A TEC Manager’s Guide to Higher Education

Department for Education and Employment

Preface

Partnership between TECs and higher education institutions can play a vital part in the competitiveness of firms and the regeneration of local economies. HE institutions are major employers and investors as well as providers of education and training, research and consultancy. However, partnership is often limited by lack of understanding on both sides. Higher education is a complex and rapidly changing world, and TEC managers have to cope with many demands on their time.

In the last few years we have made progress. Most TECs now have strategic plans for working with higher education. Universities and Colleges of HE are involved in strategic fora, in projects to achieve the National Targets, to combat graduate unemployment or to provide high level skills and technology transfer to small firms. 40% of higher education institutions now include links with TECs in their strategic plans, and a growing proportion identify the development of their local and regional mission as a strategic priority.

This Guide has been prepared by a joint working group of the TEC National Council and the DfEE’s Higher Education and Employment Division, in consultation with staff from a range of TECs and HEIs. It aims to help all TEC managers to understand how higher education, its institutions and services, work, and how they can best work with it. We hope that it will make for a better informed, and more productive, dialogue.

In an economy where high skills and knowledge are increasingly important to business success, higher education will be vital. This guide is an important step towards making that partnership a reality.

Chris Humphries  
TEC National Council

Why this guide?

TECs and HEIs have many common aims. However, lack of understanding of each others’ cultures, organisation and ways of working often prevents them from developing their full potential. This guide seeks to provide support for TEC managers, to help them to understand the common interests and differences, to offer examples of approaches which have worked and provide a reference source on HE in England and Wales in the mid 1990s.

Who should use it?

The Guide is written for all managers in TECs, especially those with remits for economic regeneration, education, innovation, and business support. It is not simply for people designated as “Education Manager”: because HEIs do many things besides teaching students, their work relates to most areas of TEC work, while TECs vary in their own internal organisation and job titles.

How to use this Guide

The Guide is not designed to be read from beginning to end, although those new to working with higher education may wish to do this. Other readers will want to use it in different ways. If you are:

A **TEC Board Member** wishing to know why your TEC should work with HE, Section 1 *An Outline for Board Members,* will be helpful.

Interested in **current development** on specific topics (e.g. recording achievement), turn to sections 3 and 4.

**Developing a local HE strategy,** you may wish to read section 5 and work through the checklists in section 6.

Seeking **specific information,** the table of contents will point you to specific sections. You may also find the lists of key reports and relevant organisations in sections 10 and 12 useful.

Seeking **information on particular projects** and development programmes, turn to the outline of development initiatives in section 11.

Seeking **examples of good practice** in TEC/HE work, turn to the case studies in section 7.

Seeking **relevant reading,** key documents on specific topics or policy or practice are listed with brief notes in section 9.

Sections 8 and 9 have been provided for you to insert your own material about your area and local institutions, and relevant material from other sources as it appears.

The Guide is concerned mainly with HE institutions, rather than those forms of higher education which are delivered through FE Colleges. Although the latter are important, TECs already have established links with FE institutions, and HE and FE institutions can be very different in structure and culture. The Guide is written from an English standpoint, although most (but not all) of what it says also applies in Wales. Most is not relevant to Scotland, whose higher education system and LECs are different in significant ways.

Updating

The Guide has been produced in loose leaf format to allow users to insert local material and additional documents which they find relevant or useful. It is also describing a rapidly changing world, and some detail is bound to be out of date before publication. If users find material which is inaccurate, or wish to suggest additional material for inclusion in updating sheets they should send them to Policy Section, HEED, N4, Moorfoot, Sheffield, S1 4PQ, or email stephen@niace.org.uk.

The Guide has been prepared by a joint working group convened by the TEC National Council and the Higher Education and Employment Division of DfEE and was written in consultation with the HE Funding Council for England and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals.

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Contents

1. An Outline for TEC Board Members

2. Why be interested in higher education

2.1 Strategic Partnerships

2.1.1 Shared Objectives

2.1.2 The Economic role of HEIs

2.1.3 Understanding the local economy and community

2.2 Access, Participation and Progression

2.2.1 Raising awareness of HE

2.2.2 Extending access and progression

2.2.3 Using G/NVQs for access

2.2.4 Strengthening careers education and guidance

2.2.5 Extending Recording of Achievement

2.2.6 Promoting Equal Opportunities

2.3 Supporting Business and Generating Companies

2.3.1 Strengthening Business Link

2.3.2 Bringing new ideas and perspectives to firms

2.3.3 Increasing graduate entry to SMEs

2.3.4 Collaborating on research and development

2.4 Curriculum Relevance and Qualifications

2.4.1 Achieving the National Targets

2.4.2 Making the curriculum relevant to work

2.4.3 Giving students experience of work

2.4.4 Embedding G/NVQs in higher education programmes

2.4.5 Developing work related quality criteria

2.4.6 Embedding Key Skills in HE

2.5 Infrastructures and Human Resources

2.5.1 Raising skill levels

2.5.2 Updating skills

2.5.3 Reducing unemployment

2.5.4 Building community capacity

2.5.5 Attracting highly skilled people

2.5.6 Supporting Investors in People and learning organisations

2.5.7 Recruiting and retaining graduates

2.6 National and International Links

2.6.1 Developing national and international links

2.6.2 International Students

2.6.3 Attracting funding

3. What higher education contributes

3.1 Strategic Partnership

3.2 Access, Participation and Progression

3.2.1 Access Courses

3.2.2 Admissions

3.2.3 Widening provision

3.2.4 Credit accumulation and transfer

3.2.5 Accelerated and Intensive Degrees

3.2.6 Guidance and tutoring

3.2.7 Recording achievement

3.3 Supporting Business and Generating Companies

3.3.1 Developing knowledge

3.3.2 University Companies

3.3.3 Science Parks

3.3.4 Workbased learning

3.3.5 Placements and live projects

3.3.6 Preparation for employment

3.3.7 Technology transfer - placement and Teaching Companies

3.3.8 HE and SMEs

3.4 Curriculum Relevance

3.4.1 Developing skills

3.4.2 NVQs

3.4.3 Qualifications

3.4.4 Individual centred learning

3.4.5 Enterprise in Higher Education

3.5 Infrastructure and Human Resources

3.5.1 Universities as employers

3.5.2 Cultural and social contribution

3.5.3 Teacher education

3.5.4 Using HE knowledge bases

3.6 Building international networks

4. Some key facts about higher education

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The Purposes of Higher Education

4.1.2 Values

4.1.3 A Diverse System

4.1.4 An Expanding System

4.1.5 Historical Background

4.1.6 Regionalisation

4.1.7 Lifetime Learning and continuing education

4.1.8 The Relationship with Further Education

4.2 The Organisations

4.2.1 Strategic Planning

4.2.2 The Institutions

4.2.3 Governance

4.2.4 Management and Staff Roles

4.2.5 Staff

4.3 Funding

4.3.1 Funding of institutions

4.3.2 Funding learners

4.4 Curriculum

4.4.1 Qualifications

4.4.2 Awards

4.4.3 Modularisation

4.4.4 Open and Flexible Learning

4.4.5 Technology in teaching and learning

4.5 Quality

4.5.1 The Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC)

4.5.2 The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE)

4.5.3 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

4.6 Research

4.7 Students

4.7.1 Types of student

4.7.2 Expansion

4.7.3 Part-time students

4.7.4 Mature students

4.7.5 Women

4.7.6 Ethnic minorities

4.7.7 International Students

4.7.8 Postgraduates and Post-Experience Students

4.7.9 Students in FE Colleges

4.8 Graduate Employment

4.9 International Comparisons and Links

5. Ways of Working Together

5.1 Time Cycles and Value Systems

5.2 Making Contact

5.3 Geographical Factors

5.4 Mechanisms for Collaboration

5.5 Designing Strategies

5.6 Influencing Curriculum

5.7 Steering and Advisory Groups

5.8 Funding Relationships

6. Checklists

6.1.1 Strategic Issues

6.1.2 Access

6.1.3 Business Support

6.1.4 Infrastructures and Human Resource

6.1.5 Curriculum Relevance and Qualifications

6.1.6 National and International Links

6.1.7 Building Institutional Profiles

7. Case studies and Models

8. TECs and HE in your region

9. Useful documents

10. Key reports

10.1 Strategic Issues

10.2 Access, Participation and Progression

10.3 Business Support

10.4 Infrastructure and Human Resources

10.5 Curriculum Relevance

10.6 Statistics

10.7 Relevant Journals and Publications

11. Programmes and Initiatives

11.1 DfEE Programmes

11.1.1 Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE)

11.1.2 Credit and Learning Outcomes (CLEO)

11.1.3 Guidance and Learner Autonomy (GALA)

11.1.4 Work Based Learning (WBL)

11.1.5 Discipline networks

11.1.6 Using graduate skills (UGS)

11.1.7 Career management skills (CMS)

11.1.8 Higher Education business partnerships (HEBP)

11.1.9 Key Skills

11.1.10 Partnership with graduates

11.2 HEFCE Programmes

11.2.1 Accelerated and Intensive Studies Programme (AIRS)

11.2.2 Computers in Teaching Initiative (CTI)

11.2.3 Continuing Vocational Education (CVE)

11.2.4 Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL)

11.2.5 Non-Award Bearing Continuing Education (NABCE)

11.2.6 Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP)

11.3 European Programmes

11.3.1 European Social Fund

11.3.2 Leonardo

11.3.3 Socrates

11.4 Other Government Programmes

11.4.1 Technology Foresight

11.4.2 Teaching Company Scheme

11.5 Other Programmes

11.5.1 Former Employment Department Programmes

11.5.2 Shell Technology Enterprise Programme

11.5.3 Year in Industry

12. National Organisations

13. Institutional Profiles

14. Glossary

# An Outline for TEC Board Members

Shared Purposes

TECs and higher education institutions (HEIs) have many aims and purposes in common. Both seek to encourage a wide range of people to engage in learning and to develop the skills and knowledge base of local and regional communities. HEIs can contribute in many ways to regional and national competitiveness and regeneration and TECs can help HEIs to work more closely with employers and local communities. Well- managed partnerships thus offer great potential benefits to both TECs and HEIs.

Developing Partnerships

There is clear evidence that relationships are strengthening. Most TECs now have strategic plans for work with HE, and 40% of HEIs identify links with TECs as part of their contribution to regional economic development, for the co-ordination of vocational education and the development of relationships with SMEs. In 1996 regional collaboration was one of the three major areas of development identified by HEIs in their strategic plans, alongside the development of teaching and learning and research quality.

There is much goodwill on both sides, but progress has often been slow. TECs and HEIs are very different in scale, structures and cultures. Every TEC and every HE institution is different, and lack of understanding on both sides often prevents people from making the best use of resources and opportunities. The *TEC Manager’s Guide to Higher Education* aims to help to overcome this, by providing a basic guide to how higher education works in England and how its activities and purposes relate to those of TEC Managers.

The Role of Higher Education Institutions

HEIs are major forces in their regions. In some TEC areas the university is the largest employer, bringing substantial inflows of resources through the jobs which it creates and the spending power of their staff and students. Nationally the HE system spends over £8 billion a year and a large university probably injects more than £100 million a year into its local economy, with an impact on a wide range of local services, the housing market, transport etc. Between 1996 and 2000 the sector plans to spend £2.6 billion on major building projects, and 40 institutions plan building developments priced at over £30 million each.

A Changing Higher Education

Higher education has been changing very rapidly, and most universities have been transformed in recent years. Those who experienced university in the 1960s and 1970s often do not fully appreciate how very different higher education now is. Compared with the early 1980s British higher education is now:

Larger many institutions have doubled in size in a decade,

More diverse there are 212 higher education institutions, ranging in size from a few hundred students to over 20,000 (leaving aside the Open University, with over 100,000). The balance between full and part time students, and between young entrants and mature ones varies very widely, as does the number and range of subjects offered.

More mature in the system as a whole more than half of all students are now mature (over 21 when they enter), although in many institutions the large majority are still full-time students between 18 and 22.

More advanced there has been a rapid expansion of postgraduate and post-experience education

More workbased there has been a growth in workbased learning, both of full time students undertaking placements, and of employees undertaking accredited HE programmes in the workplace

although full time students are eligible for grants and loans, the value of these has declined in real terms, and a large proportion of students now have part time jobs

More regional an increasing proportion of students are choosing, for financial reasons among others, to study in their home region rather than going to another part of the country. This is likely to accelerate as the proportion of mature students increases.

More technological Britain is a world leader in the application of technology to learning in HE, with all institutions networked and extensive programmes to develop learning materials and access to databases etc.

Successful Partnership

Successful collaboration between TECs and HE institutions depends on both parties recognising the strength of their common interests and the proper differences of culture and tradition. HE institutions are large, relatively slow to change and with a very strong commitment to academic values and autonomy. Most are governed primarily by consent rather than direction, and individual staff and departments have considerable independence. While Government controls the size of public funding (which is the majority of funding in most institutions) it does not control the curriculum, examinations or organisational structures. TECs, on the other hand, are relatively small and new organisations, created to cope with rapid change. They are accustomed to working quickly to objectives often set by Government.

Both organisations are learning to cope with the needs of the emerging learning society and learning organisations. HE institutions are learning to become more flexible and responsive and TECs are learning to become more strategic and collaborative.

Areas for Collaboration

There are six broad areas in which TECs and HEIs can profitably work together:

Strategic partnerships - to involve HE institutions in strategic planning, as major employers and major contributors of knowledge and skills to the local economy

Access to learning, participation and progression   
- to ensure access and progression in learning for young people and adults throughout their lives

Support to business - to provide specialist skills and knowledge; contacts and networks (local, national and international); research; and the skills and knowledge of placement students

Curriculum relevance - to ensure that those entering the workforce from higher education (at whatever age - and most students are now mature) are well prepared to contribute quickly and effectively

- to ensure that those already in the workforce have the opportunity to continue to learn as the needs of their lives and work evolve over a lifetime

Infrastructures and human resource development  
 - to create a community which is economically and socially successful and which is attractive as a place to live and work

National and international links - to build effective links to support national and international trade for the local economy

Keys to Success

There are many examples of effective partnership between TECs and HEIs and where this happens it usually reflects:

* a strategic understanding of common priorities and agendas
* a long term relationship of trust at several levels, from senior management to individual academics and managers
* a commitment to partnership as well as contractual relationships

Finally, this is not only an issue for those TECs which have HE institutions in their immediate area. All TEC areas and all TECs can benefit from partnerships with HEIs. TECs will need links with the HEIs where their residents go to study and with those HEIs which specialise in technologies relevant to their local industrial base.

# Why be interested in higher education

TECs and HEIs have a number of central aims and purposes in common. Both are interested in encouraging a wide range of people to engage in learning and in developing and managing the skills and knowledge base of local and regional communities. Well managed partnerships offer great potential benefits to both TECs and HEIs[[1]](#footnote-1).

There is much goodwill on both sides, but progress has often been slow. TECs and HEIs are very different, in scale, structures and cultures, and lack of understanding on both sides often prevents people from making the best use of resources and opportunities. This handbook aims to help to overcome this, by providing a basic guide to how higher education works in England and how its activities and purposes relate to those of TEC managers.

TECs have both broad strategic aims and very specific objectives to achieve. Higher education can help with many of these. The handbook groups them under six broad headings (although there is inevitable overlap):

* Strategic Partnerships
* Access, Participation, Progression and Guidance
* Business Support
* Curriculum Relevance
* Infrastructure and Human Resource Development
* National and International.

## Strategic Partnerships

### Shared Objectives

The core concern of all TECs is the competitiveness of their local economies, and the contribution of the local economy to overall regional and national competitiveness. In this framework they have a particular commitment to:

* local economic development, and especially the development of its human resource base (in skills, knowledge and understanding).
* creating a culture of Lifetime Learning
* the regeneration and support of local businesses.

In pursuing these objectives the National Targets for Education and Training have a key role to play, and the development of partnership with a wide range of agencies and organisations locally is a central element of TEC strategies.

The Government’s policy paper on Lifetime Learning also identifies six priorities for action:

* investing in the training and development of employees
* gaining the commitment of individuals to continuing learning
* developing an infrastructure of information, advice and guidance
* improving access to learning
* developing effective partnerships.

HEIs can assist in achieving all of these objectives.

### The Economic role of HEIs

HEIs are major economic forces in all regions and in some TEC areas the university is the largest employer. They bring substantial inflows of resources through the jobs which they create and the spending power of their staff and students. Nationally the HE system spends over £8 billion a year, and a large university can spend £100 million. A large proportion of this is spent locally, with an impact on a wide range of local services, the housing market, transport etc. An increasing proportion of students are choosing, for financial reasons among others, to study in their home region rather than going to another part of the country. HEIs also undertake major capital projects within their area, and 65 institutions have current plans for building projects priced in the range from £15-100 million.

HEIs also contribute, through their staff, students and physical resources, to the development of the local and regional skills and knowledge base and to community capacity and cultural life.

### Understanding the local economy and community

TECs need reliable research on a host of issues, including their local economy, trends in technologies, employment patterns and international trade. Universities have departments and units devoted to such research, which often already hold substantial databases of relevant information. Some TECs contract with universities to carry out such research, others have collaborative arrangements of various kinds.

At the same time, HEIs can benefit in their forward planning from better information about trends in the local and regional economy, including labour market information to which TECs may have access.

## Access, Participation and Progression

### Raising awareness of HE

A major barrier to raising educational levels in some communities is the lack of any experience or understanding of what HE can offer. This applies particularly to schools and communities with no tradition of participation in HE. In such cases TECs may have an interest in promoting positive images of HE and supporting opportunities for individuals to experience taster activities, locally delivered programmes or open days and events. Some universities operate student tutoring schemes, where current students undertake placements in schools in such communities.

### Extending access and progression

The TEC priority to raise the skills and educational levels of the workforce and the local community calls for improved access to all forms of education, including HE. Most HEIs have been developing schemes and strategies to overcome barriers to access. These may include access courses, Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), access through GNVQ and Modern Apprenticeships. Access opportunities are also opened by partnerships between HE and FE institutions, including delivery of “franchised” parts of degree programmes in FE College premises. Many TECs and HE institutions are involved in the development of local and regional credit frameworks (often through Open College Networks) which make it possible to accumulate credit for HE entry from a variety of sources, including NVQs, learning in the workplace and the voluntary sector.

### Using G/NVQs for access

TECs are familiar with the operation of the NVQ system and are concerned to promote the use of NVQs and GNVQs generally. Although the principle of equivalence between GNVQs and A levels for entry to higher education is accepted, it can raise difficulties in practice and institutions may need advice and support in tackling this.

### Strengthening careers education and guidance

If the community is to make the best possible use of its human resources it needs a good and accessible careers guidance service, to act as a broker between individuals and employers at all levels and ages. The Careers Service Companies provide guidance about opportunities in higher education, while the Graduate Careers Advisory Services, based within HEIs, provide guidance to students and recent graduates (and sometimes staff) about career opportunities locally, nationally and internationally. TECs need good working links with both, to share expertise and refer clients. They may increasingly be involved in the development of local or regional partnerships in this field. Both have an interest in research to increase understanding of local labour markets and their needs for high level skills.

### Extending Recording of Achievement

TECs are seeking to expand and develop the processes of recording achievement throughout the education sector and the parallel processes of staff appraisal in the workplace are an integral element of the Investors in People programme. Although there is sometimes resistance to the use of the formal National Record in HEIs, the processes of reflective learning and practice are increasingly recognised in higher education and their development is important, for both students and staff.

