Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland

Consultation on the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland

Response from the Higher Education Academy

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Context

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) supports the higher education sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students. It does this by:

- providing national leadership in developing and disseminating evidence-informed practice about enhancing the student learning experience;
- operating as an independent broker, enabling expertise to be shared across institutions and subject areas;
- working at multiple levels, with individual academics, subject communities, departments, faculties and institutions;
- working across all parts of the UK, recognising the distinctive policy contexts and priorities of the devolved administrations but also providing opportunities to share expertise among them.

The HEA has a UK-wide focus and it works with institutions, discipline groups and individual staff within the four countries of the UK, ensuring that it responds to the priorities of the nations. In Northern Ireland, the HEA works in partnership with higher education institutions (HEIs) and key sector organisations to support the development of policy and enhance practice in HE sector in Northern Ireland.
Response

Vision for Higher Education 2010-2020

Proposal: The Department’s vision for higher education is one of a sector which is vibrant, of international calibre, which pursues excellence in teaching and research and which plays a pivotal role in the development of a modern, sustainable knowledge-based economy which supports a confident inclusive society which recognises and values diversity.

Question 1 – What are your views on the vision outlined above for the development of the higher education sector up to 2020?

The HEA supports the proposed vision. Higher education in the United Kingdom is renowned worldwide for its excellent teaching and research. The HEA’s distinctive role is to work with the sector to enhance the quality of students’ learning experiences. Raising the status of teaching is one of the HEA’s key aims. By promoting initiatives that recognise and reward good teaching at national level, such as HEA fellowships and teaching awards, and by offering support to institutions to develop effective practices associated with its reward and recognition, the HEA aims to ensure that enhancing the status of teaching as a scholarly activity continues to be a priority across the UK.

It is recommended that there is mention of the importance of sectoral commitment to the success of all its students, irrespective of background. Whilst Northern Ireland has a good record in widening participation, its retention record is not as strong as other parts of the UK. A society which values diversity should be predicated on an education system which welcomes the diversity of the student body and strives to enable all students to maximise their potential.

It is also noted that students are not mentioned. The statement could refer to the student experience, and more specifically, emphasise the role of HE in fostering creativity and equipping all graduates with the knowledge, skills, understanding and creativity which will support the realisation of the vision.

The HEA welcomes the emphasis on recognising the contribution of HE to establishing an inclusive society which recognises and values diversity.

A Learning Society

Proposals:
- Teaching and learning needs to be flexible, accessible and of the highest quality. More flexible pathways to qualifications need to be developed, with funding arrangements incentivising this change.
- The sector should seek to develop “Distinctive Northern Ireland Graduates”; graduates who possess additional skills that will place them at an advantage globally.
- A greater emphasis on part-time participation in higher education and on postgraduate research and training is required involving closer collaboration with industry and continuing Government commitment to research and development activities.
- The roles of the FECs in the provision and delivery of higher education should be further developed and fostered in partnership with the Universities and University Colleges.
There is a need to incentivise choices for STEM areas beyond the traditional higher education courses

There is a need for a greater emphasis on sub-degree qualifications which better meet the needs of local industry and brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and Europe.

It is imperative that we build on the success to date of widening participation to ensure access for all those who can benefit from higher education, addressing inequalities of gender and socio-economic grouping at a time of constrained resource availability.

What are your views on the above proposals?

There is a strong emphasis in these proposals on flexible access to HE: flexible pathways; incentivisation of particular subject choices; more part-time education; and qualifications to meet the needs of industry. Whilst there is nothing wrong with the aspiration, once again the implied driver is economic and the focus is on a learning society for the benefit of society not the learner. Whilst this is not to deny the importance of employment as a driver for the individual student entering HE, there could usefully be more emphasis on:

a) The benefits of flexible access for the individual potential student in giving them options to match their circumstances and therefore the potential to remain in HE, progress successfully and contribute to ‘a learning society’; and

b) The implications of widening participation, fair and flexible access for the delivery of ‘teaching and learning … of the highest quality’ (first bullet point).

