The TEF, Quality Assurance and Data

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Outline

- *Building Blocks*
- *The Green Paper*
- *The TEF proposals*
- *How data could be used in any review of teaching quality*
- *HEFCE plans for quality assurance*
- *HEFCE review of information about learning, teaching and the student experience*
- *Data capability and the agenda for change*

The Building Blocks

- 2011 White Paper – Students at the Heart of the System
- Sustainable and fair funding - £9,000 fees
- **Well-informed students** drive **teaching excellence** - KIS
- A **better students experience** and **better qualified graduates** – review of NSS, DLHE, grade point average, learning gain
- A **diverse** and **responsive** sector – More competition, private providers,
- **Improved social mobility** through **fairer access** – strengthen the powers of OFFA
- A new **fit-for purpose regulatory framework** – Competition and Markets Authority review of HE; redesign of the information landscape (HEDIIP)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) review of Higher Education

Research and application stage
- Make sure prospective students and applicants can easily access clear, complete and transparent information about their courses

Offer stage
- Continue to provide important information on, among other things, the **main characteristics of the course**, the **duration of the course**, and the **total price and other relevant costs** (or how these will be calculated)

Enrolment stage
- Check the pre-contract information is still accurate

- Continue to draw students' attention to important information

- Get permission before you change anything

Redesigning the HE Information Landscape to Ensure Efficiency - **Overview**

Redesign means change – possibly significant change

- There will be an impact on data management processes

- New data will be collected

- Some data will no longer be collected

- Data definitions will be modified

- The timing and frequency of reporting will change

- The method of submitting information will be updated

- Algorithms currently used for reporting will be reviewed and modified

- New measures will be introduced

- The uses made of the data will be different

Benefits of redesigning the landscape

- Improving UK's HE sector through timelier and more relevant data

- Progressing towards a more efficient system that reduces duplication

- Enabling a joined up approach to managing data requirements across the HE sector

- Integrating the HE information landscape into the wider government data strategy: Progress since the 2013 *Seizing the data opportunity: a strategy for UK data capability*

- The role of data in empowering students in their decision making process

- Taking the next steps to building a more coherent, responsive and less burdensome information landscape in HE

2015 Green Paper

Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

Goals

- Improve productivity and transparency
- Drive up teaching standards
  - Ensure more high quality teaching, while improving possible value for money and providing more information up front to students
- Boost social mobility
  - Raise the bar on widening participation
- A level playing field for new and existing providers
  - Make it easier for new colleges and providers to enter the market so there is greater choice and better protection
- Reform the higher education architecture
  - Simplify the regulatory landscape and create a higher education regulator with the student at its core
- Reduce complexity and bureaucracy in research funding
  - One research Council

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

A new TEF will ensure the quality of teaching is, like research, a top priority

- Raising teaching standards
- Recognising and rewarding high quality teaching
- Delivering value for money
- Providing students with access to better information

The Green Paper set out how TEF might work when fully operational – when it will have four levels, each carrying its own financial and reputational rewards. Initially this will be the right to raise fees in line with inflation. In time, the rewards are likely to include raising fees to any further fee cap, fee loan cap uplifts or incentives through the alternative provider performance pool. It also contains some transitional arrangements for the first two years.

TEF Eligibility

- When fully operational the TEF will be open to all HE providers in England
- It will cover all **subject areas** (disciplines), **types of delivery** and **levels** in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

- An institution can choose whether or not to apply for "higher levels" but eligibility will be contingent on:
    - Having measures in place to facilitate the access and success of disadvantaged groups (demonstrated through Access Agreement, or through an alternative plan agreed by the Director of Fair Access).
    - Demonstrating that the institution has observed the Competition and Markets' Authority's guidance on how consumer protection law applies to higher education providers.

- Institutions will be encouraged to adopt Grade Point Averages (GPA) but this will not be a pre-requisite for engaging with TEF. They will also be encouraged to tackle grade inflation.