### Promoting Equal Opportunities

The development and integration of minority groups and communities into the local economy is a priority for many TECs. Most HEIs have the development of Equal Opportunities as a priority and welcome the opportunity to collaborate, in order to raise expectations and overcome barriers. Most HEIs provide specific support for disabled students, while many undertake initiatives designed to widen access for disadvantaged groups or for black and ethnic minority students. Others seek explicitly to recruit women in subject areas traditionally dominated by men. Such initiatives include schemes to widen access, to create links with local groups and to offer role models to young people.

## Supporting Business and Generating Companies

### Strengthening Business Link

TECs are committed to the development of Business Link as a means of improving the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in their areas. Some HEIs are actively involved as formal partners in the local Business Link company and in at least one case both local Vice Chancellors are directors. In other cases a university has seconded a member of staff to work with Business Link on services related to higher education.

### Bringing new ideas and perspectives to firms

Firms can often benefit from the up to date knowledge, fresh perspectives and high level skills which individual students can offer. However, many HEIs have difficulty finding suitable work placements for students, especially in the less vocational disciplines. TECs are well placed to understand their local firms, especially SMEs, and to see opportunities for developing closer links to benefit firm and student.

### Increasing graduate entry to SMEs

TECs have an interest in the development of the SME sector locally and especially those parts of it with growth potential. As the graduate output of the higher education system expands, and many large firms downsize, a growing number of graduates are likely to seek employment in the SME sector. Collaboration between HEIs and TECs can lead to better matching of opportunities and talents, overcoming the natural suspicions and fears on both sides.

### Collaborating on research and development

The economies of many TEC areas depend on a limited range of key technologies and industries. Often local HEIs have departments with teaching and research specialisms in these areas. Sometimes the links are well developed and productive, through initiatives like the Teaching Company Scheme or Technology Transfer initiatives but this is not always the case. There can be situations where intervention by the TEC can strengthen collaboration and contribute to the development of a stronger local base, especially in areas where no single local firm has an immediate commercial interest.

## Curriculum Relevance and Qualifications

### Achieving the National Targets

HEIs can play an important part in achieving all three of the aims of the National Targets. Some have been actively involved in the creation and development of Employee Development schemes, as well as providing education and training programmes for their members. All have a concern to widen access, though this is a higher priority for some than others. All would share a concern with the development of self-reliance, flexibility and breadth, which have always been part of the notion of the graduate, although not always explicitly described or assessed.

In addition, first degrees are formally equivalent to Level 4 NVQs for the purposes of Lifetime Target 2, and these can be strengthened by approaches which incorporate NVQs within degree programmes, for example, through the assessment of work placements. HEIs can also contribute to Lifetime Target 3, as providers of training a consultancy to firms preparing for accreditation under Investors in People, and in their own right as large firms.

### Making the curriculum relevant to work

TECs have an interest in ensuring that the higher education curriculum helps to make graduates employable. HEIs vary in the strength of their focus on this, but there has been much development in this field in recent years, especially through the Enterprise in Higher Education programme. Key areas for collaboration include the embedding of personal transferable skills and Key Skills in HE programmes. TECs will also wish to ensure that avoidable barriers to access and progression between HE and other qualification systems are overcome.

### Giving students experience of work

A priority for many TECs is to ensure that students have an opportunity to develop work related skills in the course of their studies. Work placements, through “sandwich courses”, have always formed a central element of the more vocational degree programmes, but a much wider range of programmes now incorporates some form of placement. TECs may be able to help HEIs, which often have difficulty in finding and managing appropriate placements, especially with SMEs, although such placement can often be very valuable for both firm and student.

### Embedding G/NVQs in higher education programmes

HEIs are likely to be increasingly involved in NVQ delivery and assessment following the publication of the Government position paper on high level NVQs in late 1996. Some HEIs already incorporate units or elements of NVQs into their own qualifications (for the accrediting of work placements for example) so that graduates emerge with both a degree and parts of an NVQ. However, understanding of NVQs and GNVQs is not widespread in most HEIs, which could benefit from advice and support in developing these approaches.

### Developing work related quality criteria

Individual HEIs are responsible for their own quality assurance systems, which are subject to external audit (until March 1997 by the Higher Education Quality Council, and thereafter from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). TECs have an interest in ensuring that such local systems recognise employability and responsiveness to the local community.

### Embedding Key Skills in HE

Key Skills are important for all members of the workforce, including the highly skilled and educated. Although some elements of Key Skills have always been part of the idea of being a graduate, they have not traditionally been made explicit. TECs have an interest in helping HEIs to ensure that they are embedded in all programmes and are explicitly recognised and accredited.

## Infrastructures and Human Resources

### Raising skill levels

The maintenance of high level skills in the local economy is a priority for all TECs, and many have a formal high level skills strategy. Higher education can provide highly skilled graduates in specific areas as well as support for workbased learning for those already in the workforce. Because they have to keep up to date with the latest knowledge and research in their fields HEIs and their staff are a valuable source of current leading edge knowledge.

*The Skills Audit* identified technician level skills, rather than degree level ones as the highest priority in high level skills development, and Britain compares reasonably with most economic competitors in levels of degree level qualifications (NVQ levels 4 and 5 and their equivalents). Many such skills are developed in HEIs, through skills learned within degree programmes and through short courses and sub-degree programmes (of which HND and HNC remain major contributors). Studies of high level skill shortage continue to highlight special difficulties with engineers and managers.

### Updating skills

A clear priority for TECs is the development and promotion of programmes to update the skills and knowledge of the adult community, both those in work and those who might contemplate entering the workforce in the future. HEIs have traditionally offered a range of programmes, including community based and workplace courses, as well as updating and reorientation programmes on campus. In recent years these have become increasingly focused on specific vocational outcomes and on credit bearing programmes.

### Reducing unemployment

Reduction in unemployment is a clear objective for TECs. The recession of the early 1990s saw an increase in graduate unemployment, exacerbated by the effect of a rapid expansion of student numbers. By the mid 1990s the position had improved, although unemployment levels remained higher than in the past. Unemployed graduates represent a particular challenge to local services, since they may have little experience of the workplace and are often seeking employment in relatively specialised occupations. They may also be living at some distance from the graduate careers service of the HEI where they graduated. A number of joint HE/TEC schemes have sought to address this through specialised advice services or programmes like Graduate Gateway, which provide training and support to speed the transition from student to effective worker.

A related issue is graduate underemployment. As graduate numbers increase, some find themselves (at least initially) in jobs not formerly occupied by graduates. Some of these jobs now need graduate skills when they previously did not and some have potential for enrichment, with benefits for firm and individual. TECs may be able to intervene through support schemes to employers or individuals, or use Modern Apprenticeships, to reduce the waste of human resource in such situations.

### Building community capacity

Strong networks of community support and activity can help to counter social and economic exclusion. The ways in which HEIs support this include short and part-time courses, professional updating programmes and voluntary activities of students.

### Attracting highly skilled people

It is easier to attract and retain highly skilled staff and inward investment to a visibly healthy community and universities contribute to this through their provision of public facilities like museums and galleries, drama, cinema and the arts generally. Often universities welcome support from other local organisations to strengthen such activities and community involvement in them.

### Supporting Investors in People and learning organisations

Many firms preparing for Investors in People status require education and training programmes to support organisational and management development. Many universities are well equipped with expertise in these fields, through business and management schools, to support both the firms and individuals within them. At the end of 1996 60 HEIs had made a formal commitment to Investors status, and 16 had been recognised, mostly for individual units like Business Schools or Conference and Accommodation Services.

Some HEIs have also been active in the emerging Employee Development movement. As large employers in a knowledge based industry, HEIs have a direct interest in these approaches, and some either run their own employee development schemes, or are partners in local ones. A number of universities also undertake research on learning organisations (usually through Business and Management Schools or Departments), and many have the potential to support firms seeking to develop in this way through courses and consultancy.

### Recruiting and retaining graduates

One way in which TECs can help to raise the skill level of their local workforce is to encourage local firms to recruit graduates with up to date and high level skills and knowledge, and to retain them locally. There is increasing interest among HEIs in supporting the local economy in this way, although most higher education institutions have traditionally seen themselves as preparing graduates for a national and international labour market. However, many HEIs have better contacts with national and multinational employers than local ones. TECs are well placed to develop and strengthen such local links, and partnership with Graduate Careers Advisory Services to share knowledge and expertise may be particularly useful.

## National and International Links

### Developing national and international links

In an increasingly global economy most firms need to review and consider developing their national and international markets and relationships. TECs will wish to support them in doing this. HEIs are all involved in some way (and some very substantially) in international work, through language departments, students and staff exchanges, collaborative research and international consultancy. In some institutions almost all Departments are involved in international partnerships and networks. The potential for closer co-operation here is often unrecognised on both sides.

### International Students

HEIs are major exporters of education and training, through courses delivered (directly or by franchising courses to local institutions) in other countries. They also recruit large numbers of international students who study on campus. Since such recruitment is not subject to government limits on numbers, and international students pay full fees, their numbers have been increasing steadily in recent years. Some HEIs and student unions seek to promote links between such students and local communities and businesses,

### Attracting funding

There are a growing number of national, regional and European initiatives which offer funding to firms or educational institutions for economic, social and educational development work or programme delivery. Most such bids call for partnership between agencies, including public and private sector bodies. HEIs may have areas of technical expertise to contribute and networks (locally and internationally) which can be used to seek partners abroad, while local firms may have work in need of such resources. TECs may have an important role as brokers in developing consortia and proposals.

# What higher education contributes

Higher education contributes in a number of ways to the local economy and labour market. Many of those are little understood (inside the institutions as well as outside them). This section outlines some of its key contributions.

## Strategic Partnership

HEIs are not merely providers of education and training. They are also major economic and social forces in their regions. In some TEC areas the university is the largest employer and HEIs bring substantial inflows of resources through the jobs which they create and the spending power of their staff and students. The institution thus has a major impact on a wide range of local services, the retail sector, the housing market, transport etc. Although an increasing proportion of students are choosing, for financial reasons among others, to study in their home region rather than going to another part of the country, the average HEI still recruits the majority of its students from outside its immediate area.

Government Offices are developing regional strategies for partnership with their HEIs and most TECs now have HE strategies agreed with their local (and sometimes more remote) HEIs. In some regions the Vice Chancellors themselves meet regularly at regional level and many TEC Chief Executives have regular meetings with local Vice Chancellors. There is a growing range of regional and local working groups which bring TECs, Government Offices and HEIs together over issues like high level skills, access or technology transfer.

A key area for strategic partnership is in the gathering and interpreting of labour market information. The trends in most HEIs towards mature and part-time students, towards local or regional recruitment and towards a clearer focus on employability of graduates, all point to the need to incorporate local and regional Labour Market Information into the HEI’s strategic planning. However, most institutions do not have well developed systems to do this at strategic level. At all levels HEIs are driven more powerfully by national funding methodology, which rewards filling student places, than by identifiable labour market needs.

## Access, Participation and Progression

Until the late 1960s British higher education recruited very selectively, with a heavy bias towards white young men from middle class backgrounds. The exception to this was the work of the Extramural Departments which offered part-time higher education programmes in local communities, some of it explicitly with local organisations and trades unions.

In 1970 the Open University was founded with a specific remit to make higher education available to mature learners who could not attend traditional institutions and it decided that it would not set entry qualifications for its students. Through the 1970s the polytechnics (created in the late 1960s as vocational HE institutions) began to expand higher education linked to employment and some of the Extramural Departments launched initiatives aimed specifically at opening higher education to people from particular disadvantaged communities. This change gathered pace in the 1980s, with a rapid growth of initiatives aimed at increasing participation by women, members of ethnic minorities and disabled learners. These included the development of Access courses, franchising and validation with FE colleges.

### Access Courses

The most conspicuous element of this was the rise of Access courses, which offered preparation for higher education, mainly for mature students without traditional qualifications. At the end of the 1980s DES (now DfEE), with CNAA and CVCP set up a national mechanism for validating such courses, to ensure that the certificates which they produced were acceptable for admission to all HEIs. This works through regional or local Approved Validating Agencies (AVAs) most of which are Open College Networks (consortia of local education and training providers, including HEIs), which approve programmes and award credit to learners on a wide range of programmes below degree level. There are over 1000 Access courses now in existence, and most HEIs admit students on the basis of Access course qualifications.

Access courses may be tailored to specific groups of students, or specific subjects. They may be linked to particular HEIs or HE programmes, or be more open.

### Admissions

Universities have complete freedom as to who they admit, but the majority of students still enter with A levels, and the average A level score of entrants[[2]](#footnote-2) continues to be one of the ways in which institutions, departments and course leaders measure themselves. Admissions decisions are normally made by admissions tutors, who are academics in the relevant department or course team and take this on as an additional duty. As a result, the implementation of institutional policy can be patchy and admissions tutors are not always well informed about recent developments like NVQs, Records of Achievement or Modern Apprenticeships.

There has been much debate about admission processes for first degree programmes. Unlike many European countries, the British system has always been highly selective (which is one reason for its high retention and success rates), but rapid expansion has put this under severe pressure. A number of proposals have been put forward for reform, including reorganising the academic year to allow decisions to be made after the publication of A level results.

The range of qualifications used for entry has diversified, and GNVQs are increasingly recognised. Some institutions explicitly commit themselves to considering GNVQ or NVQ applicants or to taking Records of Achievement into account. The Universities Central Admissions Service, which manages the admissions system nationally, has been developing a single tariff system to try to make it easier for applicants to use alternative qualifications, or combinations drawn from different systems.

### Widening provision

In 1995 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) launched a Widening Provision Programme, which funds institutions over four years to develop innovative approaches to widening higher education. Allocation of funds was through competitive bidding, and 45 institutions are mounting schemes, at an average cost of £85,000 pa over four years. The topics addressed include ethnic minority participation, advice and guidance services, HE in rural areas, uses of technology with non-traditional learners, HE in the Third Age, provision in areas of traditional non-participation, women and disabled learners. Some projects cover several of these.

### Credit accumulation and transfer

During the 1980s the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) promoted the development of Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes (CATS), which were adopted by many of the polytechnics. Under such schemes, programmes were given “credit rating” at one of four levels and students successfully completing a module or unit would be awarded the relevant credits. These credits could then be accumulated with credit from other programmes ("accumulation") or used with credit from another institution (“transfer”) to form a single qualification. Under the CNAA scheme, a standard three year Honours Degree would be rated at 360 credits (120 per year at levels 1, 2 and 3), and postgraduate programmes would be awarded credit at level “M”. This aimed to increase the flexibility of programmes, which could be tailored to the needs of individuals and employers. In the early 1980s, as most institutions modularised their provision, a growing number of universities adopted the scheme.

At the same time there was a growth of similar schemes for work below degree level, developed by Open College Networks (OCNs), which were typically regional consortia of education, training and voluntary organisations. These gave credit ratings to a wide range of programmes in private and public sectors and award credit to individuals who complete the programmes. Most Access courses are now validated by OCNs, and all OCNs include HEIs as major partners. The development of this credit framework was supported by the Further Education Unit (FEU) and its successor, the FE Development Agency (FEDA). The principle attraction of CATS schemes is the ability of individuals to assemble credit from a variety of sources (including, for example, workbased courses, HE courses and FE courses) into a recognised qualification. However there remains a range of technical issues which prevent this being a simple issue. A key distinction is that between “generic” and “specific” credit. While a student may gain “generic” credit from a particular programme at a particular level, that programme may not be recognised as “specific” credit for entry to another specific course, since it may not include all the necessary prerequisite knowledge or skills.

In 1992, the CNAA’s responsibilities transferred to the newly created Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), which commissioned a national review of CATS in higher education. Its findings were published *as Choosing to Change* (the “Robertson Report”). This found that CATS schemes were widespread but not very developed in HE and that their use for accumulation (within the institution) was much more common than for transfer between HEIs. The report proposed a number of structural changes to support their further development, but most of the national recommendations have not yet been implemented. Nevertheless, there have been a number of development initiatives at regional level, notably in Wales and the South East of England, and most universities now subscribe in principle to the national framework.

### Accelerated and Intensive Degrees

HEFCE funded an experimental programme with a small number of institutions, to test whether a full conventional degree could be effectively undertaken in two rather than three years, by extending the working week and the academic year. The schemes were broadly successful, but mainly with mature students (for whom the shorter absence from employment was a priority). However, research suggested that potential demand for such programmes was limited.

### Guidance and tutoring

All institutions have some services designed to help individual students to manage their learning careers within the institution and to prepare for and find, suitable employment afterwards. Although the processes are similar, the former are usually described as “tutoring” and the latter as “guidance”. However, few institutions have coherent strategies for all these activities and they are often delivered, sometimes unevenly, by quite separate services within the university or college.

The traditional careers service is under considerable pressure from increased numbers, as well as the greater diversity of students and graduate destinations, without a corresponding increase in resources. This is causing many HEIs to review the role and functions of their Careers Advisory Services, and seek more economical models of delivery of services.

It has been argued that a fully modular institution, where every student is likely to be following a unique learning programme, guidance to select suitable options is a higher priority, but few institutions have so far addressed this systematically. The cost of maintaining such personal contact for increasing student numbers is considerable, and some institutions have responded by scaling down or abandoning aspects of their tutorial services. Other have made them available only to students with problems.

One major growth area has been in guidance modules within those institutions which have organised their curriculum on a modular basis. Such modules typically offer some combination of induction to higher education, career planning skills, personal transferable skills, work experience and learning skills. Most institutions which offer them make them optional, though some make them compulsory. Some, but not all, assess such modules and award credit as a component of the degree.

HEQC reviewed this issue and reported on it in *Personal Tutoring and Academic Advice in Focus* (HEQC 1996) and published guidelines as *A Quality Assurance Framework for Guidance and Learner Support in HE* (HEQC 1995). The provision of learner support services of this kind is also examined through Quality Audit and Quality Assessment and this has encouraged institutions to take it more seriously. DfEE has mounted a number of projects in this field, reported in *Putting Learners at the Centre* (DfEE 1996)

### Recording achievement

Recording achievement is an issue for HEIs in two distinct ways. On one hand, the use of the NRA as an admissions tool and, on the other, the promotion of recording and reflecting processes with students. Some institutions have had a commitment to one or other of these for some years. A particular stimulus to the former was a DfEE project based on a consortium led by Wigan Local Authority, while the latter was encouraged through the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative. There is also an academic interest in the issues in schools of education and management, some of which have a research interest in reflective practice and its development, especially in the contest of Continuing Professional Development. Despite this, however, understanding is not widespread, and there is considerable suspicion of externally imposed models and procedures, of likely costs and administrative work.

A DfEE survey of 70 HEIs in 1996 showed relatively few HEIs with clear policies on recording achievement, and relatively little understanding of the issues among policymakers and senior managers. Fourteen per cent of institutions had a policy and only few of the others anticipated developing one. Two institutions were using the formal NRA with students and one was using it with staff as part of its preparation for Investors in People.

At departmental level there was more interest and support, and 43 institutions provided examples of practice, including use of transcripts, profiling, skills support, personal development planners, or use of formal records in work placement, etc.

## Supporting Business and Generating Companies

### Developing knowledge

It has been widely argued that economic activity in the future will be increasingly concerned with the manipulation of knowledge - applying old knowledge to new contexts, and new knowledge in flexible and imaginative ways. A key element will be the tailoring of products and services to the needs of individual clients, customers and firms, calling for depth of knowledge and understanding as well as high levels of skill.