Hence teaching and learning needs to be flexible, accessible and responsive to the needs of diverse student groups so as to ensure a high quality student learning experience. The widening participation agenda should also ensure access for all those who can benefit from HE at all levels i.e. to include access to postgraduate education.

Many potential students are already in full-time work, as evidenced in the Leitch report¹. They are employees whose employers want them to be developing capabilities to enhance business performance. They require higher level skill developments but at the time, place and opportunity that meets the needs of the business. HEIs need to reconsider their learning environments to ensure that all students are able to engage in meaningful learning, regardless of their situations. This requires creating a more innovative vision of HE in the 21st century. This may require reviewing funding opportunities for smaller chunks of accredited learning with more accessible systems and processes for learners to accumulate credit and move in and out of learning in line with personal and professional needs.

The recent work of the HEFCE-funded Strategic Development Fund projects in England² may provide helpful examples of the ways in which employer-responsive provision can be developed as part of a wider strategy to support high quality flexible learning. This form of provision requires government, institutions and employers to re-evaluate existing models of learning and professional development. Innovative forms of learning and assessment are required which are supported at an institutional level by flexible processes and systems.

² http://www.hefce.ac.uk/finance/fundinghe/sdf/
The HEA has facilitated a network of practitioners involved in the HEFCE-funded employer engagement projects. This network has recently been opened out to include a wider community of practice across the sector. A launch event of the network is planned for May 2011. The HEA also hosts a well-established stakeholder group which provides a platform for sharing cross-nation approaches to employer engagement, and representation from Northern Ireland would be welcomed.

It may be worth considering whether the distinctiveness of graduates from Northern Ireland should be a primary concern. What is likely to be more important is that graduates have the skills and attributes that will equip them to become effective employees and citizens in an increasingly global community. The development of work based learning and the integration of work experience as part of the overall learning experience will be increasingly important.

The HEA has undertaken a review of HE delivered in further education (FE) in 2007. There is an important role for FE colleges in ensuring smooth progression pathways into and through HE for students on vocational and work-based programmes. These are often students such as apprentices and work-based learners who have not traditionally engaged with HE but have experiential learning that requires recognition by HEIs to support progression. This may involve transition support and revisiting the HE curriculum to ensure that it aligns with this type of learning. The requirements for intermediate level skills as identified by the Leitch report still remain and therefore there is a need for further accessible provision. Some of the experiences of projects supported through the English Lifelong Learning Networks and the HEFCE Employer Engagement projects suggest that full qualifications such as Foundation Degrees may not always be the most suitable vehicle. Smaller learning units such as module and HE certificate level may be more attractive and affordable for many employers. FE colleges are likely to have a valuable role in providing such learning opportunities.

The introduction of sub-degree classifications should be structured carefully so that students are employable in local industry but also would have the opportunity, through continued professional development and lifelong learning, to satisfy professional standards and registration at all levels.

The incentives for students who choose STEM subjects should be balanced with investment in the STEM student experience. The Engineering Graduates for Industry study\(^3\) reported a need to balance the support, development and funding of staff and infrastructure in order to meet the needs of industry. Staff development as well as infrastructure development should feature in the strategy in order to continue to develop the distinctiveness of the Northern Ireland STEM student experience.

**Question 2 - How should higher education in Northern Ireland be delivered to best support the needs of current and future learners, including those in the workforce?**

The HEA's involvement in the 'What Works? Student Retention and Success' programme (in conjunction with Action on Access and funded by HEFCE and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation) has shown that the quality of teaching and learning has a direct impact on student retention and success\(^4\). There is a growing recognition in the sector that enabling full and equitable participation in – and successful progression through – HE, for all prospective and existing students, requires new, student-centred approaches.

\(^3\) [http://www.engsc.ac.uk/graduates-for-industry](http://www.engsc.ac.uk/graduates-for-industry)

\(^4\) [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/inclusion/retention](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/inclusion/retention)
to teaching policy and practice. This should reflect, for example, widening access and changing modes of entry to – and delivery of – HE.

