

# News September 2005

## **From the Chief Executive**

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This is the first of our regular news updates for everyone in the higher education sector. Our aim in producing it is to keep you up to date with recent and forthcoming Academy activities. We will also be using these updates to publicise new initiatives and projects – look out for notices in subsequent issues about our principal work themes for 2005-2006 and the consultancy services we will offer to institutional subscribers.

## **Official opening of Academy building in York**

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The Academy's new building on the York Science Park was formally opened on 21 June 2005 by Bill Rammell, the Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education. The building was completed in February 2005 and now houses some 80 staff.

Mr Rammell said: "The Academy has the potential to make a real difference to the experience of learners. I strongly support its focus on the needs of students and its commitment to work closely with institutions, identifying high quality teaching and spreading good practice."

## **Senior Advisers for Wales and Scotland appointed**

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We have appointed two new Senior Advisers to work with higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales and Scotland. They will be located in Cardiff and Edinburgh respectively. Their role will be to develop the Academy's function in Wales and Scotland and work with all HE providers to broker support and build relationships with national bodies.

Gabriel Jezierski has been seconded from the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, (UWIC) as Senior Adviser Wales.

Alastair Robertson, Assistant Director of QAA Scotland (the Quality Assurance Agency in Scotland), has been appointed Senior Adviser Scotland.

They will build on our existing activities in Wales and Scotland, such as work with the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Unit and Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland.

## **Consultation on professional standards**

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We are currently consulting on proposals for a new framework for professional standards for teaching and supporting learning in higher education.

We were approached in 2004 by the UK higher education funding bodies, Universities UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) to undertake a consultation on how a standards framework for staff who teach and support learning might be developed. The idea of the framework was proposed in the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (2003), which recommended that: "from 2006 all new teaching staff should obtain a teaching qualification that incorporates agreed professional teaching standards". Consultation began with the publication of the paper *Towards a Framework of Professional Standards* in 2004.

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We have now developed a framework that builds on our existing programme accreditation system. It has been derived from extensive consultation with the HE sector and evidence from research. It proposes a broad definition of standards that HEIs will be able to use as a reference point to develop their own criteria. The proposals are designed to enable HEIs to meet the White Paper commitment that national professional standards, designed and agreed by the sector itself, will form part of accredited programmes for all staff who teach in higher education.

The consultation closes on 20 October and the consultation document is available on our website at: [www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/consultations.htm](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/consultations.htm).

## **Academy Liaison Officer scheme**

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To improve our relationship with individual HEIs we are setting up a liaison scheme. The scheme is part of our commitment to addressing institutional needs, as outlined in our Strategic Plan. In particular, it will allow us to meet our objectives of developing programmes of support based on HEIs' needs and being a responsive, efficient and accountable organisation.

We are asking each institution to nominate a senior member of staff to act as its main contact with the Academy at the strategic level. In turn we will designate a senior officer of the Academy as the link contact with each institution and will begin initial visits to institutions in the autumn. For further information please contact [liaison@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@heacademy.ac.uk)

## **New Subject Centre**

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Oxford Brookes University Business School will host the Academy's new Subject Centre for Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance (BMAF) from September 2005.

The new Subject Centre will build on the resources and activities developed by the previous Business, Management and Accountancy Subject Centre. It was set up on the recommendations of a review carried out in Summer 2004, which concluded that there was a need for a new centre to meet the needs of these subject areas.

The Centre forms part of our UK-wide network of 24 Subject Centres providing subject-based support for teaching staff in universities and colleges.

## **Academy's first Annual Conference**

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Our first Annual Conference on 'Enhancing the student experience' was held at Heriot-Watt University in June. It attracted record numbers and was attended by more than 500 UK and international delegates. Keynote addresses were given by Professor Craig McInnis (Professor of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne), Professor Diana Laurillard (Head of the e-Learning Strategy Unit at the Department for Education and Skills), Professor Steven Schwartz (Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University and Chair of the Admissions to Higher Education Review), and Professor John Hay (Chair of the Carrick Institute in Australia).

Planning is in hand for the 2006 Annual Conference, which we hope will be even larger and attract a more diverse audience.

## **Research grants awarded**

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We are funding ten one-year research projects totalling £250,000 to further our aim of leading research to improve the student learning experience. The projects are relatively small in scale and take the form of pilot studies, but are intended to inform policy and practice. Over 480 bids were received for the first tranche of funding from a wide range of HEIs.

A key aspect of developing evidence-based research at the Academy is commissioning a series of evidence and literature reviews. After broad discussion with the sector, we have identified a

number of key areas relevant to HE policy and practice. We are therefore funding four six-month reviews of research literature, which should lead to evidence-informed approaches to policy and practice and explore different reviewing methodologies.

Details of all the funded projects are available on the Academy website at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/news](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/news).

## **National Teaching Fellowships**

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On 28 June the award of 50 new National Teaching Fellowships was announced. The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) recognises and rewards teachers and learning support staff in higher education for their excellence in teaching. It is managed by the Academy and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

The 50 winners, chosen from a total of 187 nominations submitted by HEIs across England and Northern Ireland, will each be awarded £50,000, to be used for projects that will make a significant contribution to learning and teaching. The new Fellows will be presented with their awards by Bill Rammell MP on 15 September.

The full list of winners is on the NTFS website at [www.ntfs.ac.uk](http://www.ntfs.ac.uk). We have recently completed a review of the scheme and are working with HEFCE on options for its future form.

## **Forthcoming events**

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Below is a selection of the events we are holding in the next few months. Full details are available at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/list.htm](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/list.htm).

### **CETL Support Workshop: Evaluation and educational research: 5 October, Nottingham**

A workshop for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), exploring the evaluation and educational research strategies open to CETLs.

### **CETL Support Workshop: Accessibility and technology: 27-28 October, Leeds**

A workshop by TechDis for CETLs.

### **The teaching and research relationship: developing institutional policy and practice: 8 November, London**

A conference on institutional policies, structures, processes and practices to develop the relationship between teaching and research.

Welsh Strategies event: 1 December, Llandridnod Wells