One of the main functions of HE institutions is to develop the skills of creating and applying knowledge through teaching, research and scholarship. They also organise, store and present it to the outside world. Such knowledge can be of great value to individual firms seeking to maintain a competitive edge in world and national markets.

### University Companies

Many universities have generated companies to exploit a particular innovation or technology in which the university has a research strength, or particular knowledge. A study by Robson Rhodes for HEFCE in 1994 identified 173 such companies, with an annual turnover of £172 million. Most such companies are small in terms of employment, though they may be large in turnover. The largest are Salford University Business Services, which employs 75 staff and has a turnover from consultancy services of £11 million and University of Leeds Innovations Ltd which has a turnover of £5 million. The latter has spun off two subsidiaries, one of which itself now has a turnover of £2 million. Some such companies involve staff leaving the university to operate independently. Sometimes they work in both locations, and sometimes the university retains a controlling interest in the firm. Some are a significant source of revenue for the university itself.

### Science Parks

In addition, some universities have launched “science parks”. Many of these are primarily concerned with increasing the university’s income from property, but some are intended to provide a link between the knowledge and skills of the university and the commercial world. Many provide starter accommodation for embryo high technology firms.

### Workbased learning

The majority of learners in higher education are no longer full time students. Even those who have that formal status are likely to undertake some sort of part-time work alongside their study, and a growing proportion are in full or part-tine employment, undertaking their learning either part-time, or in the workplace itself. Paid employment is thus an important part of the lives of most learners in HE. This has implications for their motivation to learn and objectives as well as the time available for study.

In 1995 the DfEE commissioned a major review of this issue, published in 1996 as *A Review of Work Based Learning in Higher Education*. This identified four basic models. In each case the curriculum framework and the award of the qualification rests with the HEI:

Type A - full-time student with content designed with employers. This is the model of the traditional “sandwich course”, or work related modules in a modular HE programme, where students undertake a placement in the workplace.

Type B - full-time student with curriculum design shared with a professional body and content designed with employers. This model is common in professional degree programmes in fields like medicine, teaching and social work. Students usually achieve an HE award and some form of professional recognition or licence to practice.

Type C - full-time employee with content designed with employer. This includes specific degree programmes adapted to the needs of a particular employer, and institution wide frameworks which allow such programmes to be developed in a range of subject areas.

Type D - full-time employee with focus and content designed primarily by the learner. Here individual learners negotiate a personal learning programme with the HEI, within some form of curriculum framework laid down by the institution but building on the individual’s own circumstances and needs. Such programmes are relatively rare, but are developing in a number of institutions.

### Placements and live projects

Work placement was always a major element of degree programmes in polytechnics, as part of sandwich courses and vocational qualifications. A growing number of degree programmes now incorporate work placements or experience, not only in directly vocational courses. A few institutions require all students to undertake some formal work placement in all degree programmes, whatever their subject, and use these as a means to develop Key Skills and career management skills. In recent years HEIs have been developing more effective mechanisms for controlling the quality of learning on placements, ensuring that the placement enhances the relevance and quality of the student’s learning through formal contracts between HEI, student and employer, recording and reporting systems and formal assessment of work.

One model which has been growing is the short project placement. Here, rather than simply spending a period experiencing the workplace, students undertake a specific agreed project for an employer. Such initiatives are sometimes co-ordinated through HEI wide schemes offered as a resource to local employers, or national schemes like the Shell Technology and Enterprise Programme (STEP), which places students with SMEs to undertake projects. Evaluations of such schemes suggest that they can be very valuable to firms, by tackling a specific piece of work which is important, but not of sufficient priority to allocate staffing to. STEP promotes such placements nationally through a system of awards, with a strong focus on the benefits to particular businesses.

### Preparation for employment

Ensuring that graduates have the skills to be effective in the workplace was a major focus of the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative and has been a growing concern for all HEIs in recent years. This has led to a more explicit focus on the development and assessment of key and personal transferable skills in the curriculum, and their development through placements and project work. EHE was also instrumental in promoting team and group work, as well as group and self assessment of team projects.

There have been many studies of the qualities which employers seek in graduates, which show a consistent pattern, although the terms used vary between studies. The key qualities almost always focus more heavily on generic qualities than specific technical knowledge or skill and on the ability to apply and transfer skills and knowledge (although this is not always true for recruitment in specific technical fields where degree programmes are directly professional or vocational). The 1993 report of the Quality in Higher Education Study is typical in identifying (in order of priority)

* Communication skills
* Team work
* Problem solving
* Analytic skills
* Flexibility and adaptability
* Self skills (self confidence, self-management)
* Decision making skills
* Independent judgement
* Numeracy
* Logical argument
* Enquiry and research skills
* Imagination and creativity

More recently, the Association of Graduate Recruiters identified the qualities which they believe that graduates will need to succeed in the labour market of the future. They include a balance of four types of skill:

specialist skills - a particular expertise

self-reliance - ability to manage oneself

“connectedness” - able to work with others

generalist - a range of general business and management skills, including communication and problem solving

They also identify a set of “Self Reliance Skills”:

* self awareness
* self promotion
* exploring/creating opportunities
* action planning
* networking
* matching and decision making
* negotiation
* political awareness
* coping with uncertainty
* development focus
* transfer skills
* self-confidence

Most of these qualities are best developed through the way in which teaching and learning is organised, rather than explicit teaching. Team work, for example, is best learned by structured reflection of the practical experience of working in a team. HEIs are increasingly developing ways of working which encourage such experiential learning, including teaching methods which use group project work and peer assessment.

One factor which is encouraging such developments is the growing accessibility of nationally published data on graduate employment. Institutions are increasingly sensitive to their positions in official and unofficial “league tables” which show the graduates of some institutions to be more successful in finding employment within six months of graduating[[3]](#footnote-3). There has been relatively little research into the early stages of graduate careers, although there are a number of longitudinal studies now in progress which may reveal how graduates enter the labour market and how their early careers develop.

### Technology transfer - placement and Teaching Companies

Technology is transferred between HE and industry in a variety of ways, including consultancy and commissioned research or development projects. One key approach is through formal project based partnerships between HEIs and firms. There are many forms of partnership, ranging from short project placements for current undergraduates who carry out small (but sometimes significant) projects, to formal Teaching Company Schemes, where a number of graduates may be placed to undertake a major piece of work with input from academic staff.

The key characteristics of all such initiatives are that they address a specific identified piece of work required by the employer and that individuals are identified to work on it under joint supervision from an HEI and employer. Outcomes for the firm include a completed piece of work which could not otherwise have been done. For the individual, they include some form of HE accreditation and increased experience of work and/or HE. For the HEI it strengthens staff skills and curriculum relevance.

Some such programmes are mounted by individual course teams as part of particular courses, others are HEI wide schemes (which are sometimes run by Students Unions rather than the university itself), and some are national government led ones.

The Teaching Company Scheme is the most formal and sophisticated of such initiatives. It is a Government sponsored national programme which aims to enable companies to make strategic business advances through projects which would otherwise be beyond their resources of knowledge and skilled manpower. It does this by recruiting able young graduates (“Teaching Company Associates”) to work on projects with supervision and support from both employer and HEI. In addition to supporting the firm, the scheme also aims to develop the graduates and to strengthen the relevance of skills and knowledge in HE. There are over 500 schemes, provided through 20 centres based in HEIs. Typical aims for the companies within TCS partnerships include:

* introducing new or improved products, services and processes
* introducing or improving systems
* entering new markets or improving penetration of existing ones.

TCS partnerships are financed by government grants to the university partner, complemented by financial contributions from the partner firm. These funds support the employment of one or more TCS Associates, who work in the partner company on the agreed project. In addition to practical learning, Associates receive formal training aimed at developing both technical and managerial skills.

### HE and SMEs

Traditionally, the majority of graduates have gone on to employment in large firms and the public sector, and HEIs’ links through research and student placement have tended to be with large firms. HEIs have not, in general, had such strong links with the SME sector, which is more diverse, mobile and difficult to contact for a large HEI. Graduates have tended not to seek jobs in SMEs, since they are more difficult to find out about, and may seem to offer fewer obvious career routes, and less career management support. SMEs in turn have tended not to recruit graduates, through fear that they will require unreasonable amounts of support, that they will be “slow starters” and unduly academic in approach.

However, as the supply of graduates expands, and large firms contract in size, a growing number of graduates are seeking employment in SMEs. A number of programmes are seeking to develop ways of overcoming the difficulties, by increasing student placements, and through Graduate Gateway or apprenticeship schemes, some of which use the Modern Apprenticeship to support the transition from HEI to work. The development of Continuing Vocational Education programmes is strengthening the links, with specifically tailored courses for particular employers or groups of employers, and the more widespread accreditation of such programmes means that the individuals may be able to acquire credit which they can later accumulate towards more formal qualifications. This is particularly helpful as HEIs recruit increasingly from their immediate region.

There is a critical, and generally underdeveloped, role for Business Links in promoting and developing such connections.

## Curriculum Relevance

### Developing skills

Although HE traditionally emphasises its role in developing academic knowledge, it also develops a wide range of skills in its students. The academic skills of researching, analysing, organising and presenting information have a relevance in many fields outside HE. They may be made available to employers both through recruitment of graduates and through higher education programmes provided in the workplace to existing staff.

Most programmes also develop more specific technical skills, whether it be the use of particular kinds of equipment and apparatus in scientific and engineering fields, of computers, social science research techniques and so on. It has been argued that one of the important economic contributions HE makes is the highly specialised and rare skills which are developed by postgraduate researchers, and which can then be transferred into specialist firms.

In addition to the development of these skills in undergraduates, many HEIs also offer them to other members of the community and the workforce, through short courses and conferences, and sometimes through consultancy. As the pace of organisational and technological change increases, this will become an increasingly high priority.

Overall, Britain compares reasonably with its major competitor countries in its levels of high level qualifications. The British higher education system has traditionally been more condensed, admitting a smaller proportion of people than in many comparable countries, but offering them a short but intensive degree programme with low drop out rates. The result is lower participation, but comparable qualification rates as a proportion of the population. Britain produces rather more science and engineering graduates than its immediate comparators[[4]](#footnote-4).

There are, however, continuing problems in two specific areas, engineering and management. In engineering employers complain about the quality of graduates, and surveys of hard to fill vacancies at graduate level continue to feature engineering, despite considerable efforts to reform the engineering curriculum in HE. In management, the provision of qualifications (MBA, Diplomas and Certificates, and short courses) has expanded and is larger than in most European countries. However, this appears not to have made much impact on the majority of (especially smaller) firms.

### NVQs

The NVQ framework developed from the bottom up and has only recently impinged on HE. Some HEIs are now delivering NVQ programmes at high levels, pioneered in most cases within management education where Level 5 qualifications were first available.

Some institutions have been seeking to incorporate elements of NVQs in their work placements/sandwich years, enabling graduates to have some NVQ units as well as a degree on graduation. In the national consultation on high level GNVQ HEIs were very unenthusiastic, arguing generally that there was no demonstrated need for a new qualification.

Some institutions are now offering NVQ assessment and staff development opportunities, especially at higher levels.

### Qualifications

Most people think of HEIs as institutions which provide programmes leading to first degrees, and this is indeed one of their principal purposes. However, they also provide a wide range of other qualifications, including sub-degree programmes like HNDs and postgraduate programmes (which range from the very academic to the very vocational). There is a substantial continuing vocational education programme, which may lead to formal professional qualifications, and some are beginning to offer NVQ based programmes, and assessment. Institutions which offer credit based programmes are also often able to offer parts of degree programmes, such as Certificate on HE (equivalent to the first year of a degree), and Diploma in HE (equivalent to the first two years)[[5]](#footnote-5).

### Individual centred learning

As student numbers have increased and pressures for greater flexibility and responsiveness to mature and workbased learners have been more evident, some HEIs have begun to introduce strategies for flexible learning. Some of these are also available at FE level. Their common strand is that they place greater emphasis on the student’s responsibility for his or her own learning, by recognising individualised programmes of study, or learning which takes place with limited face to face contact with teachers. The approaches include:

Accreditation of Prior Learning where an individual is awarded credit on the basis of learning (formal or experiential) undertaken elsewhere, on the basis of a portfolio, other forms of evidence, or some form of formal test. In the course of these developments the terminology has sometimes been confused, and while institutions may offer one or more of APL, APEL, APLA, there is no generally agreed definition of the terms[[6]](#footnote-6). These approaches may be used to gain exemption from some part of a programme (admission with advanced standing) or, in rare cases, exemption from the whole programme. Most institutions have regulations which require an individual to have studied a specified proportion of the qualification in the institution.

Degree by Independent study this is a relatively rare model, where an individual negotiates a personal programme of learning with the HEI and undertakes it with assistance from the institution, employer or other external support. The HEI assesses the outcome, which may be a formal report or other piece of work.

Open and resource based learning

increasingly institutions are offering some parts of their programmes on an open basis, providing students with guidance and structured materials which lead them through the learning process individually or in student led groups, rather than with face to face tuition. The most commonly known model is the Open University, but a large amount of open learning is now undertaken by learners on campus. This includes programmes sometimes described as “resource based learning”. Distance learning is one form of open learning, but not all forms of distance learning are individual centred, and some are very directive.

### Enterprise in Higher Education

Enterprise in Higher Education was the largest government intervention in the higher education curriculum. Funded by the Employment Department (now DfEE) programme it supported curriculum and institutional change aimed at making graduates better prepared for work. Funds, averaging £1 million per institution, were allocated competitively to 64 HEIs or consortia, each of which designed a five year programme of work, relevant to the particular institution. Most institutions focused on embedding personal skills development in mainstream programmes and introduced new approaches to teaching and assessment. They also involved employers directly in curriculum design and developed schemes of work placement, as well as specific materials.

External evaluations suggested that the programme was effective particularly because institutions and staff had the opportunity to develop work around broad objectives without external imposition of a single model. All institutions were required as a condition of funding to develop and implement a continuation strategy to carry the work forward after the end of funding (the last contract was completed in December 1996). As a result, most former EHE institutions have a body of expertise, both centrally and within departments, in issues of employability and the curriculum, and for linking with employers.

## Infrastructure and Human Resources

### Universities as employers

All local labour markets with over 100,000 jobs (with one exception) contain at least one HEI. In most regions the HEIs are among the largest employers (e.g. all five universities in the North East are among the 30 largest employers in the region).

HEIs employ over 250,000 people in the UK, and since 1980 employment in higher education has grown consistently faster than employment growth generally, even in those regions where employment generally has been in decline. Overall HE accounts for 1.1% of the workforce, but this rises to over 2% in 12 local labour market areas, (and as high as 8% in Oxford and Cambridge). However, higher education employment tends to be concentrated in cities and conurbations, with the 10 largest cities containing 46% of all higher education employment. The presence of an HEI generates additional jobs in the local labour market, adding 20-100% to the direct employment provided by the HEI[[7]](#footnote-7).

### Cultural and social contribution

HEIs also play a major part in the cultural and intellectual life of their cities and regions. They run theatres and cinemas, museums, galleries, festivals and bookshops. Most make their libraries available to the general public (though some do not publicise this for fear of potential demand). Eighty per cent of universities provide public lectures by distinguished scholars and 20% open some internal lecture programmes to the public for a fee. They also organise sporting events and more than half open some high quality sporting facilities to the public. Even when they do not provide the services directly HEIs often make services like bookshops viable in communities where there would otherwise be inadequate demand. Many HEIs also make grounds and historic buildings accessible to the public. All these activities make the region more attractive to visitors and inward investors, for whom a culturally lively community can be a significant attraction, especially to firms employing (or planning to employ) a high proportion of graduates.

HEIs are also active in community development activity and voluntary work, through staff but especially through student organisations and sometimes through placements with voluntary bodies. Students Unions support local charities through fund raising and voluntary work. Some universities participate in the CSV Student Tutoring programme, which places undergraduates in local schools for a number of weeks, to provide additional support and stimulation to the school and role models for pupils. Many also participate in mentoring schemes designed to do the same for young people from ethnic minorities.

Many universities have departments which provide specialist services to the community. These include medical and dental schools which run hospitals, social science faculties and units which provide consultancy and support to local community groups and to agencies like the police and probation services.

Many HE institutions offer conference and tourist accommodation out of term time (and some during term time through management centres). These supplement tourist accommodation and HEIs often provide the largest facilities for national and international conferences within their area. Their impact on employment and increasing local business can be significant.

### Teacher education

Higher education has always been closely involved in the training of teachers, which in turn affects the skill base of the whole local economy. It is therefore important that new teachers, and teachers engaging in professional updating, understand the ways in which the labour market and workplaces are changing. Recent Government policy has been to strengthen the link between teacher training and classroom practice. However, HEIs are still very much involved and all trainee schoolteachers pass through HEIs in the course of their training. TECs interested in changing the perceptions of education of young people could do well to seek opportunities to influence the preparation of teachers, especially giving them opportunities to experience workplaces other than educational ones.

Formal training for teachers in higher education has never been established on a formal basis, although it is expanding at present. Like schoolteachers, many HE staff would benefit from the opportunity to experience other workplaces, through placement and exchange schemes like those available to schoolteachers.

### Using HE knowledge bases

HEIs are vast repositories of knowledge, covering a very wide range of fields. However, they are usually better adapted to communicating this through formal courses or direct consultancy than to wider dissemination. It can be very difficult for firms or organisations to identify where expertise is to be found, and how to access it. Some institutions have developed systems for centralising such information, for use by local firms or the media. An increasing number are making it available through the World Wide Web (all HEIs now have Websites).[[8]](#footnote-8)

## Building international networks

All HEIs have international links. Many have international reputations which attract scholars and students from overseas, and are engaged in collaborative research with overseas universities. Many are significant exporters through courses provided for educational institutions and firms overseas. Increasingly they are involved in international exchanges, where British students study, or do work placements, abroad and overseas students do the same in the UK.

In a competitive global economy knowledge of other countries, their cultures and economies and networks of contacts become increasingly valuable. HEIs provide courses on language and culture, consultancy, and collaboration on research and development. They also offer access to students undertaking placements in a range of other countries and to overseas students studying in the UK, all of whom can bring relevant experience and knowledge.

Developments in technology and open learning are beginning to make education a global service and a number of institutions worldwide have plans to become global HEIs, offering programmes and qualifications to learners in all or many countries, by correspondence, satellite, email etc. The UK Open University is one of the 10 largest such institutions worldwide, but other British HEIs are developing similar activities in specific fields.

Most HEIs are involved in European programmes in a variety of capacities, including large scale exchanges of students and collaborative projects with colleagues in other EU countries. There are probably few EU programmes in which no UK HEI is involved, but the principal educational ones are SOCRATES and LEONARDO. A particularly strong trend in the early 1990s has been the development of links and partnerships with Easter Europe.

# Some key facts about higher education

Higher education is an extremely complex and diverse system. This section of the guide outlines some of the key characteristics of higher education and HEIs.

## Background

### The Purposes of Higher Education

Much of the shape of the present British higher education system was set by the Robbins Committee in 1963. The Committee defined the purpose of higher education as:

* instruction in employment skills
* promoting the general powers of the mind
* the advancement of learning
* the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship.