TEF Assessment Process

- TEF assessments will be made independently of government
- A panel of academics, students and employer/professional representatives, will make judgements based on metrics plus additional information
- A number of panels will be convened to cover the range of disciplines being assessed
- Assessments will be made on a rolling basis once every five years – although reassessments could be triggered by an institution applying for a higher level of award, by concerns about teaching quality or change of ownership.
- There may be an appeals process.
- Institutions will be expected to bear the cost of the TEF

TEF Incentives

- Fee cap and fee loan cap uplifts will apply at an institutional level.

- Over time, fees will increasingly differentiate according to the TEF level awarded.

- The government will set a maximum fee cap to correspond to each TEF award level, maintaining the current model of basic and higher amounts, and not exceeding real term increases.

TEF Metrics

- The QA process and higher levels of TEF will use the same metrics and indicators where possible. New metrics will be incorporated once they are sufficiently robust.

- The metrics will be common to all providers although they will be benchmarked. They will also be broken down and reported by disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

- The initial proposal is to use:

  - Employment/destination from DLHE (until the HMRC data match is available)

  - Retention/continuation – from the UK Performance Indicators published by HESA

  - Student satisfaction indicators

- Over time metrics relating to (i) student commitment to learning; (ii) training and employment of staff; and (iii) teaching intensity will be added

- In addition, to the common metrics, TEF will consider institutional evidence setting out their evidence for excellent teaching.

TEF Transitional Arrangements

- In year one, meeting or exceeding the expectations for quality and standards in England – based on the most recent review published by the end of February 2016 - will form Level 1 of the TEF.

- Institutions with Level 1 TEF in this first year will be entitled to raise their fees in line with inflation for new students from the academic year 2017/18.

- The award will last for up to three years.

- In year two, a provider can apply to be assessed for higher levels (levels 2-4) of TEF.

- Any assessment will last for up to three years.

Which parts have been welcomed?

- The intention to recognise and reward teaching excellence
- The intention that TEF will be open to all HE institutions and all forms of delivery – creating a more level playing field between institutions and full-time/part-time etc
- The intention to not disadvantage institutions that educate large numbers of students from WP backgrounds
- The phased approach to implementation
- That the QA process is integrated into the TEF process – they are not separate and contradictory
- That the TEF will recognise the relationship and mutual benefits between teaching, scholarship and research.

Implementing the TEF Metrics - questions

- The ambition of the Green Paper is to measure excellence on the basis of teaching quality, learning environment and student outcomes and learning gain

- The common metrics proposed are DLHE, HESA retention statistics and student satisfaction indicators

- These will be accompanied by institutional evidence.

- This raises a number of questions:

  - Is it possible to capture excellence across the diversity of the sector on the basis of these metrics?

  - How will this recognise courses that lead to socially valuable but low paying jobs (e.g. nursing) or to careers where people are self employed and often make ends meet by taking non-graduate jobs in the early stages of their careers (e.g. professional musicians, freelance journalists, graphic designers etc)

  - How will this work across all forms of delivery?

TEF encouragement for widening participation - Question

- The Green Paper envisages encouraging widening participation through the TEF in two ways:

  - having measures in place to facilitate the access and success of disadvantaged groups and

  - breaking down metrics by disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

- While this might not (depending on the spending review) disadvantage universities that recruit largely from under-represented groups – would it actually incentivise those that don't to do any more than they currently get away with under their access agreements?

HEFCE Review of Quality Assurance Framework

Baseline position for the Risk-Based Approach

- **A UK-wide system generated through dialogue**

- **European quality expectations incorporated**

- **The role of students embedded**

- **The Home Office's requirements included**

- **The Government's Green Paper** – HEFCE will continue to work closely with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to ensure that the quality assessment arrangements implemented by HEFCE in England align seamlessly with the Government's proposed reforms as set out in its higher education Green Paper.

HEFCE Review of Quality Assurance Framework

Baseline regulatory requirements

- The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Specific elements of the current UK-wide Quality Code.
- The financial sustainability, management and governance requirements of the relevant funding body.
- The Higher Education Code of Governance, or other equivalent designated governance code.
- The expectations of consumer law as expressed through the Competition and Markets Authority guidance.
- Student protection measures as expressed through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's good practice framework and the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman equivalent, and HEFCE's Statement of Good Practice on higher education course changes and closures.
- The provider's mission and strategy for its higher education provision.

