

6. Higher Education Sector

Developments in the Higher Education Sector in 2006-2007

HEFCW have taken ESDGC to their committee and produced a work plan to take forward the actions attributed to them. The ESDGC champion has been involved in meetings with HEFCW and the Third Mission committee to look at developments. Three interconnected projects have been funded this year to take forward specific initiatives.

Strategic lead (Action 6.1.2)

HEFCW asked HEIs to include a section on ESDGC within their strategic reports for 2007. HEI's were asked that they consider the implications for their institution in terms of actions they were undertaking to develop and embed ESDGC principles across a range of activities, for example in terms of learning and teaching activities; third mission activities and the training of leaders and senior management teams. We asked them to provide this information in terms of the overall strategy of the institutions, linking it to the Third Mission Strategy and/or the Learning and Teaching Strategy as appropriate. In particular, we asked HEIs to set out how they intend to develop a framework and timetable to deliver their contribution to this key Assembly strategy. As a result of this exercise, HEFCW has amassed a body of information that can be used as a baseline for future reference and analysis and to ensure that the developments proposed for the HE sector are in line with their requirements.

HEI representatives (Action 2.1.6)

All chancellors at each higher education institution (HEI) were contacted to nominate a representative from their institution to act as a conduit for ESDGC for information in and out of the institution. This list is now mostly complete and the first meeting of this group was held in October 2007. They will input into developing projects and help to focus energy on future developments resulting from the strategy.



Budgeted projects for 2007/08

Sharing of Good Practice (Action 6.1.1)

HEFCW will commission, in early 2008, an external analysis of the information provided via the Strategic Planning exercise (see 6.1.2 above) and to share best practice with the Welsh HE sector.

Environmental Management Systems (Action 6.3.1)

Funding has been allocated to HEFCW to facilitate the development of suitable EMS within HEIs. Details are currently being agreed, with funding to be released to HEIs early in 2008. HEFCW is also working with Swansea University and WEAUC to provide further support and direction to HEIs in this area.

Training and Awareness Raising (Action 6.1.3)

HEFCW will hold an ESDGC conference for the HE sector in May 2008. This event will focus on good practice and on training and leadership needs. Discussions are ongoing with the Higher Education Academy and with ESDGC leads within HEIs.

Sustainable Procurement Initiatives (Action 6.3.2)

A number of related activities can be reported here. HEFCW monitors HEIs via their Procurement Fitness Health Check action plans, of which sustainable procurement is one element - the action on HEIs is to maintain a watching brief and to work with Value Wales. HEFCW is currently working with Value Wales officers on the refresh of their sustainable procurement tool: this work will involve targeting and working with, first, the larger Welsh HEIs (with a kick-off meeting at Cardiff University in January 2008). HEFCW is also actively promoting the Value Wales 'Making It Happen' Sustainable Procurement Course with the sector and via HEFCW.

Third mission provision

(Action 6.4.2)

HEIs were asked to report on third mission activities within their new three-year Third Mission Strategies (2007/08 to 2009/10). This information will feed through into the best practice study.

(Action 6.4.3)

HEIs were asked to link their Strategic Plans (under 6.1.2) to their Third Mission Strategies (under 6.4.2).

ITET (Action 6.2.3)

Develop clear learning outcomes, support materials and resources for QTS relating to ESDGC. Provide training for staff at ITET institutions to raise awareness of ESDGC and best practice for delivery to teacher trainees. Take the common understanding for ESDGC out to each ITET college and provide resources for trainee teachers. This will follow up to UCET Cymru pilot project and develop the links and momentum created within this project.

Setting the Scene

Implementing ESDGC will impact on all parts of society and all areas of our lives. The widest dissemination of an understanding of ESDGC will be vital if people are to be enthusiastic participants in the social transformations that will occur. Information will need to be available to all sectors of society - from those currently in positions of leadership to those taking their first steps in education. HE has a key role, since the students passing through it include a significant percentage of young society, of an age where questioning and forming views is critical, and of those who will be tomorrow's leaders. The method of teaching in HE encourages a critical, involved view, which will be vital in implementing ESDGC. Those integrative ways of thinking are implicit in ESDGC and can only enhance learning.