22 years later, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment launched a review of the purpose and shape of higher education and invited views. She subsequently commissioned a committee, chaired by Sir Ron Dearing, to conduct a larger review, to report in the summer of 1997.

In its evidence to the committee the DfEE proposed that the Robbins principles remained valid, but that the balance between them should be changed, to give more emphasis to employment related skills and the role of higher education “in underpinning a modern, competitive economy*”*.

The review set up a number of working groups and studies and will report in the summer of 1997 with recommendations on the future purpose, structure, funding and size of HE in the UK.

### Values

Higher education is driven by a strong value system, based around the notion of the independent pursuit of knowledge, and membership of an academic community united in this pursuit, however long it may take. The intellectual independence of academic staff and “academic autonomy” are highly valued, and in many institutions key decision-making functions rest with a senate or similar body, all or partly elected by staff. As a result, institutions may be very resistant to initiatives which appear not to be intellectually well founded, or to address what are perceived as short term political fashions.

For TECs it can be difficult to relate to such apparently anarchic organisations, which can seem to have no clear core of authority or accountability. The culture naturally resists central direction, and most academic staff are more strongly motivated by the views of other academic staff in their particular discipline and their personal value systems (which may include a particular commitment to their students or to concerns like Equal Opportunities) than by institutional or Government policy or direction.

The commitment to the pursuit of knowledge is reinforced by the funding systems, which many believe reward research more than teaching. As a result, many academic staff are less interested in transmitting and applying knowledge than creating and shaping it.

### A Diverse System

Although higher education has undergone very rapid change since the mid 1980s, its popular image is still closer to Oxford in 1930 than Salford in 1996. In reality HE institutions are enormously diverse in:

* size, from the Open University with 100,000 students to the College of Guidance Studies with only 350, and ranging from 60 academic staff at North Riding College to 1750 at Oxford.
* curriculum, from single subject institutions in fields like guidance, medicine or music, to those offering courses across all academic fields
* modes of study, from almost all part-time to almost all full-time
* mix of modes, from all face to face to all distance learning
* catchment areas for recruitment, from those which recruit mainly within their own region to those whose recruitment is largely national and international
* linkage to local economies, from those actively involved in local economic development, social and cultural activity, to those which sit on the fringes of their host communities
* balance of first degree, sub-degree and postgraduate students (postgraduate student numbers per institution range from 1 student to 12,700)
* age spread, from almost all 18-25 year olds to almost all over 21
* degree of involvement in externally assessed research, ranging from 10% of academic staff in some institutions to 98% in others.

### An Expanding System

The system as a whole has expanded dramatically. In the 10 years to 1994/5, the total number of students in British HE increased by 87% from 909,000 to 1,701,000[[9]](#footnote-9). This expansion was uneven - some institutions (generally the new universities) expanded more rapidly than others. The rate of expansion was highest among mature learners and postgraduate and post-experience learners. The figure shows the scale and speed of the expansion.

Figure 1: Total First Year Home Students



The Government policy of consolidation, announced in 1992, has slowed the growth in 19 year old full-time entrants[[10]](#footnote-10), but postgraduate numbers continued to rise (between 1993/4 and 1994/5 full-time numbers rose by 3% and postgraduates rose by 11%). In its 1996 letter of guidance to HEFCE the Secretary of State indicated a desire that part-time participation should continue to rise.

The numbers of qualifications awarded also increased over the decade from 243,000 in 1984 to 439,000 in 1994, a rise of 81%.

### Historical Background

One reason for the diversity and complexity of the system lies in the history of higher education. Universities are among the oldest institutions in Britain and most were not originally created as part of a public education system financed by the state.

In terms of their foundation the English university system[[11]](#footnote-11) can be divided into:

2 Ancient Universities Founded before 1600

6 Victorian Civic Universities Founded in the 19th century, including London University.

10 20th Century Civic Universities Founded between 1881 and 1949 in provincial cities, mostly as colleges of London University. These all became independent universities between 1926 and 1962.

7 Colleges of Advanced Technology Became universities in 1963.

8 “Greenfield” Universities New universities founded between 1961 and 1967 on the recommendations of the Robbins Committee.

Open University created as a unique, distance learning university in 1970.

33 Polytechnics Created after 1965, all became universities in 1992.

2 Post 1992 Universities Colleges designated as universities since the 1992 restructuring of the system.

31 Colleges of Higher Education most were formerly teacher training institutions which now offer a broad range of degree programmes, mainly in the humanities and social sciences.

19 Specialist Colleges offering programmes in areas like Art & Design, Music, Drama, Theology, Medicine etc.

74 Colleges of Further and Higher Education

Further Education colleges which receive HEFCE funding to carry out limited HE work in addition to their FE programmes.

In addition some FE institutions provide higher education programmes under franchise arrangements with an HEI. Here responsibility for the course rests with the HEI. Discussions are also in progress about the creation of a number of new universities for regions currently under provided.

Many universities (especially the Victorian Civics, London Colleges and the polytechnics) were originally created specifically to serve local needs, and were often funded by local communities. Most gradually developed national and international missions and moved away from their local focus. Some are now reconsidering this and planning to reverse the trend.

Until 1992 there were two distinct sectors, the universities and the polytechnics. The polytechnics had been the responsibility of the LEAs until 1988 (when they were given independent status) and had a much stronger tradition of vocational education, workbased learning, local and regional links and curricular innovation. They also recruited more mature and part-time students. The universities mostly aspired to be internationally recognised centres of excellence, especially in research. This division, the “binary divide”, dominated the working of the system and was felt by some people to give the polytechnics (and their staff and students) a second class status, and considerably less autonomy.

In addition there were a group of colleges of higher education, many of which had begun as teacher training colleges, but which had diversified to provide a much wider range of degree programmes. Most of these recruited primarily traditional aged full-time students on a national basis.

The abolition of the binary divide in 1992 did not create a homogenous system, and institutions remain very diverse. They have sought to distinguish themselves by distinctive missions (concentrating, for example, on specific subject areas, on research, on European or regional development or on work related learning for example). Some have also sought to create an elite group of institutions, usually distinguished by concentration on internationally recognised research work and often on recruitment of a high proportion of school leavers with high A level scores to first degrees. Other institutions, on the other hand, have sought to establish a specific mission to work with those previously excluded or with local communities.

### Regionalisation

Since the second world war, higher education has been seen as a national, rather than regional or local service. This was particularly the case for the institutions which were universities before 1992. Students were recruited nationally and most moved away from home when they began their studies. Recently the proportion of students who choose to study in their home regions has been increasing, partly as a result of financial pressures and partly as the proportion of mature students with domestic ties rises, although the change has been uneven across the country. Forty-five per cent of students are now studying in their home regions, but this ranges from 17% in East Anglia to 48% in Greater London. On graduation the proportion who stay in the region where they have studied ranges from 8% in East Anglia to 57% in the Northern Region.

### Lifetime Learning and continuing education

#### History

Many universities began as institutions designed specifically to serve their local communities and economies and a number were mainly adult institutions until the mid-20th century. It was only in the 1950s that they became predominantly concerned with 18-24 year old students.

Many of the old universities established Extramural Departments or Departments of Continuing Education to serve the educational needs of their adult communities with part-time, academic and general courses. Some of these departments carried out research and developed specialist expertise in the teaching of learning needs of adults. In many of these institutions courses were provided locally in partnership with the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) whose local voluntary networks identified need, organised recruitment and provided accommodation. The Department for Education and Science (predecessor of DfEE) funded these extramural and joint courses through direct grant and these institutions were known as "Responsible Bodies”.

The polytechnics, on the other hand, often had closer links with local employers and offered more part-time programmes accessible to working adults. However, unlike the old universities, they never received separate funding for work with adult learners, which was always viewed as part of their mainstream mission, rather than an added service.

After the unification of the system in 1992, HEFCE sought to harmonise funding systems by encouraging the old universities to “mainstream” their non-vocational part-time programmes, placing them on the same basis as other university programmes, with similar planning, quality assurance and assessment processes. Most universities “mainstreamed” most or all of their part-time provision, but some retained some non accredited programmes.

Some institutions have now restructured or abolished Departments of Adult Education or Extramural Departments. Others have reshaped them to deal with these expanding areas and some use them as gateways to the university for a wide range of external agencies. There is a live debate in some institutions about the future of non-accredited provision, and about the place which specialist departments should have in universities.

However, other universities have expanded their provision for adult learners outside the traditional extramural and continuing education departments. This is especially the case with departments with strong professional or vocational links, where there has been a great growth of continuing professional development and short updating courses. Some universities have been very active in supporting the CPD schemes of professional institutions, on a full cost basis.

#### Specific funding for continuing education

HEFCE now operates two specific Continuing Education funding programmes. Non-Award Bearing Continuing Education (NABCE) is funding 45 institutions to provide either non-accredited adult programmes, or initiatives to widen provision to excluded groups over a four year period. Continuing Vocational Education is funding 95 institutions to develop vocationally related provision.

The origins of the second of these funds lies in the government’s PICKUP programme, launched in the mid 1980s, to encourage the development of vocational short courses and continuing professional development programmes linked to specific employer needs. Its successor, the HEFCE Continuing Vocational Education (CVE) programme which spent £14.9 million in 1995/6 on development funding to 95 HEIs, on four year contracts.

Funds are designed for development, not ongoing running of courses (which are expected to become self financing) and were allocated competitively. The criteria for allocation included the extent to which bids were integral to the HEIs overall strategy, incorporated a coherent business plan based on demonstrated market need, and the institution’s past record. Assessors also considered evidence of partnership, and of contribution to National Targets.

Although the majority of bids were funded, they were banded in four categories, with the strongest 29 bids receiving up to £300,000 pa. with 66 receiving smaller sums[[12]](#footnote-12).

### The Relationship with Further Education

The Higher Education Funding Council funds 74 FE Colleges (whose principal funding comes from FEFC) to provide higher education programmes in their own right, for about 37,000 students (1995/6).

In addition HEIs work with FE institutions to provide preparatory programmes for those wishing to enter HE, and to offer HE programmes directly through the FE institution. There are a variety of models of such collaboration or interaction. The following are the principal categories, although the terms are not formally defined and may not always be used in the same way in different places:

Foundation Courses a one year preparatory programme, delivered in an FE or HE institution, especially in areas like engineering. About 7000 students were on such courses in 1992/3.

Access to HE Courses programmes designed to prepare those without conventional entry qualifications for entry to higher education. Courses may have a specific subject focus, or be generic. They are mainly (90%) delivered in FE institutions, and accredited through a national network of 38 Accredited Validating Agencies (AVAs). Most are credit based, and some have direct links to specific HE programmes or institutions. 1000 courses have been accredited and they enrol about 30,000 students a year.

Compacts agreements under which students who successfully complete a specific FE programme are guaranteed entry to an HE institution. Compacts are used mainly to encourage recruitment from schools or areas where there has traditionally been a low take- up of HE.

Two plus Two/Two plus One here an HND programme is linked to a degree one, so that students complete one or two years of an HND in an FE institution and then have the opportunity to progress to the final year of a degree. Many of these are franchised to FE colleges.

Franchising here part or all of a degree programme is delivered by an FE institution (or other non-HEI) on behalf of an HEI. Students enrol with the HEI, which remains responsible for course design, quality assurance etc. and pays a fee to the FEI for the delivery. About 50,000 students were on such programmes in 1994/5.

Validation here the programme is managed and delivered by the FEI, which enrols the students. The HEI validates the programme and provides quality assurance, for which it charges the FEI. This model is used for a range of purposes, including programmes designed for specialist professional qualifications.

Outreach here HE programmes, or parts of them, are delivered in locations remote from the HEI to meet the needs of particular communities. They are sometimes mounted in collaboration between HEI and FEI, but sometimes by one or other alone.

## The Organisations

### Strategic Planning

#### Current Priorities

Since 1992, HEIs have been required to undertake more formal strategic planning processes, and to submit their plans to HEFCE annually. Although HEFCE has no power to influence or reject the plans, it does publish an analysis of the collective trends, and this process does appear to have formalised planning processes and led to institutions defining their priorities more clearly. In 1996 HEFCE reported that institutions were focusing on:

**cost-effectiveness in the delivery of teaching and learning**, including increasing emphasis on student-centred, resource-based learning and flexibility in mode of provision.

varied **measures to widen participation**, including links with other educational and community organisations, flexibility in the delivery of teaching and learning, and targeted student support and provision of facilities.

a considerable increase in activity in response to **the Technology Foresight Programme**.

increasing emphasis on **meeting educational and training needs within their region**, contributing to economic prosperity and participating in the social and cultural development of their region.

There were some notable changes by comparison with the 1995 report, including:

work related to **Technology Foresight** was mentioned by two thirds of institutions (compared with 25% in 1995). 20% said that Foresight was influencing curriculum.

formally agreed **admissions policies** existed in 40% of institutions (20% in 1995)

specific **targets for widening access** were agreed in 50% of institutions ( 20% in 1995), including initiatives aimed at local communities, under-represented sections of society and those without standard entry requirements

A number of features are also relevant to HEI work with TECs:

40% describe **links with TECs** to co-ordinate vocational training, promote economic development or support the development of SMEs

50% of plans identify a role in promoting the **economic prosperity of the region**

50% identify a **social and cultural role in the region**

80% describe **collaborative work** with other organisations, including collaborative research programmes with other agencies

#### Planning Processes

HEIs differ greatly in their planning processes, across a spectrum from strongly centralised to very decentralised and “laissez faire”. As far as course planning is concerned, they tend to be based on estimates of student demand, within a framework of target numbers set by HEFCE for academic subject areas. After this the principal focus is in maintaining use of existing resources - maintaining work for staff in areas of particular research expertise and maximising the use of expensive capital equipment. Because past efforts to steer recruitment towards identified national needs have often seemed ineffective, leading to graduate oversupply in particular fields, institutions and staff are wary of attempts to match their own planning too closely to current labour market demand.

When information is available about labour market needs (short or long term) or data is gathered on graduate employment destinations, it does not often get considered at a strategic level. Typically it is held within Careers Services, where it may inform guidance to those students (often a minority) who have a formal careers interview, but in many HEIs it is not passed on to those making decisions about new courses, or institutional strategy. This may become a problem for institutions as the proportion of mature and work based learners increases.

An internal DfEE study suggests that the institutions best adapted to respond to labour market needs are those with strongly centralised structures, with a high proportion of part-time and local students and a tightly focused discipline spread. Such institutions gather LMI formally and informally through TECs, informal business contacts, visiting professorial staff, local employers, placement students and graduates. They have mechanisms to feed such information into the institution at several levels, including the highest. They may also make use of employer “futures” groups and professional bodies, but formal employer advisory committees rarely appear to be effective. Some have developed systems for sharing LMI with TECs, and some have effective Careers Advisory Boards, which include TEC Chief Executives, as well as a range of national and local employers.

### The Institutions

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are among the largest and most complex organisations in Britain[[13]](#footnote-13). Each university is an independent corporation, with the power to make its own decisions about what to teach, whom to admit and what qualifications to award. Each chooses its own areas of research and individual staff have considerable autonomy.

HEIs are also very diverse in their functions and structures. A few are quite strongly centralised, with decisions made at the centre and communicated to staff through chains of consultation and command. Most, however, are strongly devolved and place great emphasis on the autonomy of individual staff and departments. In such structures individual staff largely decide what is taught, how and to whom. In general the “new” universities (former polytechnics) are more “managerial”, while the “old” universities are more devolved and democratic, although there are exceptions in both cases.

In England[[14]](#footnote-14) there are 140 higher education institutions (universities, colleges of HE) funded by HEFCE. In addition, the Council funds 70 colleges of further education to provide specific higher education courses.

Many FE colleges also house higher education programmes on behalf of an HE institution through “franchising” and other kinds of partnership. In these cases the HEI is formally responsible for the programme and receives the funding from HEFCE.

In 1995/6 the “average” HEI in England had around 10,000 students, but 30 had more than 15,000 and eight had fewer than 500.

### Governance

All universities are independent self governing institutions, created either under Royal Charter, or Articles of Governance issued by the Privy Council under the 1988 Education Act. No university is entirely dependent on the state for funding.

The constitution (and name) of University Governing Bodies varies, as does the extent to which they are actively involved in the affairs of the institution. All include employer representatives, who may, or may not, act as voices for the employer community in the affairs of the University.

All universities also have a body with responsibility for academic affairs. In the old universities this is normally called the Senate, and is sometimes a large body, including representatives of all the various interests within the University. In new universities it may be called an Academic Board. These bodies in turn create committees and working groups, commonly for research and for teaching and learning.

Most universities with significant vocational programmes have external advisory groups, committees or boards which exist to advise particular departments or schools on the vocational relevance of their work. These vary greatly in their level of activity, and effectiveness.

### Management and Staff Roles

Most universities have two distinct, if overlapping, structures - one academic and one managerial. Different institutions relate these in different ways. The following are the most commonly used titles in HE institutions, but not all institutions use all of them and the roles may vary.

##### Managerial Structure

The **Vice Chancellor**[[15]](#footnote-15) is the chief officer of a university (in a few institutions this post is called **Rector** or **Principal**), and is a permanent full-time appointment.

**Pro Vice Chancellors**, especially in the old universities, support and deputise for the Vice Chancellor. They are practising academics who serve for a limited number of years as Pro Vice Chancellor before returning to their academic work. In a few, mainly new, universities these functions are carried out by permanent Deputies or Assistants.

**Deans** are academic staff responsible for faculties or schools (like Engineering, or Social Sciences), which group together departments responsible for teaching and research in specific subjects.

**Heads of Department** are academic staff responsible for departments. In some institutions the roles of Dean or Head of Department rotate.

The **Registrar** (sometimes the **Secretary**) is the most senior administrator in the University, responsible for all administrative and financial matters and support to academic bodies.

**Liaison Officers** exist in some institutions. They have a variety of roles, including work with employers or local communities, technology transfer, short course provision etc.

**Directors** sometimes exist for specific functions, like leading a specialist research unit, or support function including Directors of Careers and Directors of Student Support.

**Staff Development Officers** exist in most institutions. Their responsibility may include staff development for academic staff and/or non-academic staff. Often they concentrate on generic issues (like preparing for Quality Assessment or Investors in People, developing NVQ programmes for administrative staff, embedding personal skills in the curriculum). [[16]](#footnote-16)

##### Academic Structure

**Professors** are the most senior academic staff. They are appointed on the basis of academic expertise and may or may not have managerial responsibilities. Some Vice Chancellors are Professors, as are some Deans and Heads of Department.

**Readers** are senior academics with a particular research role, and are not normally part of the managerial structure.

**Senior Lecturers** and **Lecturers** are the main academic staff, who carry out the bulk of teaching and usually research. They often also have roles as academic and/or personal tutors to students.

### Staff

The higher education system in the UK employs over 250,000 people, of whom 94,000 (37%) are academic staff. The remainder carry out a wide range of roles, some highly specialised - technicians, research assistants, specialist librarians, and some support roles of the kind to be found in any large organisation - including secretarial, administrative, domestic and manual staff. One of the traditional routes into academic work is as a Graduate Teaching Assistant - postgraduate students employed part-time to carry out some teaching duties.