In response to the increasing diversity of the student body, many institutions are seeking to move towards more inclusive policies and practices. The HEA endorses an inclusive approach to teaching and learning which involves the use of mainstream approaches and practices to meet the entitlements, interests and aspirations of all students in order to maximise their success in HE. This is in contrast to relying on additional practices and interventions for particular student groups, such as those from a WP background or protected groups, and/or focusing exclusively on the retention of students at risk of withdrawing. It has implications for the design, delivery and assessment of curricula and the way in which student support is delivered.

Student engagement also lies at the heart of retention and success and therefore offers institutions answers to their improvement. It refers to the interaction and active involvement of students with individuals and groups of peers and staff, and with the institution *per se*. It pre-supposes that students: are active participants in, rather than passive recipients of, their HE experience; invest in, and take responsibility for, their learning and whole HE experience; and interact with, and learn from, peers and staff.

Essentially, therefore, institutions need to attend to not only the number and range of interventions or services they provide, but also the quality and extent of their students’ interactions with those interventions and services, as well as with the institution more broadly. Successful HE depends upon a partnership between the student and their institution.

Employers are also increasingly looking for individuals who can function effectively in a workplace which requires collaborative working, high level communication skills and creative problem-solving. There is a growing demand to utilise employees more effectively for business performance. Higher education can play a critical role here in providing a comprehensive and strategic approach to working with employers which brings together CPD, R&D, knowledge transfer and innovation. The contribution of HEIs will be enhanced through developing curriculum that supports inter and trans-disciplinary approaches, as outlined in the recent report ‘Employability and Skills in the UK: Redefining the Debate’.

With regard to postgraduate provision, participation of Northern Irish institutions in the HEA’s postgraduate surveys: Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) can provide useful contextual data about professional skills and career development. The surveys involve collation and analysis of data about postgraduate students’ opportunities to develop core skills, about their motivations for choice of degree programme, their career aspirations, and the extent to which their expectations have been met through their higher degree programme. Employability is a key theme, particularly for the sample of taught postgraduates in the sector in 2010 (n=32,638). The surveys offer a unique data source allowing for benchmarking of performance of NI institutions in the context of UK higher education.

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Question 3 - How can learning at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland be made distinctive from the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe, leading to graduates with greater employability potential

As highlighted earlier, it may be worth re-evaluating whether the distinctiveness of graduates from Northern Ireland should be a primary concern. The critical issue is that graduates have the skills and attributes that will equip them to become effective employees and citizens in an increasingly global community. The Destinations of Leavers from HE (DLHE) statistics from 2008-09 show that students from NI have a higher than average employment rate (76%) compared to Scotland (70.4%), Wales (73.1%), and England (72.5%). It may be useful to consider the need for compatibility with the Bologna framework.

Developing the employability of all graduates and postgraduates has long been recognised as a core concern of HEIs. Many HE programmes have an explicit employability focus, are professionally accredited and prepare students for employment in specific employment sectors and roles. More recently, HEIs have demonstrated responsiveness to supporting employability in emerging skills sectors. It is important that all students have the opportunity to develop their employability skills developed through their subject curriculum, extra-curricular activities or through elective employability modules. There is a need for imaginative approaches to curriculum development which support the integration of, and reflection on, appropriate work experiences. Many English and Scottish HEIs have made progress with these approaches. Many have built on the earlier work of the HEA in this field. The HEA has an extensive range of publications which are likely to be of value when considering strategies for developing employability potential. The HEA’s Learning and Employability series of publications are likely to be of particular value in this respect. More recently, the HEA has also facilitated networks of practitioners involved in and learning from the completed CETLs in both England and Northern Ireland (forthcoming report and repository of resources on HEA website). The HEA is currently reporting on a review of the recently developed employability statements for prospective students. Good practice which has been identified through this review will be highlighted at workshops in April and June, and the HEA would be pleased to discuss the associated learning with the DELNI.

Another programme of work the HEA is taking forward is Education for Sustainable Development. This provides support to institutions and subject communities in developing curricula that will equip graduates with the skills and knowledge which they need to live and work sustainably.

