Secretary and Registrar at UMIST (2000-2004) and previously was Registrar at University of Wolverhampton for 5 years. He is President of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA), an Executive Member of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) and a member of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium Board.

Julian Nicholds **Vice-President (Education), National Union of Students**

Julian was elected as Vice-President (Education) in 2005.

Ruth Farwell **Director and Chief Executive Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College**

Previously Pro Vice Chancellor, London South Bank University (2002-2005), Dean of Academic Affairs at South Bank (1998-2002) before that Ruth held a number of head of department level posts at the University of Brighton, the most recent being Head of Strategic Planning. She has a PhD in applied mathematics from the University of Kent and held a research fellowship at Imperial College, London for two years in the early eighties. This was followed by a lecturership in mathematics at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, where she became Head of the Department of Mathematics. She served two terms as governor at Worthing Sixth Form College between 1997 and 2005 and was Chair for six years

Ron Haylock **Chairman of the Council, University of Nottingham (1997-2004)**

Ron was Chair of the Committee of University Chairmen (2001-2004) and a founder Board member of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. He holds a number of non-executive director appointments in the travel & tourism sector, and is a governor of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and the Perse School Cambridge, and Chairman of international conservation charity Fauna & Flora International.

David Holmes

Registrar, University of Oxford and Professorial Fellow of St John's College (1998-2006)

David was also an Honorary Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. Prior to this he was Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham (1988-98), Academic Secretary and Deputy Registrar, University of Liverpool (1982 -88) and before that held a variety of administrative posts at the University of Warwick and a secondment to the University of Sheffield. He was Chairman of the Organising Committee for International Meetings for Administrators until January 2003 and Chairman of the UK Association of University Administrators Planning Forum (1993-95). Was a member of the National Committee of Inquiry (Dearing) into Higher Education's Working Group on Staff and Cost Effectiveness, 1996-97 and is currently a member of the national advisory committee on clinical academic employment matters.

Steve Igoe

Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources), Edge Hill University

Steve is currently a member of the steering group advising HEFCE on the Accountability Framework for Higher Education and a member of the group reviewing TRAC for teaching; he is also a Board member of an acute NHS trust, a member of the workforce advisory board of a local Primary Care trust and trustee of a charity providing respiratory training courses for healthcare professionals.

John Lauwerys

Secretary and Registrar, University of Southampton (since 1992)

Prior to his present appointment, John was Secretary and Registrar at Royal Holloway, University of London (1988-92), Bursar of the London School of Economics (1985-1987) and previously held a variety of administration posts at Imperial College, Goldsmiths and the Central Offices of the University of London. He is Chair of the Russell Group Universities' Registrars' Group and was a member of the HE Information Management Taskforce and of the former Joint Funding Council's VFM Steering Group.

Dugald Mackie

Vice-Principal, University of Manchester

Prior to this Dugald was Registrar and Secretary, University of Manchester from April 2004 to December 2005, Secretary and Head of Administration at the University of Glasgow 1996-2004. He was Secretary and Director of Financial/Admin services at SHEFC (1992-96). He is a board member of the Big Lottery Fund.

Sally Neocosmos

Registrar and Secretary, University of York

Prior to joining York in 2003, Sally was CEO of HESDA (2002-03), seconded to the DfES as the Team Leader for the HE Quality Team (2000-01) and University Secretary at Sheffield Hallam University (1987-2001). In 1995-96 and 1998 she contributed to the work of the South African National Commission on Higher Education. She was the first elected Chair of the Association of University Administrators (AUA).

Michael Pearson Bursar and Finance Officer, Loughborough University (since 1990)

Michael is the former Chair of the British Universities' Finance Directors' Group, board member of UCAS and of an FE college.

Maxine Penlington Secretary and Registrar, University of Central England (since 1992),

Maxine had been Registrar from 1989 and prior to that was Acting Academic Secretary, City of London Polytechnic (1987-1989). She is also a Board member of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and was an FE college governor from 1992 to 2004, serving as Chair from 1995.

Punita Goodfellow Acting Deputy Director, Cabinet Office Better Regulation Executive
[as an observer]

Punita was responsible for public services regulation issues at the BRE; before that she worked in the DfES. She left HERRG towards the end of the year and joined the Treasury.

ANNEX 4

Glossary

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
AHUA	Association of Heads of University Administration
ANUK	Accreditation Network UK
AUA	Association of University Administrators
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
BME	Black & Minority Ethnic Communities
BRE	Better Regulation Executive
BRG	Bureaucracy Reduction Group
BRRG	Better Regulation Review Group
BRTF	Better Regulation Task Force
CIHE	Council for Industry and Higher Education
CoP	Code of Practice
CMU	Campaigning for Mainstream Universities
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CUC	Committee of University Chairmen
DAT	Discipline Audit Trail (as a part of Institutional Audit)
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DES	Disability Equality Statement
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DLHE	Destination of Leavers in Higher Education
DoH	Department of Health
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
DTI	Department for Trade in Industry
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
FEC	Full economic costing
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
HERRG	Higher Education Regulation Review Group
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HESDA	Higher Education Staff Development Agency
HESES	Higher Education Early Statistics Survey
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HESH	Higher Education Safety & Health Forum
ISR	Individual Student Record
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LFHE	Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
LGM	Leadership, governance and management

NAO	National Audit Office
NSS	National Student Survey
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OST	Office of Science and Technology
PSRB	Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies
PQA	Post Qualification Applications
QA	Quality assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAF	Quality assurance framework
QAFRG	Quality Assurance Framework Review Group
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SCOP	Standing Conference of Principals
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
SRIF	The Science and Research Infrastructure Fund
TRAC	Transparent approach to costing
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
TQI	Teaching quality information
UCEA	University & College Employers Association
UUK	Universities UK
VFM	Value for Money

Further copies of this report may be obtained from:

HERRG Secreteriat

DfES

1E

Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

email: HERRG.sec@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

tel: 020 7925 6814