Academic staff usually work within a specific field or discipline within departments, which may be grouped into faculties or schools which usually have considerable autonomy about how and what they teach and research. In “applied” disciplines (like engineering, design, town planning or nursing) departments usually have strong links to professional bodies and local and national employers. These links are less common in the “pure” sciences (like Physics or Maths) although there may be very close working links with specialist employers at the leading edge of development. Links are still less common in the humanities. In almost all cases, however, there are cross connections with academics working in similar disciplines in other institutions, through subject based organisations, conferences and seminars. Experienced staff are also invited to serve as external examiners or members of course validation panels for other institutions, and some serve as subject assessors for HEFCE on Teaching Quality Assessment and Research Assessment exercises.

There is no formal requirement to hold a qualification in teaching to teach in an HEI and until recently there were few training programmes available for academics. Many HEIs now require new recruits to undergo some form of staff training and there has been a growth of staff development programmes in recent years. The CVCP has created the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association (UCoSDA) to support this and staff developers themselves have created the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), which operates a national accreditation scheme for academic staff.

There has also been a growing interest in HEIs in the training and staff development of non-academic staff and some institutions have been actively encouraging staff to take NVQ programmes.

Over 60 HEIs have committed themselves to seeking Investors in People status for some part of their work and 16 had been recognised at November 1996. Thirty of these HEIs had made a commitment for the whole institution, three of which had achieved recognition by October 1996. Of those seeking partial recognition the majority are business schools, catering and residential services, or students unions. A number of large institutions, which fall naturally into distinct business units, are seeking recognition in stages, taking one part of the institution at a time.

## Funding

All HE institutions except one receive some funding from Government[[17]](#footnote-17) which provided 66% of the total funding for all higher education in 1994/5. The chart below shows the sources of funding for HE institutions in England in 1994/5.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Figure 2: Sources of Funding for HE Institutions 1994/95



(HESA, 1994/95)

The Funding Councils (separate Councils for England, Wales and Scotland) are the main channel for this money, acting as a buffer between Government and the institutions. The members of the Funding Councils are appointed by the relevant Secretary of State and operate within the constraints of an annual letter of guidance from her and an overall sum set in the annual Public Expenditure Settlement. Within that constraint, however, they act independently, and Government does not intervene directly in how resources are distributed to individual institutions.

### Funding of institutions

The main headings under which funds are provided are listed below. However, funds are allocated as block grants and although they are calculated by the use of a formula, institutions have full discretion about how they then use the money. Thus the sums allocated on the basis of student numbers in particular subject areas may not all be used in that area, or may be supplemented by money allocated under the formula in relation to other fields of teaching or to research.

Teaching Funds - which totalled £2.2 billion in 1996/7, are paid as a block grant by the Funding Council to the institution. Institutions receive “core funding” which rolls forward from year to year and guarantees stability and “marginal funding”, to provide for agreed additional student numbers and support for specific initiatives.

The allocation formula is complex, and under review. In 1996/7 it reflected student numbers, calculated separately for each of the 11 academic subject categories (ASCs), each mode of study (full-time, sandwich and part-time), and each level of study (undergraduate and taught postgraduate, and postgraduate research).

Each year the Council agrees a Funding Contract with each institution, based on the formula and there are penalties for institutions which fail to recruit the agreed numbers (the Maximum Aggregate Student Number - MASN). This makes the accurate recruitment of planned numbers of critical importance for institutions.

Government and HEFCE are committed to linking funding to the quality of teaching and learning in institutions, but no acceptable mechanism has yet been devised to do this, although HEFCE do have the power to withdraw funding in cases of seriously unsatisfactory quality.

Research Funds - are also paid as a block grant by the Funding Council to the institution, calculated through a formula which reflects the quality of research in each department or unit as assessed in the previous Research Assessment Exercise. HEFCE research funding in 1996/7 totalled £638 million. Although research funding is not the largest element of institutional funding, it is easier for institutions to use it flexibly. Higher ratings in the Research Assessment Exercise attract disproportionately greater funds - in 1996/7 a department rated 5 received four times as much funding as one rated 2, and departments rated 1 receive none. Research Assessments are thus of great financial importance to academics and institutions (apart from their influence on the institution’s status and reputation).

Non-formula funding In addition, HEFCE provides funds for special facilities (e.g. costs of running museums, or minority subjects) and special initiatives (like the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme).

Student Fees Fees are paid by Government for all full-time UK and EU students on specified programmes (mainly first degrees) channelled through the student’s home local authority.

Part-time students pay their own fees (or their employers do), as do overseas students. Part-time workbased students on short courses (sometimes described as “continuing vocational education” or CVE) are one of the areas where HEIs can continue to expand numbers on a full cost basis, since institutions are not constrained by HEFCE allocation of student numbers.

Research Grants - for work in specific subject fields are paid by the government funded National Research Councils.

In 1994 Government expenditure per full-time equivalent student averaged £4620 (excluding capital expenditure).

Non-Government funding - consists mainly of research funding from commercial and charitable sources, charges for residences and catering and overseas student fees.

HEIs vary greatly in their ways of managing finance internally. In some, individual departments or faculties control much of the resource, while in others much is centralised. They also vary in the way they treat income earned externally by individual staff or departments, which can affect issues of ownership of intellectual property in collaborative work with employers or outside agencies.

Funding for the system has not expanded in step with the expansion of student numbers and, on Government advice, HEFCE has built efficiency savings into its formulae each year. Unit costs have fallen substantially, creating pressures for change, which have been managed in different ways by different institutions. The way in which HE is to be funded in the future was a major element of the remit of the Dearing Committee on the future of HE.

### Funding learners

Learners in higher education are funded in a variety of different ways. The following are the broad outlines:

Full-time first degree students - have their fees paid automatically through their home local authority, and are eligible for mandatory awards and student loans. While they are students, they are barred from claiming under the social security system, whatever their income level.

Part-time first degree students - normally pay their own fees (set by the institution) and are not eligible for mandatory awards (although some receive discretionary awards from their local authorities). They can be eligible for Social Security Benefits, subject to the 16 hour rule.

Postgraduate students - may be eligible for grants through one of the research councils, or other sources, or may pay their own fees. Some are employed by the HEI as Research Assistants or Graduate Teaching Assistants. HEIs may also provide support through bursaries, studentships or waiving of fees.

Learners on short courses - normally pay their own fees

In addition, some students (almost entirely full-time first degree students) are eligible for mandatory maintenance awards (the “student grant”) from their local authority. Awards are means tested, and full-time students under 50 are entitled to apply for student loans up to a maximum limit from the Student Loans Company. No repayment is required until the course is completed or left and the student’s income rises above a threshold level.

## Curriculum

There is no equivalent of the national curriculum in higher education. Institutions are free to decide what to teach, how to do it, and how to assess learners, although institutions are required to have quality assurance procedures to ensure the quality of what is provided. In their strategic plans HEIs are placing a higher priority on curriculum issues than in the past, and 70% are planning to rationalise programmes, increasing the proportion of open and resource based learning, and the use of technology for learning.

### Qualifications

The UCAS Annual Report for 1995 identifies 40,000 separate qualification bearing undergraduate courses offered by British HEIs, representing about 10,000 subjects and subject combinations. In addition HESA identifies (1994/5) 50,000 non credit bearing courses. Many of these are short, professional updating or community based courses.

Individual universities are free to create new subject areas and offer programmes based on them (currently emerging fields include, for example, economic psychology, information design, and childhood studies). The Funding Council groups subjects into 11 Academic Subject Categories (ASCs). The distribution of student numbers in these in 1994/5 (HESA data) was as follows:

Figure 3: Student Numbers in Academic Subject Categories 1994/95



### Awards

The numbers of qualifications awarded in higher education in the UK has been expanding rapidly. In 1994 the totals were:

76,000 higher degrees - an increase of 105% on 1979

211,000 first degrees - an increase of 70% on 1979

153,000 sub degree qualifications - an increase of 147% on 1979

Most students in HE are taking qualifications planned and awarded by the individual institution and there is nothing like a “national curriculum” or national awarding body structure for HE. However, HEQC is conducting the “Graduate Standards Project” which is examining the question of comparability of degree standards across institutions and disciplines and is also considering the place of Key Skills in degree programmes. Similar issues will arise as high level NVQs are developed.

All institutions have formal procedures for validation, approval and review of new and ongoing courses, which involve scrutiny by relevant outside agencies and individuals as well as by internal staff from other fields of study.

In addition to their own courses, many HEIs teach courses designed to lead to professional qualifications, either as their main purpose or alongside an academic qualification. In these cases, what is taught, how it is examined, and sometimes who is admitted, is governed by the relevant professional body. A small number of HEIs have also been experimenting recently with incorporating NVQ units (or whole NVQs) into their programmes, but this is still rare.

There is an active debate about the future structure of qualifications in HE. It has been argued that the three year honours degree should be replaced or supplemented by a shorter qualification (sometimes described as the “Associate Degree”) which would provide an HE qualification in less time (and at less cost), to which individuals could then add a range of further qualifications either immediately or later as part of a lifelong learning career. Some see this as a dilution of traditional quality, or a basis for distinguishing a hierarchy of institutions. Others see it as an economically attractive solution to the public funding implications of mass participation, while a third group sees it as a natural part of the progression towards a lifelong, rather than initial, model of HE. This is an issue on which the Dearing Committee is expected to comment.

### Modularisation

The traditional British first degree usually involved students in three years full-time study of a single programme and all students enrolling followed broadly the same programme. In recent years this pattern has changed and 60% of institutions are now fully or partly modular. The modular approach was pioneered in this country by the Open University, whose degrees have always been modular, to reflect the diverse needs of its wholly mature student body.

The rationale for modularisation was twofold: to increase choice and flexibility for learners and to ease the management problems of a rapidly expanding system. In reality, however, many institutions have not made dramatic changes. Many have divided traditional courses into separate elements, but with strong constraints on what can and cannot be combined with what (“corequisites”) and in what order (“prerequisites”). Other institutions, particularly the new universities, which had a more mature and workbased student body and a stronger tradition of tailoring programmes to employment needs, have taken modularisation further, allowing considerable flexibility and choice to learners, although all continue to prescribe mandatory and elective modules for specific named degrees.

Despite the potential advantages, modularisation has not been universally welcomed. The evidence that students want it is not strong, especially among traditional age full-time students. Academics in general have not welcomed it, and surveys suggest that academics believe that it leads to the loss of academic coherence, to increased administration, to over assessment and increased workloads without concomitant benefits. Despite this, the proportion of students who are studying programmes involving more than one traditional academic subject has increased and more students now enrol on combined subject degrees than in any single ASC.

Linked to modularisation is the development of a semester structure, where the academic year is divided into two semesters, rather than the traditional three terms. 25% of universities have adopted this structure.

### Open and Flexible Learning

The Open University pioneered high level open and distance learning in the UK and has always been a world leader in this field. In recent years most HE institutions have introduced some elements of open learning into their work, including more resource based and technology based opportunities. The Open Learning Foundation is a consortium of institutions which have agreed to share expertise and produce materials to assist the expansion of open approaches. The Open College also generates relevant material in some fields.

A related issue is the extent of access to premises and resources. A number of HEIs now operate some facilities, including libraries and computing services on a 24 hour basis, and some are experimenting with weekend and vacation teaching.

### Technology in teaching and learning

Britain is a world leader in the application of information and communications technology in HE, with one of the most sophisticated national networks, both in terms of communication capacity and supporting infrastructures. All HEIs are connected to the national Joint Academic Network (JANET[[19]](#footnote-19)) which provides all academic staff with a range of services, ranging from email and access to national and international databases to facilities like videoconferencing, and shared teaching and learning resources. The UK HE Funding Councils, through their Joint Information Services Committee of the Funding Councils (JISC) co-ordinates work and funding. Its services include providing access to software, databases, teaching material, and statistical and research sources on all issues studied in HE, as well as discussion groups and publications.

The Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP) has funded the development of a wide range of innovative teaching and learning resources, available to the whole academic community. Initiatives like the Open University’s Knowledge Media Institute are pioneering the use of new technologies for teaching and learning, sometimes in collaboration with major employers and software firms.

## Quality

The primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education rests with the individual institutions and the large majority of higher education awards are qualifications given by the individual institution. A student taking a degree from the University of Leeds is thus assessed by the staff of that university, supported by an external examiner, who is an academic from another HEI in the same academic field. This mechanism is intended to ensure the maintenance of consistent standards within subject disciplines across all higher education.

To ensure that standards were maintained, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act created two national bodies to oversee the quality assurance processes. HEQC was responsible for Quality Audit, the process of establishing that appropriate systems were in place to secure quality. HEFCE was responsible for Teaching Quality Assessment, the process of establishing the quality of teaching in individual subjects. Both processes began with self assessment within the institution, which was then visited by external teams.

In 1997 the quality functions of the two bodies are to be brought together to streamline procedures and reduce costs.

### The Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC)

Until April 1997 HEQC was responsible for “Quality Audit”, the process of establishing that the institution has appropriate systems and structures to guarantee the quality of what they do. Institutions were visited by audit teams every five years. Periodically the Council published “Lessons from Audit” which provided an overview of findings and issues. It also carried out studies of specific topics like personal tutoring systems, or external examining, and published guidelines on quality assurance generally and on specific topics.

It also worked with “cognate bodies” - professional, industrial and academic bodies concerned with quality assurance of education and qualifications at higher levels - and with NCVQ, to seek ways of streamlining quality assurance for high level professional qualifications.

### The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE)

Until April 1997 HEFCE was responsible, through its Quality Assessment Division, for assessing the quality of teaching and learning, subject by subject. The aim was to encourage improvement and development, to provide public information and to obtain value for public money.

Under this programme, teams of quality assessors visited all institutions in a given subject area to inspect teaching. The Council published a report after each visit, and analysed the collective results in a report on the quality of teaching and learning in that subject nationwide. Forty subject areas will have been examined by December 2001. By October 1996 27 had been completed, and 19 subject reports had been published.

The process begins with an Institutional Self Assessment carried out within the institution to a framework set by the Council. This is submitted before the visit, during which a team (comprising mainly academics from the subject area, but with some non-academic assessors) observes teaching, meets students, staff, graduates and employers, scrutinises course documents and exam scripts as well as details of resources and academic and pastoral support). All assessors are trained centrally.

HEFCE are also responsible for the five yearly Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which examines the quality of research undertaken in individual departments, and gives each a rating.

In addition, where HEIs offer courses leading to qualifications of outside bodies - including NVQs, HNDs and a range of more specialised awards, they are subject to the quality assurance processes of those bodies. The same principle applies to professional qualifications, many of which are offered, in full or in part, through HE courses.

### The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

In April 1997 the quality assurance work of HEFCE and HEQC will be merged under a new body to streamline the processes, which previously involved some duplication of work in institutions. Like the old system, the new one will involve an external team examining the institution’s practice against its own stated mission and an institutional self assessment. Members of the external teams will be trained nationally, and institutional visits will take place on an eight year cycle, combining examination of institutional systems and subject teaching reviews.

## Research

Research is a major function of higher education and is usually viewed as one of the two or three main purposes, alongside teaching and scholarship. A major part of institutional funding, from both public and private sources, is based on this. The system is funded through the “dual support system” which provides general funding for research through the HE Funding Councils and specific funding for individual pieces of work through the Research Councils. Institutions then seek additional funding from other agencies who commission research, including employers and industry bodies.

Figure 4: Sources of Funding for Research, 1993



Mainstream HEFCE research funding aims to support basic and curiosity driven research, long term collaborative research with charities and others and to provide the infrastructure for research (including the training of researchers, libraries etc.). This forms the bulk of public research funding for most institutions and is allocated through a formula based on the results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). This aims to make the best use of public funds by concentrating resources in the institutions and departments with the highest quality work. The Exercise is carried out every five years by teams of distinguished academics in each of 72 subject fields. Institutions are required to list all staff engaged in research (“research active staff”), and to submit four pieces of research produced by each individual in a specified period. The panels then rate the quality of this work and the results for each “Academic Unit of Assessment” (usually a department or unit) are rated on a seven point scale. The scale is based on the proportion of work assessed which is of international excellence, and how widely it covers the academic field. The highest rating is \*5 and the lowest 1. Funding is awarded only to units rated 3 and above.

RAE has an impact greater than one might expect from the size of HEFCE funding for several reasons. Firstly, it generates additional funds from other sources, since other research funders - commercial organisations, charities, research councils and trusts - tend to commission research from departments and units whose quality of research has been accredited by HEFCE. Secondly, for staff, independent research rating is seen as a measure of personal standing within their own professional communities. Thirdly, for institutions, HEFCE research funding can be used more flexibly than teaching funding, which its tightly tied to student numbers.

In many circles the standing of an HEI is measured more by its research status than its teaching quality assessment and some have argued for the creation of a separate category of “Research University”. This argument has not been accepted, partly because of its implications for a two tier system, partly because high quality research can be found in small units within HEIs which perform unremarkably in research assessment in general, and partly because the dividing lines are difficult to draw. The chart shows the spread of institutions against a “Research Quality Index”, derived from the HEFCE 1996 RAE report. It measures the institution’s research quality as a percentage of a hypothetical maximum score. Thus an institution where all the staff were active researchers and all received the highest rating (5\*) would score 100, while one with no active research staff, or where they all scored 1 or 2 (at which level HEFCE does not award funding) scores 0. Scores are weighted according to the HECE funding formula for 1997/8.



This table gives a broad indication of the spread of fundable research across institutions, and shows that the majority of HEIs have some significant research of national or international level. While 11 institutions have more than half of their research active staff engaged in research at international level in some or all of their work, 57 HEIs have some work of international excellence.

## Students

### Types of student

In 1994/5 there were 1.25 million students in higher education in England, of whom about 13% were studying in FE institutions (half of them on sub-degree programmes - mainly HNC/HND). The distribution of all degree level students is shown in the following chart:

Figure 5: Distribution of HE Students

(HESA, 1994/95)

### Expansion

The higher education system in Britain has recently passed through a period of very rapid expansion, following decades of relative stability.

In 1960 about 6% of school leavers entered higher education. This number doubled by 1970, and then remained stable until the mid 1980s when Government committed itself to further expansion. The numbers then doubled again to the point where, in 1995/6, 32% of all 18 year olds entered higher education directly on leaving school or FE college. In 1991, having almost achieved its target for the year 2000, Government announced a policy of “consolidation” of full-time student numbers, but continued to encourage expansion of part-timers.

Although the expansion of traditional age student numbers in full-time undergraduate programmes has been most widely discussed, the proportionate rise in the numbers of mature students, postgraduates and women has been greater.

### Part-time students

Internationally the UK is unusual in distinguishing full-time from part-time students. In reality the distinction is becoming increasingly blurred, as a growing proportion of “full-time” students take on paid employment alongside their studies for financial reasons. The principal rationale for retaining the distinction is in the different basis on which they are funded (part-timers are not normally eligible for maintenance awards).

The majority of part-timers are mature. In 1994/5 57% were over 29, and 84% over 24. Part-time numbers expanded by 33% between 1988 and 1993, encouraged by the HEFCE funding formula, and almost doubled in the case of part-time postgraduate courses, where part-timers outnumber full-timers. Part-timers in general are particularly heavily concentrated in business studies, education, combined studies and (in the case of undergraduates only, in subjects allied to medicine). Numbers are very small in the sciences and arts. 2 institutions have more than 90% of their students studying on a part-time basis[[20]](#footnote-20), while more than 20 institutions have none.