Higher Education and the Economy

Proposals:

- Research should continue to be funded at an appropriate level to enable our Universities to fulfil their central role to develop and sustain a world-class research base in Northern Ireland.
- Increased employer engagement with higher education and the continual development of knowledge exchange activity with businesses, the public sector and with the third sector is required.

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6 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/employability/employability?tabIndex=1&#tab2](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/employability/employability?tabIndex=1&#tab2)
7 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingresearch/cetls](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingresearch/cetls)
8 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/sustainability](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/sustainability)
The promotion of entrepreneurship in the local economy through the higher education sector, including the development of graduates with the right set of skills necessary to compete in a global economy.

- Working more closely with local industry, particularly SMEs and potential investors to ensure that skills gaps are identified and addressed, putting in place flexible client-focused approaches to do so.
- Northern Ireland must play to its strengths, ensuring the development of a high quality skills base and a willingness to respond to investors.
- Cross-departmental co-operation to promote interest in, and the study of, priority subjects from an early age, achieving the right balance between these and other subject areas, whilst respecting academic freedom.

What are your views on the above proposals?

Many institutions are now embracing enterprise and entrepreneurial innovation as integral aspects of their provision. In addition to the development of bespoke incubator units, the enterprise agenda is increasingly being taken forward through the development of the curriculum. The HEA’s Learning and Employability series highlighted above also addresses this issue, and the HEA has also developed specific subject level resources for teachers in HE who wish to develop enterprise in the curriculum.

Although there is mention of other “economically relevant subjects such as law, the creative arts and design”, reference to R&D is largely in terms of the MATRIX (the NI Science and Industry Panel’s) vision. It is noted that the creative industries do not feature and yet the creative industries are identified by the Work Foundation as one of four sectors with the greatest potential to support economic recovery across the UK as a whole. The creative industries are important as a pioneering sector of the knowledge economy. The pervasive influence of creativity is felt across the economy not only to enrich individual lives but to make Northern Ireland more attractive to business visitors and those who will support future innovation, new business models and multidisciplinary solutions. Previously held distinctions between creativity and science are increasingly blurring and it is recommended that policy and funding support and recognise this.

Question 4 - How can the higher education sector maximise its contribution to Northern Ireland’s economy, particularly in relation to research and development?

The HEA is not responding to this question.

Question 5 - How can higher education, government and business work more effectively to identify research and development needs and improve the knowledge and skills of the current, and future, workforce?

The HEA has an established stakeholder group which provides a valuable forum for the key national agencies with an interest in employer engagement and employability to develop complementary ways of working. The membership of this group includes UK Commission on Employment and Skills, the Council for Industry and Higher Education, the Sector Skills Councils, Guild HE, UUK, fdf, and QAA. Representation from Northern Ireland on the stakeholder group would be welcomed.

The HEA also facilitates other sector-based networks which provide opportunities for institutions to share effective practice in working with business and employers to improve the knowledge and skills of the workforce.
Internationally Connected

Proposals:

- Expansion of Northern Ireland’s market share within the UK in respect of international activity and overseas student enrolments through the development of a unique Northern Ireland higher education selling point.
- Encouraging, incentivising and supporting Northern Ireland students to avail of the opportunities for international mobility.
- Institutions should seek to further develop their portfolio of well managed overseas institutional partnerships that benefit not only their students and institutions but Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Healthy and substantial international research links should continue to be fostered, for overseas trade and inward investment. In particular, HEIs should continue to work with SMEs to ensure they are well placed to reap the benefits of internationalisation.

What are your views on the above proposals?

The HEA is aware that Northern Ireland HEIs are actively pursuing their internationalisation strategies to attract more international students and to develop international partnerships. The HEA, through the Teaching International Students project (TIS)\(^9\), has been assisting with this in 2010-11 through work with the University of Ulster (including staff development activities).

Highlighting and promoting the fact that current international students speak highly of their experiences in Northern Ireland can be a key selling point. Perceptions of high quality and university reputation underpin the continued flow of international students into Northern Ireland.