HEFCE Review of Quality Assurance Framework

Review for established providers

- Verification of a provider's methodology for its own review processes, as a one-off transition mechanism, to ensure that these are focused appropriately on delivering continuous improvement in the student academic experience and in student outcomes.
- An Annual Provider Review process, tailored for operation in each country, that brings together the **scrutiny of data**, student views and other intelligence, and the information collected through the relevant funding body's annual accountability processes.
- A re-focused periodic Assurance Review visit, conducted by the relevant funding body, to test the basis on which a governing body can provide assurances about the provider's activities in this area.

HEFCE Review of information about learning, teaching and the student experience

Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey (NSS), Unistats and information provided by institutions

- Redesign Unistats to refelct diverse student information needs
- Transfer publication of learning, teaching and assessment information to institutions
- Add questions on student engagement to the NSS
- Amend questions on learning resources and assessment and feedback
- Merge duplicative questions
- Transfer personal development and student union questions to optional bank
- Bring optional questions up to date

Proposed NSS changes post 2017

- Consider options for publishing qualitative information including National Student Survey comments
- Include new groups of undergraduates in the survey:
  - Students on programmes of 1 year or less
  - Students on short courses
  - Students who have withdrawn
- Include taught postgraduate students in the survey

Change in the HE sector is now inevitable

BIS – Green paper and TEF, Open Data
Funders – NSS review, UNISTATS and KIS changes, Review of QA processes
HE Academy – Grade point average project, survey work (PRES and PTES)
HEDIIP – New subject coding system, Unique Learner Number, Data Landscape, Data Capability, Data Language
HESA – Data Futures Project; review of Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, consultations related to changes to 2016 data submissions
    HEIDI (with JISC) HEIDI Plus, HEIDI Lab, HEIDI Benchmarking
JISC – Effective Learning Analytics, Business Intelligence, From Prospect to Alumnus
UCAS – Qualifications review and new tariff, postgraduate recruitment, name blind applications
Universities UK – Open Data (with Open Data Institute), Efficiency Exchange

HE Providers – involved in responding to/working on one to many of the above
    PLUS   their own activities designed to improve the student experience

Software Suppliers – tools for BI, Visualisation, Survey Work, Modelling, Planning …

Integrating the HE information landscape into the wider government data strategy – data capability

- The 2011 white paper and the recent green paper has made it clear that data and analytics will play a greater role in the organisation and management of HE

- The work of HEDIIP and the HESA data futures proposals make the government's requirements achievable

- The work of JISC offers additional richness

- But, some HEPs and PSRBs are small or specialist and without help will struggle to meet the data capability of larger institutions

- Even some larger HEPs faces data capability challenges

- The information landscape is a rapidly changing environment and while the focus is on developing a data architecture that will enable data to be used more effectively, some thought should go into integrating the outcomes of this work

Data Capability in HEIs

HEPs are at very different points in the journey to improve capability
- Large metropolitan university vs specialist conservatoire vs alternative providers
- Their needs are different. The investment they have already made varies.

One size will not fit all – but some key requirements can be identified
- Buy in from key institutional stakeholders
- Technical capability
- Resources to invest – money, time, infrastructure
- Training
- Engagement from staff across the HEP

The people who change a student's experience are those on the front line

For example, **module evaluation** will be **most effective** when it is **welcomed** as **one tool** to improve the conversation between academics and students, when staff have the confidence to celebrate positive aspects and, where indicated, implement change

Since 2013, HEPs have taken huge strides to improve data capability, but, the demands for additional capability are growing equally fast

Using data to empower students in decision-making

To be useful in decision-making information must be:
    Current, accurate ,easy to interpret, easy to digest quickly, comparable
It must not be:
    Overwhelming in quantity, overly complex, irrelevant

- Data required at different points on the student journey will vary
- The Competition and Markets Authority have determined what is essential
- HEFCE is reviewing the role of the KIS and UNISTATS
- Institutions, working with their students, can add context
- Data protection must be at the heart of the system
- Data security must be rigorous and demonstrable

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