### Mature students

Mature students have been a growing proportion of the student body, representing 54% of all first year first degree students in 1994/5 (33% of full-time and 93% of part-time students). However, mature students are not a homogenous group. NIACE has suggested that they fall into four broad groups:

* “deferred entrants”, who account for about half the total, are in their early 20s, entering HE after a few years in employment, often driven by a desire to improve their position in the workforce after leaving full-time education early, or deciding not to enter HE at 18.
* “returners”, who typically enter HE in their late 20s and 30s, are predominantly women whose children are in school and who are seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market at a higher level.
* “professional developers” are upgrading their qualifications in mid career, often through a postgraduate or post-experience qualification. The majority are men.
* “personal developers” are a smaller group, seeking to develop knowledge, interests and skills for a range of personal reasons, including voluntary work and community activity. This includes a large number of students enrolled on part-time day and evening adult education programmes, delivered locally or on campus. They are of all ages, but include a proportion who are approaching, or in, retirement.

Mature students are not evenly distributed across institutions. Although they represent 50% of all students, there were, in 1994/5, four HEIs where over 95% of all students were mature, and four where the proportion was under 20%. The large bulk of institutions falls in the range from 30%-60%. At one time there was concern that the expansion in mature entrants without traditional qualifications would lead to a decline in the quality of undergraduate work. However, research has repeatedly shown that mature students tend to perform as well as, and often better than traditional age ones.

The age distribution of students in 1994/5 is shown overleaf.

Figure 6: Age Distribution of Students 1994/95

(HESA, 1994/95)

### Women

For a long time women formed a minority among students in higher education. This imbalance was greatly reduced in the late 1980s, and between 1984 and 1994 the proportion rose from 40% to 49%. Again institutions vary greatly, with three institutions more than 70% male, and 20 more than 70% female. Despite an overall equalisation, women continue to be unevenly distributed in terms of subjects of study, and although there are virtually no subjects without women students, there are some which continue to recruit mainly men. Women are in a majority in education, professions allied to medicine, art and design, and humanities.

### Ethnic minorities

By comparison with their numbers in the total population, students from ethnic minorities in general are not underrepresented in higher education. This partly reflects the age distribution of some ethnic minority communities which is skewed towards young people. However, participation rates differ dramatically between different minority groups. Afro-Caribbean men, and students of Bangladeshi origin, especially women, are very underrepresented, while South and East Asian men are heavily over represented. Subject spread is also very uneven, with some minority groups heavily concentrated in particular subject areas like computing and business studies. Distribution between institutions is also very uneven. Some HEIs, especially some of the new universities in large conurbations have explicitly sought to expand participation among ethnic minority communities.

### International Students

Britain is a significant exporter of higher education, through overseas students attending HEIs in the UK and through courses delivered by UK institutions in other countries, either directly or through franchising arrangements with overseas institutions. This is the result of the quality reputation of British higher education, historical Commonwealth links, and the influence of the English language.

In 1995 there were 70,000 international postgraduates and 94,000 international undergraduates studying in UK HEIs. The majority were on very vocational courses. The largest groups came from EU countries (45,000 undergraduates and 20,000 postgraduates), and East Asia (24,000 undergraduates and 21,000 postgraduates).

In the long term British HE may face a competitive threat in the international markets, and the dependence of some HEIs on international students from a small number of countries, mainly in South East Asia (notably Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore), may represent a risk to the institutions. Several of these countries explicitly aim to become exporters themselves in the foreseeable future, becoming competitors rather than customers. A further threat arises from the development of global HEIs. At least 10 HE institutions (of which the Open University is the only British example) have plans to become providers of higher education to learners worldwide, placing them potentially in competition with British institutions, first for international students, and perhaps later for home ones as well..

### Postgraduates and Post-Experience Students

A particular area of expansion has been in postgraduate and post-experience work. Postgraduate student numbers in 1994/5 were 315,000 (21% of all students, compared with 13% of the much smaller total in 1979). Of this total 80% were on taught postgraduate programmes (as distinct from research degrees) and 60% were part-time.

Traditionally postgraduate study was seen primarily as preparation for careers in academic life or high level research, but this has changed significantly, as a result of factors like a more competitive graduate labour market, and the growth of high level work based learning. The distinction between postgraduate and post-experience is often blurred and institutions admit non-graduates to “postgraduate” programmes on the basis of prior experience and evidence of relevant knowledge. The new groups include both those “traditional” aged graduates who are seeking to make themselves more employable by raising their qualification levels in an increasingly competitive labour market and people returning for continuing education alongside their full-time employment, either to develop in their present jobs of to prepare for a career move.

The number of postgraduate and past experience programmes has itself expanded rapidly, with many programmes specifically designed for particular firms or groups of individuals.

The definition of postgraduate qualifications is confused, but broadly they can be divided into research degrees (most commonly PhD. D.Phil. and M.Phil.) and taught postgraduate degrees (including MA, MSc and many others). A further recent development, especially in the natural sciences, is Masters qualifications integrated with undergraduate programmes, like the Master of Physics, which is studied as a two year programme which follows the first two years of an undergraduate degree, bypassing the third year of a normal degree.

### Students in FE Colleges

About 13% of higher education students are studying in FE institutions, and about half of these are on HNC or HND programmes. They are heavily concentrated in business and administrative studies (42%) and engineering and technology (16%), with creative arts and design the next largest category (8%).

## Graduate Employment

The numbers of graduates produced by the higher education system has been increasing as a result of expansion, and will peak in the mid 1990s, when the impact of consolidation of student numbers has worked through. This has combined with the effects of the recession to produce a rise in graduate unemployment, although this had abated somewhat by 1996, and graduates are still as likely to be in employment at the age of 23/24 as their non graduate peers (and more so if they are female or have previous work experience).

Graduate destination information is gathered and published annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)[[21]](#footnote-21). A significant proportion of first degree graduates go into postgraduate study (including professional qualification courses) and this is generally higher in “old” than “new” universities. The tendency to stay on for a further qualification has increased in recent years, partly in response to a more competitive labour market.

The first destinations of 1994 graduates are shown in the figure overleaf.

Figure 7: First Destinations of Graduates, 1994

(Education Statistics for the UK, 1995)

Traditionally there has been an identifiably distinct graduate labour market. largely closed to non-graduates, although a proportion of graduates have always entered employment outside this market, at least initially. Recruitment to the graduate labour market was mainly to large national and international employers, using the graduate careers advisory services, which organised the “milk round”, where employers visited universities annually to present themselves and interview potential recruits. These graduate employers are generally members of the Association of Graduate Recruiters and often have long standing relationships with the careers advisory services of particular universities.

A second major route for recruitment, especially in fields like engineering, has been through sandwich courses. Here, a full year’s work placement gives employer and student the opportunity to get to know each other well and is often used as an extended recruitment process.

As the numbers of graduates have increased, employers have become more selective and graduates are finding employment in a wider range of occupations. This does not necessarily imply that they are underused, or that they will remain in these jobs on a long term basis. Some large graduate recruiters are in practice recruiting graduates both to “graduate jobs” through a specific graduate scheme and to other roles through their normal recruitment systems. A growing number of graduates are being recruited to SMEs, although this is much more common where the firm has graduate managers.

The graduate recruitment market is a competitive one and “graduate employers” typically have many applicants for each place. In general the employers are seeking two distinct kinds of graduate:

specialists - with specific technical knowledge and skills (e.g. engineers, pharmacists, architects). Here the specific nature of the qualification is important and employers and students may well already know each other through work placements.

generalists - a larger group recruited for broader managerial and administrative roles, who place greater emphasis on personal transferable skills than on formal qualifications.

In the latter case the class of degree may not in itself be a major concern for the employer but, given the high number of applicants, it is often used as an initial screening tool. This can mean that a student with a lower second class degree may simply not be considered, while one with an upper second class degree will.

There is evidence that mature graduates, and graduates of some (especially “new” universities) have greater difficulty in entering the labour market. This is despite the fact that they have previous work experience and more vocationally focused qualifications and the traditional argument for recruiting for the long term is no longer so relevant.

The occupations most commonly applied for by graduates are: general management/administration, teaching, research, specialist management and professional services. In general they place highest priority on interesting and challenging work, competitive salary and the opportunity to continue to develop skills.

## International Comparisons and Links

Britain has traditionally operated a shorter, more selective and more intensive higher education system than most OECD countries. For this reason participation rates have been lower per thousand population, but graduation rates have been comparable. The age at which individuals graduate has been lower, and very much lower than some countries.

The 1995 OECD Indicators show the UK as 11th of 22 OECD countries in HE participation rate but 6th in terms of the proportion of degrees awarded. The UK has the fourth highest proportion of graduates in natural and physical sciences.

There is considerable movement of students between UK and foreign universities. In 1992/3 under the EU ERASMUS programme 12,000 European students came to study in UK universities, while 8,000 UK students went abroad as part of their studies (the large majority to France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands).

# Ways of Working Together

Having established something about how HE works, there are a number of ways of making contact and working together. This section outlines some of them.. These issues are discussed in greater detail in the HEFCE/UACE report on best practice, listed in the Key Reports section of this Guide

## Time Cycles and Value Systems

TECs, like much of industry, work to very short time scales, with programmes moving from conception to operation in months or weeks, not years. They are used to responding rapidly to new demands and pressures and expect those they work with to do likewise.

HEIs are becoming more interested in contributing to local and economic development, and to working in partnership with others. However, the core business of universities is creating and disseminating knowledge, and such work is necessarily slow. They are also built around well established sets of common values, which have their roots in disciplines and institutions whose history stretches back for years (and sometimes centuries). Much of the work of universities is therefore based on a very long time cycle, and the culture reflects this. Specific reasons for this include:

course development - is bound to take time. A substantial change in a degree programme - like building in Key Skills as an assessed component of a degree, is likely to take a year of planning, consultation and staff development before introduction on a pilot basis. It can be four or five years before graduates emerge with the new qualification.

research timescales - in many fields of research timescales are even longer, because the processes themselves are slow and because of the importance of testing, interpreting and debating results.

consent - the fact that universities are normally governed by consent rather than direction also means that major change in what is taught and how it is assessed and given credit require the agreement of a wide range of people across the institution. The result may be better thought through, but it takes time for ideas to win support, to gain majority consent and be implemented.

staff management - much of the staff resource of HE is committed over a long timescale - to teaching on programmes that run for three or more years, and to research and publication programmes with similar timescales. Many are not in a position to stop what they are doing to respond quickly to new demands.

administrative procedures - many universities have complex procedures to ensure that innovation commands genuine support and is well thought through. They also work on academic, rather than financial years, which can lead to administrative problems in collaborative project work.

Delays can be frustrating for TEC staff, who can see a need and sometimes find it difficult to understand why HEIs cannot respond rapidly. However, they are often unavoidable if universities are to do their primary task, and this makes the cultivation of long term strategies and relationships very important. If the resource of the university is to be unlocked for the good of the local community and economy, planning needs to take place over a long period and relationships of trust and shared values need developing.

It should also be noted that some parts of universities can respond rapidly: some are set up specifically to do this and many institutions have devoted time and energy to developing strategies for rapid response which do not disrupt their other activities.

## Making Contact

Since most universities are highly devolved systems, rather than managed organisations, most do not have a single point through which all the potential expertise of the institution can be accessed. Some have been developing such systems, and there are cases of such approaches at regional level. However, it is very difficult even for those working within a large university to keep track of all that is going on among perhaps 1000 staff, each pursuing a unique programme of teaching and research.

The first question to ask is, therefore, does a central reference point exist? If so how is it contacted and what is its scope? Not all such central points are well linked throughout the university and some have deliberately narrow remits.

If there is no central referral point, a much more complex strategy is inevitable. The formal head of the institution is responsible for its overall strategy and will be the key person to liaise with on local and regional strategy. However, he or she is rarely a “manager” in the normal sense and is not usually in a position to instruct colleagues to work with outside agencies or to undertake new initiatives. Most Vice Chancellors see themselves more as leaders than managers, steering their institutions by persuasion and consent rather than direction. It is therefore important to develop a network of contacts with other key people with particular responsibilities. Some of the key people, services or units might include:

* access and admissions offices
* business development units
* business schools
* city and regional offices
* continuing education departments and units
* external relations offices
* graduate careers advisory services
* heads of specific departments and schools
* industrial liaison officers
* marketing and communications offices
* schools of education and in-service education
* teaching and learning development units

An important element of any development strategy in HE is to ensure that it addresses the both top and bottom of institutional hierarchies. Individual academics are motivated by personal commitment and enthusiasms as much as by direction from senior managers. Their ability to produce change can be restricted by lack of understanding among senior managers, especially where change calls for modifying institutional procedures and structures. The most successful schemes are those which combine ‘top down’ with ‘bottom up’ approaches, where individuals are helped and motivated to change within a framework agreed at senior levels. Throughout such developments personal contacts can be extremely important and relationships of trust need to be established and maintained with key people in relevant parts of the institution.

## Geographical Factors

There are TECs which have no HE institution physically based in their areas (although of course the Open University operates in all TEC areas). This does not, of course, mean that no HE takes place, or that the area does not need the services of HE. Even if an HE institution sees serving local needs as one of its main priorities, it is unlikely to define “local” as only its surrounding TEC area. In some ways TECs with no local HE institution are fortunate in being able to develop a range of relationships with several institutions, using each for those things which it is best at.

On the other hand, some TECs have several HE institutions in their area: often an “old” university and a “new” one and sometimes specialist colleges of HE as well. Here again there is the opportunity to develop a range of relationships for particular purposes: recognising that different institutions will have different strengths. It is important to avoid stereotyping institutions, or assuming that old universities will be only interested in international academic research and that new ones will be only concerned with vocational courses.

Some TECs have no exclusively HE institution, but include a “mixed economy” College of Further and Higher Education, in which case they are likely to already have a working relationship. Many FE colleges also provide HE programmes “franchised” from an HE institution, and others act as outposts in which a HEI delivers its programmes to students who would otherwise have difficulty travelling to the main campus.

Many TECs have recognised the diversity of potential connections, and some TEC strategies identify six or more institutions within their region and beyond with which they have links for specific purposes (like access to expertise in specific locally important technologies, or particular kinds of management expertise).

## Mechanisms for Collaboration[[22]](#footnote-22)

Increasingly agencies concerned with post-school learning are developing partnership approaches to their work. Sometimes these relationships are created purely because of a funder’s requirement and they do not always rest on a clear understanding of common and distinct roles and objectives. To be effective, a partnership needs all those involved to be clear about what they wish to achieve, about their partners’ aims, and about what each party is expected to contribute.

Some partnerships involve HEIs with one or more employers, sometimes they involve an HEI and one or more TECs. A growing number involve collaboration across a region or sub-region. In all cases it is important that TECs and HEIs see each other not merely as contractors or funders, but as having a concern for a common objective.

## Designing Strategies

Most TECs have developed strategies for work with higher education. Some are generic, covering relationships with several HEIs, others are specific, negotiated with individual institutions. Some explicitly recognise relationships with HEIs outside their immediate area, where there is unique expertise (e.g. in a particular field of management, or an area of technology important to local industry). Government Offices are also developing strategies at a regional level. The process of developing a strategy can itself be important in bringing the various partners together and focusing their attention on the full range and potential of their work, as well as cementing working relationships on which future work can be built.

It is important that any strategy recognises all the dimensions of the relationship. For example, a scheme designed to benefit employers by providing access to specific skills or knowledge may be perceived as only concerned with business competitiveness, but it can also form part of a strategy for the development of people, whether they are undergraduates, graduates or academic staff.

## Influencing Curriculum

Changing the curriculum of higher education is important, but a slow process. Courses take a long time to design and academic staff are rightly proud of their specialist expertise and knowledge. In most academic and some professional fields, it is the staff of universities who define the subject field or discipline and who set and maintain its standards. They are properly cautious about radical change which may endanger the survival of their field. It is, after all, important for the competitiveness of the UK economy that we continue to produce first rate physicists, and do not stop doing so in order to pursue a misguided fashion in education or training. Academic staff therefore need to be convinced intellectually of the need for change. They need to see that it works and improves the quality of learning and competence of their students. They also need a system of reward which recognises the priority of change and this is sometime lacking at present.

The experience of the Enterprise in Higher Education programme is particularly relevant here. Under EHE, institutions signed contracts with the Employment Department for five year programmes of work around broad agreed aims, but were given great latitude in how they carried out the work. The Department provided support and advice, encouraged cross fertilisation between projects, and gave formal recognition to the workers within the institutions. What it did not do was prescribe solutions or try to impose ways of working.

## Steering and Advisory Groups

Most project based development involves some form of steering group or committee. These are sometimes perceived as an irritating requirement of contracting procedures. At best they are seen as a means of ensuring that project staff meet deadlines (or are publicly embarrassed by failing to do so). However, used creatively such committees can be an important way of improving the quality of the project itself and of cementing and developing relationships between partners. A project steering committee can be a way for a new TEC officer to make personal contacts within the university, and begin to “read” the politics of the institution.

Steering committees also usually have formal responsibilities for the project, although they are not always aware of these. It can be helpful to encourage the committee to recognise and take its role seriously, both to stimulate active involvement and partnership, and to ensure that a variety of voices are heard in its direction and effectiveness.

Committees may also be symbolically important for the institutional staff, where project staff are relatively junior and lack leverage within their own institutions. The need to attend a steering committee, because it has contractual implications, may encourage senior managers to consider issues which would not receive attention if raised internally by a junior project officer. The meeting can also force staff to clarify and write down their thoughts and plans and encourage internal colleagues to make decisions about resources and structures which otherwise would not be attended to.

Committees can also provide a forum for discussing issues like external impact and long term implications which may be beyond the control of the project, or outside its immediate field of vision.

A further, but distinct, use of committees is the advisory panel or group which many universities have for more vocational programmes. Such groups typically include a number of employers and other relevant interests, who represent potential employers of the programme’s graduates, and can bring up to date knowledge of the application of the academic expertise to the work context. Although the model exists widely and is encouraged in Quality Audit, it is not always felt by academics to be effective in practice.

## Funding Relationships

In the past there has sometimes been a tendency for HEIs to see TECs merely as a source of money for initiatives not fundable from other sources. In some cases this has led to a formal contracting relationship which has made it more difficult to develop creative partnerships. In many cases it will be more beneficial to both parties, and their common objectives, if both see funding as a means to achieve common purposes through partnership, rather than a formal bidding and delivery process.

This does not, of course, imply that proper financial relationships are not important, but it does recognise that very formal relationships can inhibit creative thinking, while flexible use of resources can produce innovation and cement relationships in the longer term. The evidence of successful partnerships suggests that using resources to build relationships of trust is more likely to achieve the objectives of both parties than a narrower contract-based approach.

One particularly useful way of achieving this is through collaboration in bidding to other agencies, including the EU and programmes like Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The experience of joint work of this sort can be a powerful tool for creating shared commitment.

# Checklists

The following section offers a set of checklists, designed to help TEC staff develop a coherent picture of higher education in their areas and of those aspects most relevant to TEC concerns. TEC managers may wish to use them alone, in discussion with a group of colleagues, or with colleagues inside the HE institutions. The list is long, and it is likely to be more usefully addressed in sections than pursued as a questionnaire.

A manager who knows the answers to most of the questions, preferably as a result of discussion with key staff in the university, will be in a much better position to understand how the institution works, and the opportunities for working together on common objectives.

*Some questions, like the numbers of students, are matters of fact (though not always simple ones). Others are much less clear cut: either because the answer is different in different parts of the institution, because there are proper debates internally, because information is collected in different ways for different purposes, or because a formal policy agreed at the top may not be understood or implemented in practice. In most cases there is no “right answer” - what is right for one institution may be wrong for another. In many cases there will be no clear institutional policy but there may be a policy at school, faculty or department level, or well established practice without formal policy statements.*

### Strategic Issues

1. Does your TEC have an agreed strategy for its work with HE and what priorities does it set?
2. How does it correspond to the strategic priorities of the HEIs in your region, as shown in their strategic plans?
3. Is there any regional structure to support HE/TEC collaboration, based on the Government Office or elsewhere?
4. At what levels are there formal or frequent links between the TEC and HE (Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Deans, Heads of Department, Heads of Specialist Units, or individual academics…)?
5. What kind of issues does the HE share formal policies on and which are left to local or individual discretion?

### Access

1. Does the HEI have a strategy for promoting HE in areas or to groups who have not traditionally participated in HE?
2. What guidance services does the HEI provide for those considering entry, and for those leaving? How closely do these services work with other guidance agencies in the area, to share expertise, information or to refer clients?
3. Does the HEI have a policy (and how does it implement it) on embedding core/key or personal transferable skills in the curriculum?
4. Does the HEI have a policy (and how does it implement it) on alternative entry routes (access courses, Compacts, GNVQ, RoA…)?
5. Is it possible for a student to obtain credit from part of a course and transfer it to another institution and is the reverse also possible?
6. Does the HEI have any procedure for accrediting the prior learning of people seeking admission, and allowing them exemption from parts of the course on this basis?
7. How does the HEI’s Equal Opportunities policy relate to its admissions processes?

### Business Support

1. Are there particular examples of successful collaboration between HE and businesses which might be valuable in promoting future development?
2. Do the HE institutions have direct connections with Business Link (e.g. formal partners, or shared staff)?
3. Who are the key contacts for discussion about managing work placements for students?
4. Who are the key contacts for discussion about leading edge technology transfer?
5. Does the HEI have departments or units with expertise or knowledge of particular relevance to local or regional development?
6. Does the HEI have a policy (and how does it implement it) on workbased learning?
7. Does the HEI know about and understand the skills and knowledge needs of local firms?
8. Does the university have a policy on working with SMEs and how effective are its networks for doing so?

### Infrastructures and Human Resource

1. Are there specific initiatives aimed at reducing graduate unemployment?
2. Are there any initiatives aimed at raising skill levels in specific local areas?
3. Are HE institutions involved in Investors in People, as Investors themselves, or by supporting other employers?
4. What activities or initiatives are there which aim to contribute to the quality of life and to community capacity in the region?
5. Are there any schemes to encourage staff exchanges between the university and industry?

### Curriculum Relevance and Qualifications

1. How many students undergo some form of work placement or experience during their time with the HEI (how much time is involved and how is it supervised and assessed)?
2. Are HE institutions involved in developing and promoting recording achievement for their students? Do they make any formal use of the National Record of Achievement with entrants or students?
3. What mechanisms exist to stimulate development in teaching and learning (internally or externally funded) and what work has been carried out?
4. Is the curriculum modularised and, if so, is it easy for students to combine modules from different subjects to create unique learning routes (and how many do so)?
5. Does the HEI offer courses which lead to, or incorporate units of, NVQs, or opportunities for learners to acquire these by other means like APL?
6. How far does the HEI’s quality assurance system recognise learning related to employability or work experience? How is the quality of learning on student placements monitored?
7. How rapidly can the university design long or short courses in response to external demand?

### National and International Links

1. Does the HEI offer any courses to overseas clients which might be useful to local firms?
2. Does the HEI recruit overseas students from countries where local firms are keen to develop business and can these links be developed?
3. Where students undertake placements in other countries or “years abroad”, what countries do they go to and are there opportunities to build links with local employers?
4. Do HE institutions have links for research or course delivery with countries where local firms are seeking to develop business?
5. Are there opportunities for collaborative bidding for development funding to the European Community or other international sources, involving HEIs and firms and/or the TEC? Are there mechanisms in place to do this quickly in response to invitations to tender?
6. Do similar opportunities and mechanisms exist for national and regional initiatives like the Single Regeneration Budget?

### Building Institutional Profiles

For each relevant HEI:

1. Does the HEI see itself as primarily a local, regional, national or international institution? (Is this different in different subject areas?
2. How does it see the balance in its activity between teaching and research? (How has it performed in Teaching Quality Assessments and Research Assessment)?
3. How does the HEI’s decision making structure work - what kind of decisions are made by the Governing Body, by the Vice Chancellor or a management team, or by an elected body (Senate, Academic Board etc.)?
4. What are the principal strengths of the institution, in research, development and consultancy?
5. Does the HEI have a policy on Lifetime Learning?
6. Does the HEI have an Equal Opportunities policy on admissions and employment? How is this implemented, and with what effect?
7. How many students are currently enrolled?
8. What proportions are on sub-degree/first degree/taught postgraduate programmes, research degrees?
9. What proportions are full and part-time?
10. What proportion are mature (DfEE defines “mature” as over 21 at entry to degree programmes and over 25 to postgraduate ones)?
11. What proportion are in full-time employment?
12. What proportion are recruited locally?
13. What proportion stay in the area after graduation?
14. What are the main trends in numbers in recent years?
15. How many staff does the HEI employ and how are they divided between academic, research, administrative, manual?
16. How much freedom do individual staff have to act in organising joint projects or external collaboration? (Who approves action?)
17. Does the HEI maintain a system for identifying staff expertise and knowledge which might be relevant to local or regional firms?
18. How far is the management of resources devolved internally?
19. Does the institution have a single contact point for enquiries about TEC related issues?
20. Who are the key contacts within the institution for discussion of general TEC/HE relationships and economic strategy?

# Case studies and Models

On the ground there are many examples of good, or interesting, practice in TEC/HE collaboration. This section provides a sample of case studies of such initiatives. They do not claim to be the best, or necessarily replicable in other locations, but they may suggest ideas and approaches which you could follow up in your own context.[[23]](#footnote-23)

# TECs and HE in your region

This section is provided for you to insert documents relating to your own region.

# Useful documents

A range of relevant organisations produce briefing papers which you may wish to insert here. This section of the guide has been provided for you to file such material. One source is CVCP, which publishes occasional briefing papers on major issues.

# Key reports

This section lists some documents on higher education which may be of particular interest to TEC Managers wishing to understand more about a particular field. They are grouped under the same broad headings as the rest of this Guide.

## Strategic Issues

An Adult Higher Education: a Vision

McNair S. NIACE 1993

A policy discussion paper from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. Argued for a redesigning of higher education as a predominantly adult system which would be lifelong, learner centred, achievement led, economically proactive, explicit about purposes and criteria, and diverse. It would be built around three “frameworks”, for learner support, curriculum and credit.

Communities and their Universities - The challenges of Lifelong Learning

Ed Elliot J., Francis H., Humphreys R., and Istance D.  
Lawrence and Wishart 1996

Papers presented to the Annual Conference of the Universities Association for Continuing Education. Focus on the contribution which universities can make to the re-creation of their own communities and the impact of those communities on the universities. The essays are written from the perspective of the community, its needs and its resources.

Continuing Education

HEFCE Circular 3/94

Describes the Council’s approach to funding Continuing Education development in HEIs.

HEFCE Circular 11/95

Describes the results of the competitive bidding for CVE funds

The Demand for Higher Education Students in Wales

ERES for the Welsh Development Agency 1993

The report of a survey of 500 businesses in Wales, examining patterns of graduate recruitment and policy issues relating to graduate employment in SMEs.

Enterprise in Higher Education: the First Eleven

A review of Enterprise in Higher Education by the Directors of Enterprise in the 11 HEIs which participated in the first round projects 1988-1993. Describes the experience in the institutions and examples of innovative practice.

The FE/HE Interface: a UK Perspective

Rawlinson. S. Frost D. and Walsh K. Institute for Employment Research for CVCP 1996

Maps the range of relationships between FE and HE institutions in the UK and identifies policy issues for the future.

Final Report of the Joint Planning Group for Quality Assurance in HE

CVCP 1996

Report of the group constituted to plan the merging of the quality assurance functions of HEQC and HEFCE.

Higher Education: a New Framework

DES/HMSO 1991

The White Paper which provided the rationale for the 1992 Act which abolished the binary line.

Higher Education Futures

Royal Society 1993

Presented the Royal Society’s proposals for the reform of higher education. Supported mass participation and institutional diversity, and argued for the abolition of the classified Honours degree, and a longer degree for those specialising in the sciences.

Institutions’ Strategic Plans

HEFCE Circular 20/96

Each year HEFCE requires all HEIs to submit a strategic plan for the following five years. The Council analyses these and publishes in December a Circular which identifies the main trends and developments in the sector, including projections on student and staff numbers, finance and major development issues and trends. This provides the most comprehensive overview of planned trends in HE as a whole.

Investing in Diversity: an Assessment of Higher Education Policy

CIHE 1992

Reviewed the position of HE immediately after the 1992 Act came into force. Recommended a system based on diversity, relevance to work, with stronger focus on engineering, maths and science, research and technology transfer, and with substantial investment in transition to a mass system.

Lifetime Learning: a policy framework

DfEE 1996

A Government paper produced following a public consultation. It proposes a national framework for policy on Lifetime Learning which will not be a government initiative, but to which government will be committed. It includes six strands of development:

* investing in the training and development of employees
* gaining individuals’ commitment to learning
* developing advice and guidance for individuals
* improving access to learning
* providing opportunities to develop basic skills
* developing partnerships.

Longer Term Prospects for British Higher Education

Williams G. and Fry H. Institute of Education for CVCP 1994

An analysis of the future of HE, carried out by the London University Institute of Education to provide an overview of future policy issues for the Council. Based on a consultation with a wide range of interested organisations and individuals. Report identifies issues, risks and growth points.

Profitable Learning

Ball C. RSA 1992

Proposed a unified national campaign for learning based on findings that learning pays individuals, organisations and society, that we have underestimated the human potential to learn, and provided too little financial incentive to learn. Presented a 10 point action plan.

Redrawing the Boundaries: FE/HE Partnerships

Bocock J. & Scott P. Centre for Policy Studies in Education, University of Leeds 1995

Report of a study of different kinds of FE/HE partnership, their impact on curriculum and quality

Report of the Working Group on Further and Higher Education in the 21st Century

National Commission on Education. Paul Hamlyn 1993

Report of one of the working groups of the “National Commission on Education”. Calls for a long term Government commitment to Lifetime Learning, backed by a single post-18 framework and a coherent system of funding.

The Skills Audit

DfEE and Cabinet Office

Report of an Interdepartmental Group reviewing Britain’s comparative performance in skills and comparing it to performance in France, Germany, the United States and Singapore.

Teaching and Learning in an Expanding Higher Education System

CSUP Edinburgh 1992 (the MacFarlane Report)

Presented proposals for the future of higher education in Scotland. Notable for the strong emphasis which it put on the role of information technology.

Teaching and Learning: towards the learning society

European Commission White Paper 1995

The paper which launched the EU policy for lifelong learning and the European Year. Outlined the challenges of the information society, internationalisation and the growth of knowledge and proposed two responses - the development of a broad knowledge base and developing skills for employability.

A Wider Spectrum of Opportunities

CIHE 1995

Proposed a strategy for the future of HE stressing “applied” education, involving FE Colleges, lifelong learning, and reform of teaching.

## Access, Participation and Progression

Fast and Flexible

Leah Sims and Maggie Woodrow HEFCE 1996

Evaluation of the HEFCE experimental programme of Accelerated and Intensive degrees.

A Mature Student’s Guide to Higher Education

UCAS 1996

A short practical guide to issues facing mature students, including finance, housing, choice of course etc.

Personal Tutoring and Academic Advice in Focus

HEQC 1996

A series of papers on current practice in personal tutoring

Putting Learners at the Centre

McNair S. DfEE 1996

Collection of essays by project staff involved in the DfEE’s Guidance and Learner Autonomy Programme. Describes institutional experience and identifies development issues and priorities

A Quality Assurance Framework for Guidance and Learner Support in Higher Education

HEQC 1995

Provides guidance for institutions on how to develop quality assurance in the field of guidance. It is used in Quality Audit work and institutions are expected to demonstrate their performance against its criteria.

Students with Special Needs

HEFCE 1995

Reports the outcomes of the HEFCE special initiative funding 1993/4 and presents examples of good practice.

Widening Access to Higher Education

HEFCE 1996

Describes the outcomes of the HEFCE special funding programme in this field.

## Business Support

The Interface Between HE and TECs in Wales

ED/University of Glamorgan

Papers presented at a conference in 1995 to explore ways of forging stronger links between HE and work.

Lifelong Learning: Developing Europe’s Future Capability

European Round Table of Industrialists 1992

Report of a working study of trends in university-industry interface in the education and training of adults. Strongly supports a shift towards a lifelong perspective. Includes short case studies and recommendations from leaders of a large group of major European companies.

The Skills Link

ED 1990

Summarises the Employment Department’s 69 development projects in HE in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Includes projects on workbased learning, access, credit accumulation and transfer, APL and course design.

Using Graduate Skills

Leeds TEC 1997

A national overview report on strategies for increasing and supporting graduate recruitment into SMEs. Produced as part of a DfEE UGS project.

Workbased Learning

Brennan J. and Little B. DfEE 1996

A substantial technical review of developments in workbased learning to date. Outlines the key issues and debates, describes a range of approaches, projects and findings. The most authoritative work in its field.

Working with Higher Education: what’s in it for your business?

DfEE with TEC National Council 1996

A short set of case studies of collaborative initiatives between HEIs and 7 SMEs.

Working on Work Experience

David Pierce DfEE 1996

A short paper summarising DfEE development work on workbased learning over a decade.

## Infrastructure and Human Resources

Best Practice in Collaboration between HE and TECs

HEFCE/DfEE/UACE 1995

The report of a project carried out by UACE for HEFCE and DfEE to investigate good practice in collaboration, includes case studies of effective partnerships.

Great Expectations

Institute for Employment Research for AGCAS/CSU 1996

Surveyed student experience and expectations of the relationship between higher education and work, based on a survey of over 5000 final year undergraduate students in 21 institutions.

Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century

AGR 1996

A study commissioned by AGR of the skills likely to be required in graduates in the future. Based on consultation with employers and others, it identifies characteristics of high skilled employment in the next century and the characteristics which graduates will need to survive in it.

Universities and their Communities

Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies for CVCP 1994

This report reviews the way in which universities impact on their local and regional communities. It points out the impact of a university on a community and examines its economic and social impact through technology transfer; expertise in fields like management education and inward investment, tourism and conferencing, built environment, social and community development, staff involvement in local social and civic activity, and direct provision of local facilities like teaching hospitals.

It reports that 80% of universities have increased their local activity, but that this is much stronger in “new” than “old” universities. It makes recommendations for further development.

## Curriculum Relevance

Assessment Issues in Higher Education

Atkins. M. ED 1993

An overview of assessment issues, exploring models and approaches to assessment in higher education. Discusses alternative approaches and the issues raised by the bringing together of vocational and academic models.

The ASSET Programme: final report

Anglia Polytechnic University 1992

Report of a project which created models for integrating workbased and academic learning for practising engineers and social workers through a competence based framework.

Choosing to Change: extending access, choice and mobility in higher education

HEQC 1994 (the Robertson Report)

Report of a project commissioned by ED and CNAA/HEQC to examine developments in credit accumulation and transfer (CATs) in British higher education. Reviews the case for CAT, the current situation, strategies for development, international comparisons, implications for funding and makes recommendations.

Engineering Futures: new audiences and arrangements for Engineering higher education

Engineering Council 1990

Proposes a strategy for promoting and reforming engineering education in the light of declining enrolments and entry to the engineering profession.

Enterprise in Higher Education: a Thematic Evaluation

Biggs C. et al. And Segal Quince Wicksteed Ltd, for   
Employment Department

Research Series No 38 1994

Report of a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the EHE initiative in achieving its objectives and in embedding its work in institutions.

HEFCE

HEFCE publishes an Annual Report summarising its work and “Profiles” which summarises key information about the individual HE institutions and the system as a whole. HEFCE publishes the reports of all its Teaching Quality Assessments, each of which examines the teaching of a single subject in a single institution. The publications list includes reports on many of the Council’s initiatives in areas like access and participation.

It also publishes overview reports on its Teaching Quality Assessments, surveying the quality of teaching across England in each subject. At October 1996 19 subject reports had been published.

HEQC

HEQC publishes the reports of all its Quality Audits, which present an overview of the institution and how it approaches the management of quality. This also includes much useful information about the institution and its ways of working. Periodically HEQC also publishes an overview of national lessons from audit or papers on broad themes like Guidance. Relevant publications include:

Learning from Audit 1994

Learning from Collaborative Audit 1995

Guidelines on Quality Assurance 1994

Checklist for Quality Assurance 1994

Vocational Qualifications and Standards in Focus 1995

Notes for Guidance of Auditors 1995

Higher Level Vocational Qualifications: a government position paper

DfEE 1996

Outlines current Government thinking on the future development of high level NVQs. It proposes that national occupational standards will increasingly inform HE programmes and that the use of common units and elements should be encouraged, but without the imposition of a single model. It invites collaboration from existing professional bodies for level 5 development, based on the accreditation of existing professional qualifications, developing new standards only where no clear standards already exist, or where this will assist progression.

## Statistics

Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA)

Publishes statistical information on students, staff and finance. *Higher Education Statistics for the UK 1994/5* is a key document as the first complete set of data collected from the unified HE system. HESA also publishes *First Destinations of Graduates* annually.

Education at a Glance

OECD Paris annual

Summarises comparative statistical data on education systems throughout the 27 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

UCAS Annual Report

UCAS annual

Presents detailed analysis of applications and admissions for each year, broken down by subject, institution, age, gender and ethnicity, social class and region of domicile.

THESIS Website

The Times Higher Education Supplement World Wide Web Site provides access to a range of information in addition to material from their current issue. It includes league tables, showing institutions ranked by a variety of indicators, including graduate employment rates, and details of Teaching Quality Assessments by subject for all institutions.

http://thesis.newsint.co.uk/DATABANK/databank.html

NISS Website

The NISS Worldwide Web site indexes Worldwide Web material and Websites related to higher and further education. It provides access to all HE institutions, professional bodies and other organisations.

http://www.niss.ac.uk/

## Relevant Journals and Publications

*The Higher* - formerly the Times Higher Education Supplement, is the weekly newspaper of the academic community, covers news and current affairs issues in HE in the UK and the world and extensive review section.

*The New Academic* - a practitioner’s magazine on teaching and learning in higher education. Published by the Staff and Educational Development Association.

*Studies in Higher Education* - the journal of the Society for Research into Higher Education. The principal British academic journal for those concerned with research into higher education.

# Programmes and Initiatives

In recent years there have been many programmes and initiatives designed to influence HEIs and their curriculum. Some have been funded by DfEE, some by the funding councils, and some by other sources. The following is a very brief summary of some of these:

## DfEE Programmes

The following are programmes mounted by the Higher Education and Employment Division of the DfEE since 1988. They are listed in order of start date.

### Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE)

Enterprise in Higher Education was a programme launched in 1988 which funded HEIs to undertake institution wide development work related to the employability of graduates. Fifty-six HEIs participated in a rolling programme, and each was funded with an average of £1 million over five years. The last institution completed its five years in December 1996.

### Credit and Learning Outcomes (CLEO)

Eleven projects to examine aspects of credit accumulation and transfer, of the linkage between NVQs and HE qualifications and competence based degrees.

### Guidance and Learner Autonomy (GALA)

Guidance and Learner Autonomy - projects created to develop whole institution strategies and practice for learner guidance in seven HEIs. Findings appear in *Putting Learners at the Centre*.

### Work Based Learning (WBL)

The Employment Department and DfEE have funded many projects in the field of Workbased Learning. Thirty were carried out between 1990 and 1992, and the most recent round, which began in 1992 included a further eight. The earlier work is outlined in the ED’s *The Skills Link*, and all are summarised in the *Review of Work Based Learning in HE*.

### Discipline networks

Forty-six projects, each concerned with a specific discipline area or professional field and mounted by a cross institutional national group. Each is concerned with relating the curriculum to the employability of graduates. Networks organise seminars, workshops and conferences and undertake surveys and research on curriculum issues.

### Using graduate skills (UGS)

Sixteen projects developing strategies and tools to bridge the transition from HE to work in SMEs. Mainly two year projects started in 1996.

### Career management skills (CMS)

Eight projects designed to develop ways of embedding career management skills in the mainstream HE curriculum across whole institutions. Two year projects started in 1996.

### Higher Education business partnerships (HEBP)

Thirteen projects aimed at establishing ongoing partnerships which will provide mechanisms to bridge the transition from HE to work in SMEs. Some projects are setting up matching, recruitment processes, while others have a sector specific focus.

### Key Skills

Three projects exploring the level of Key Skills in HE entrants and developing materials to enhance their Key Skills, with CIHE.

### Partnership with graduates

Ten projects to begin in 1997 to gather views of recent graduates of the relevance of their HE experience to work.

## HEFCE Programmes

### Accelerated and Intensive Studies Programme (AIRS)

A pilot project to test the feasibility of offering full Honours Degree programmes to mature students over two instead of three years. It found that demand existed on a small scale, but that institutions generally managed the initiative by setting up marginal and temporary structures. Reported in *Fast and Flexible.*

### Computers in Teaching Initiative (CTI)

Funds a series of national centres to support development in the use of computers in teaching within specific disciplines. Funding in 1994/5 was £1.25 million

### Continuing Vocational Education (CVE)

A competitive fund to support the development of continuing vocational education. The current programme covers 1995/6-1998/9 at a cost of approximately £15 million pa. Selection criteria included relevance to National Targets, as well as track record and evidence of contribution to wealth creation. Twenty-nine institutions were awarded up to £300,000 pa. Twenty-nine were awarded up to £145,000, and 37 less than £100,000.

### Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL)

FDTL provides funds to departments which have received an “excellent” rating in Teaching Quality Assessment to undertake development and dissemination work on teaching and learning. 44 projects have been commissioned, and the programme will spend £8 million over 2 years.

### Non-Award Bearing Continuing Education (NABCE)

NABCE funds departments to undertake development projects aimed at widening higher education provision for non-participating groups, or to undertake liberal adult education work not suitable for accreditation.

### Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP)

TLTP funds development of technology based teaching approaches and resources. Seventy-six projects in progress in Autumn 1996.

## European Programmes

### European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the four[[24]](#footnote-24) inter-related funds known collectively as the Structural Funds, the principal object of which is to encourage greater economic and social cohesion and uniformity of living standards by channelling financial assistance to less well off regions of Europe.

The ESF is concerned mainly with employment and training and typically provides funds for:

* training and retraining schemes which allow workers to upgrade their basic skills;  
  - enable workers to adapt to new production methods, technologies and market conditions  
  - allows SMEs to adapt to new forms of co-operation with large firms  
  - provides young people with up to two years vocational training
* job creation schemes
* start-up aid for self employed
* vocational guidance and counselling projects
* studies, technical assistance and other innovative schemes concerned with training and employment initiatives.

### Leonardo

The main EU vocational education programme, aiming to create a common framework for European vocational education and training. Strand 2 provides funds to support technology transfer between universities and firms. Also funds international exchanges.

### Socrates

The main EU education programme, aiming to improve the quality of education by promoting co-operation. Includes the promotion of mobility of students and of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## Other Government Programmes

There are a range of Government programmes relevant to HE TEC collaboration, and most Departments have one or more. The Single Regeneration Budget is a major area where TECs and HEIs may wish to co-operate, and the Department of Trade and Industry and the Office of Science and Technology also have relevant programmes. The following are particularly relevant.

### Technology Foresight

Foresight is a Government led (OST) programme to bring together industry and the science, engineering and technology communities to research major trends over a 10-20 year future, to influence private and public investment decisions, and especially to inform SMEs. Fifteen sector panels reported in March 1995, and are carrying out ongoing work. One identified priority is the central role of improving business processes and skills, especially in sectors like manufacturing, construction and leisure and learning.

The 1995 report proposed that universities and Higher Education Funding Councils should respond to Foresight by reflecting Foresight priorities in the allocation procedures for recurrent and capital expenditure, by putting the skill needs identified in Foresight high on their agenda and by strengthening the regional dimension of Foresight through the universities.

http://www.open.gov.uk/ost/foresight/home.htm

### Teaching Company Scheme

A Government sponsored national programme which aims to enable companies to make strategic business advances through projects which would otherwise be beyond their resources of knowledge and skilled manpower. It does this through partnerships between HEIs and employers, where able young graduates (“Teaching Company Associates”) work on projects with supervision and support from both employer and HEI. In addition to supporting the firm, the scheme also aims to develop the graduates and to strengthen the relevance of skills and knowledge in HE. There are over 500 schemes, provided through 20 centres based in HEIs

## Other Programmes

### Former Employment Department Programmes

When TECs were created a number of previously central Employment Department programmes were transferred to them and they were able to use the resources to continue them or not, in the light of their own strategies. They survive in some TECs and not others and in some cases the objectives remain, either absorbed into other initiatives or under new names. The two most relevant were Graduate Gateway, a local scheme which places unemployed graduates in firms to carry out specific projects with supervision and support from both HEI and employer and High Technology National Training, which funded (through Employment Training) new HE courses in areas where a national shortage of high level skills had been identified as an economic need.

### Shell Technology Enterprise Programme

STEP is an initiative created by Shell UK, which operates at a national level to provide short term project placements for undergraduates in SMEs. The undergraduates are carefully selected, placed and supervised and Shell organise a number of national promotion activities to publicise the value of the placements to the firms.

101776.3176@compuserve.com

### Year in Industry

This scheme is similar to STEP, but provides one year placements for young people between leaving school and entering HE. It too selects and places and publicises the business benefits of the projects completed.

# National Organisations

The following are key national organisations in higher education. Their telephone numbers are shown, together with their World Wide Web addresses, which usually provide the most up to date information on their activities.

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)

The national professional body for Graduate Careers Advisory Services of all HE institutions. Provides support to services, organises conferences, working groups and research and publishes support and policy material.

http://www.agcas.csu.man.ac.uk

Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)

The national organisation for employers who recruit graduates. About 500 companies in membership, mainly larger firms with strong traditions of graduate recruitment. Commissions occasional research on issues relating to HE and employment.

http://www.go.reedinfo.co.uk/assoc.html

(01223) 356 720

Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)

An independent body of Vice Chancellors and senior industrialists concerned with the vocational aspects of higher education. Publishes occasional reports on policy issues.

(0171) 387 2171

HE Careers Central Services Unit (CSU)

A national agency of CVCP based in Manchester, to provide support to graduate careers advisory services through central services, which include publications, vacancy lists etc. Provides graduates with information on occupations and employers, on recruitment events and postgraduate opportunities

http://www.prospects.csu.man.ac.uk

Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP)

The Committee is the representative body of universities in the United Kingdom. Its main committee consists of the heads of all the universities, and it has a variety of committees on specific topics, including vocational qualifications, and industry.

(0171) 387 9231

http://www.cvcp.ac.uk

Employers for HE

Employers for Higher Education is an organisation created by employers associated originally with the development work of the DfEE’s Higher Education and Employment Division and particularly with the Enterprise in Higher Education programme. It is an independent body, serviced by a secretariat based in Leeds University.

Higher Education for Capability (HEC)

Higher Education for Capability is an independent national organisation, created and supported by a group of universities and others committed to the development of learner autonomy and capability in higher education. It organises conferences, publishes and provides consultancy.

(0113) 234 7725

http://www.lmu.ac.uk/hec/

Higher Education and Employment Division (HEED)

The division of DfEE specifically concerned with the relationship between higher education and the labour market. Provides policy support and funds research, development and dissemination.

Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE/HEFCW/SHEFC)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council are the main channels for public funding to higher education in the two countries. They are independent bodies appointed by the Secretaries of State.

HEFCE (for England) - http://www.hefce.ac.uk

(0117) 931 7317

HEFCW (for Wales) - http://www.niss.ac.uk/education.hefcw/index.html

(01222) 761 861

Profiles of all individual HE institutions can be found at:

http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/hefce/profiles/

Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC)

The Higher Education Quality Council is an agency of the CVCP, whose function is to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of quality in HE in the UK. Its principal work since 1992 has been Quality Audit, under which teams of auditors visit institutions to review and report on their arrangements for ensuring the quality of their provision. It does not inspect teaching (see Teaching Quality Assessment). It is also responsible for quality enhancement (including the “graduate standards” project), for advising the Secretary of State on applications from institutions seeking university status, for authorising agencies which validate access courses and for handling complaints about misleading prospectuses. In April 1997 its functions will be taken over by the new Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/heqc/index.html

(0171) 837 2223

Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA)

A joint body of the CVCP, SCOP and their Scottish equivalent, responsible for collecting, publishing and maintaining statistical information on higher education in the UK. Gathers data on students from entry to post graduation destination, staff and finance.

http://www.hesa.ac.uk/

(01242) 255 577

Joint Information Systems Committee

A UK wide body created by all the UK Funding Councils to stimulate the cost-effective use of information systems in higher education and provide high quality national networks and infrastructure for UK higher education and the research councils. It is responsible for the JANET and SuperJANET national networks which link all HEIs and for a large number of projects and systems to provide higher education with access to national and international data sources, software and learning materials.

http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/jasper/index.html

Open Learning Foundation

The OLF is a national consortium of member institutions which collaborates to develop teaching and learning materials and approaches aimed at increasing the use of open learning in HE.

Research Councils

Seven national Government funded bodies created to encourage, plan and carry out research in broad fields (like engineering, medicine, or economic and social research). It also disseminates research results and supports the education and training of research personnel. They may operate their own research institutes, provide grants to institutions and individuals, provide fellowships and awards.

Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP)

The Standing Conference of Principals is the representative body for the 55 Colleges of Higher Education.

http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/scop/index.html

(01242) 225 925

Universities Association for Continuing Education (UACE)

The Universities Association for Continuing Education is the representative body of the universities in the field of continuing education.

http://www.stir.ac.uk/epd/uace

(0113) 233 3184

Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS)

An agency of CVCP and SCOP responsible for processing applications for entry to higher education.

http://www.ucas.ac.uk/

(01242) 227 788

Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association (UCoSDA)

An agency of CVCP to provide support to universities in developing and delivering staff development to academic and non-academic staff. Provides advice, consultancy and training to institutions, and publishes materials.

http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/services/ucosda/

# Institutional Profiles

The following table lists all higher education institutions in England (excluding FE institutions funded by HEFCE). It is designed to provide a brief picture of the institution, its size, student body, resources and research activity. Although figures are accurate, it is important to discuss their interpretation with informed staff within the institution, since obvious explanations of particular scores, especially on research indicators, can be very misleading[[25]](#footnote-25).

Insert spreadsheet here

#### Notes

Type - uses the categories listed in section 4.6

Students - total number of full-time, part-time and sandwich students enrolled in 1995/6

Part-time - proportion of students who are part-time

Mature - proportion of students who are mature - defined as over 21 at entry to first degree or over 25 at entry to postgraduate study.

Staff - numbers of full-time equivalent academic staff

HEFCE grant - total HEFCE grant for 1996/7 including teaching, research and capital

Research Quality - index based on hypothetical maximum RAE score (100 = all staff carrying out research of international excellence in the majority of areas of their subject).

Research Active Staff - percentage of staff carrying out research at levels eligible for funding by HEFCE.

Employed graduates - percentage of graduates known to be in employment six months after graduation

Further Study - percentage of graduates in further study six months after graduation

Unemployed - percentage of graduates known to be unemployed six months after graduation.

Note that the research figures provide only a crude indicator of the extent to which an institution is engaged in high level research and the quality of that research. Institutions which concentrate heavily on teaching, or on activities like industrial consultancy, or who carry out high quality research in only some fields, will tend to score low on these indicators, while small specialist institutions tend to score highly.

Note that these figures are intended to provide an indication of relative size, but that student and staff numbers and budget figures relate to different years and are not therefore directly related.

# Glossary

This list is of commonly used acronyms related to higher education

AGCAS Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services

AGCLB Advice, Guidance, Counselling and Psychotherapy Lead Body

AMOSSHE Association of Managers of Student Services in HE

API Age Participation Index - ratio of HE entrants to “normal age” cohort.

APL Accreditation of Prior Learning

APLA Accreditation of Prior Learning Achievement

APEL Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

ASC Academic Subject Category

AUCF Average Unit of Council Funding

AUT Association of University Teachers

AVA Accredited Validating Agency for Access Courses

BTEC Business and Technology Education Council

CATS Credit Accumulation and Transfer

CERI Centre for Innovation and Research in Education (OECD)

CIHE Council for Industry and Higher Education

CNAA Council for National Academic Awards (now defunct)

CST Council for Science and Technology

CSU Central Services Unit for Careers

CVCP Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals

DENI Department of Education for Northern Ireland

DfEE Department for Education and Employment

ECCTIS Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service

ECTS European Credit Transfer System

ED Employment Department (since 1995 merged into the DfEE)

EHE Enterprise in Higher Education development programme

EU European Union

FEDA Further Education Development Agency

FEU Further Education Unit (defunct - functions transferred to FEDA)

Foresight DTI programme to anticipate the economic impact of technological change

FTE Full-time Equivalent Student

GNVQ General National Vocational Qualification

Graduate Gateway A TEC scheme to support unemployed graduates into employment

HECSU Central Services Unit for Graduate Careers Advisory Services

HEED Higher Education and Employment Division (of DfEE)

HEFCE Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEFCW Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

HEI Higher Education Institution (includes all universities, colleges and institutes of HE funded directly by HEFCE)

HEQC Higher Education Quality Council

HESA Higher Education Statistical Agency

HESES Higher Education Students Early Statistics

ICG Institute of Careers Guidance

INSET In Service Education of Teachers

ITT Initial Teacher Training

JANET Joint Academic Network (also SuperJANET)

JISC Joint Information Systems Committee

MASN Maximum Aggregate Student Number (for funding purposes)

NACCEG National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance

NACETT National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets

NATFHE National Association of Teachers in Further & Higher Education

NCET National Council for Educational Technology

NCVQ National Council for Vocational Qualifications

NFER National Foundation for Educational Research

NIACE National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education

NICEC National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling

NOCN National Open Colleges Network

NRA National Record of Achievement

NUS National Union of Students

NVQ National Vocational Qualification

OCN Open College Network

OCSD Oxford Centre for Staff Development

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OST Office for Science and Technology

OU The Open University

PCFC Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (now merged into HEFCE and HEFCW)

RAE Research Assessment Exercise

RoA Recording/Record of Achievement

RSA Royal Society for the Arts

SCOP Standing Conference of Principals

SEDA Staff and Educational Development Association

SHEFC Scottish Higher Education Funding Council

SME Small and Medium Employers

SRHE Society for Research into Higher Education

STEP Shell Technology and Enterprise Programme

SuperJANET Second generation of JANET, provides higher level communication networks to some HEIs

TQA Teaching Quality Assessment

TCS Teaching Company Scheme

TEC Training and Enterprise Councils

TEED Training and Enterprise Division of the Employment Department (since 1995 part of DfEE)

TTA Teacher Training Agency

U3A University of the Third Age

UACE Universities Council for Adult Continuing Education

UCAS Universities Central Admissions Service

UCEA Universities and Colleges Employers Association

UCoSDA Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association

UDACE Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (defunct - functions transferred to FEU and NIACE)

ULCAS University of London Careers Service

WUS World University Service

1. Higher Education Institutions include a range of Universities and Colleges. The abbreviation “HEI” is used in this guide for all institutions funded primarily through the Higher Education Funding Councils (and the University of Buckingham, which is a university, but is not funded via HEFCE). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. By convention a “points score” is calculated, giving 10 points to an A grade 8 to a B and so on.. A student with 3 As will thus have 30 points. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A low proportion of graduates in permanent employment does not, in itself, necessarily imply a failing on the part of the institution, since graduates in some disciplines have traditionally taken longer to find permanent employment, and graduates of institutions with a strong research focus are much more likely to continue into postgraduate research or study (and thus do not appear as in permanent employment). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *The Skills Audit* DfEE and Cabinet Office 1996 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The use of these terms can be confusing, since some HEIs offer postgraduate and post-experience “Diplomas” and “Certificates” which may not correspond in demand or level to this use of the terms. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Accreditation of - Prior Learning, Prior Experiential Learning, or Prior Learning Experience [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A number of studies have explore this question in detail, but produced very different results. See CVCP *Universities and their Communities* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Websites can be located via NISS (the National Information Systems and Services) or via the HEFCE site at http://www.niss.ac.uk/hefce/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. All data here from DfEE Education Statistics for the UK 1995 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. numbers of part-time students, who pay their own fees, were not limited [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Scottish system is distinct from the English one and there are a number of more minor differences in Wales. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Allocations to individual institutions are listed in the Institutional Profiles section of this Guide. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Among the five largest employers in the North East Region, for example, two are universities (and all five universities in that region are among the 30 employers with more than 1000 employees). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The higher education system in England differs in a number of ways from the systems in other parts of the United Kingdom. The Welsh system is most like the English, and has eight higher education institutions, including five Colleges of the federal University of Wales. In Scotland the system is very different; there are 15 higher education institutions and 11 Central Institutions. In Northern Ireland there are two universities. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The **Chancellor** is primarily a ceremonial officer, normally a distinguished public figure who presides at formal occasions, but is not involved in the running of the institution. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Staff Development Units are often not involved in subject specific issues and much development for academic staff is carried out outside the institution through professional associations, subject bodies and other national organisations. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The exception is the only fully “private” one, the University of Buckingham [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. HEFCE no longer allocates capital funding separately, and institutions are free to spend their core funding on either revenue or capital work. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. All HEIs have access to JANET. SuperJANET offers higher capacity communications to a smaller number of institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The Open University and Birkbeck College London [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The principal source of information on graduate employment is the First Destination Survey, conducted by the Graduate Careers Advisory Services with all graduates up to six months after graduation. However, this data is not entirely reliable because the scope of data collection varies between institutions, and it is known that graduates in different disciplines enter the labour market at different rates. A significant number may also be in permanent jobs which are not, at this stage, their “permanent” destination. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. These issues are discussed in detail in the HEFCE/UACE report listed [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. These case studies draw particularly on the work of a project carried out by the Universities Association for Continuing Education (UACE) for HEFCE and DfEE in 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The other three are ERDF - The European Regional Development Fund; EAGGF - the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund; FIFG - the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. All figures are taken from, or based on, HEFCE sources - 1995/6 Annual Report, except Mature (from HEFCE “Profiles” for 1992/3), and Staff and Research Quality Index (derived from 1996 RAE report). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)