HEIs should also work to address concerns raised by international students which most notably centre on historical and security issues and affect perceptions and parental apprehensions.

Many academics also report that they experience difficulty dealing with students who bring unfamiliar expectations and experiences and many staff say that they feel unprepared for these changes and challenges. This is an area that needs to be addressed to ensure that international students have the best possible experience which in turn leads to them recommending Northern Ireland as an HE destination for to prospective students.

Question 6 - As higher education becomes increasingly globalised, how can Northern Ireland’s institutions further expand their international portfolios, to assist not only the higher education sector, but Northern Ireland as a whole?

The HEA has done much work to support the sector in the area of internationalisation, including leading the TIS project. This has focused on the ways that teaching staff can maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning for international students and internationalisation of the curriculum. This is done through the provision of guidance and information about meeting the diverse learning needs of international students and active support working directly with a range of universities as well as conducting a series of teaching and learning events across the UK including in Northern Ireland.

For the successful development of the Northern Ireland sector abroad through institutional partnerships, HEIs would need to think very carefully about their

\(^9\) [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/internationalisation/internationalstudents](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/internationalisation/internationalstudents)
strengths/unique selling points and be very cautious about making sure that they have natural synergies with potential partners. For those starting out, it is best to concentrate on their area of greatest strength and develop a programme around this strength with a partner whose institutional strategy is aligned with this. Where transnational education is being considered, support for staff involved in transnational teaching needs to be thoroughly addressed. Whilst this can be a good opportunity for staff to develop new skills and broaden their perspective, it can also be very challenging to maintain the level of equivalence to the home institution whilst adapting curricula to local contexts.

Transnational education is a complex issue in terms of conceptual underpinning and the challenges of high quality provision. Transnational education refers to UK university programmes that the student undertakes in their home country and can include distance education, at a branch campus, through a joint arrangement with a local university etc (i.e. the education travels, not the student). The HEA is uniquely placed to assist Northern Ireland in developing the necessary skills and curriculum strategies to support this work.

The quality of links between teaching and research are a crucial factor in the recruitment of international students, and word-of-mouth is one of the best ways of attracting students to study in Northern Ireland. In order to achieve the objective of maintaining and developing the international reputation of Northern Ireland’s HE sector, it is vital that close attention is paid to the teaching and learning issues of international students.

International students have diverse prior learning experiences and their wide range of goals and expectations cannot simply be accommodated into established ways of teaching and learning. Nor can the students themselves seamlessly adjust their own expectations and skills to match those required in UK classrooms and assessments. The underlying framework of TIS work in this area is the need to move beyond accommodation and adjustment to the creation of an inclusive learning environment. Here, all participants in HE education will be aware of differences and able to work effectively and creatively with all those they meet in the now diverse and internationalised worlds of education and workplaces.

**Question 7 – How can Northern Ireland’s students be encouraged, incentivised and supported to become more internationally mobile?**

The HEA encourages greater outward as well as inward mobility for students and staff. This not only has the advantage of giving students a more internationalised experience but it also allies to the UK’s commitment to the Bologna Action Line of the promotion of mobility. This is an aspect on which the UK does not currently score well and a culture of mobility, where periods of study abroad are the norm, needs to be built. As noted in the HEA’s recent publication ‘Bologna Process: Responding to the post-2010 Challenge’, “The benefits of mobility need to be articulated in mission statements and in a European strategy. Mobility opportunities need to be well advertised at open days, in ‘welcome weeks’, and in early contact with new students. Mobility needs a continual profile and should involve the local Students’ Union and returning students, who are the best advocates of mobility”\(^\text{10}\).

Higher Education and Civil Society

Proposals:
- Increasing opportunities for learners to enter higher education and assist in the development of initiatives and programmes at the HEIs to ensure the establishment of an open and diverse society.
- Promoting the creation of sustainable outreach links between the HEIs and the local voluntary, community and local Government sectors, supported by external engagement committees in which all stakeholders are represented.
- HEIs working in partnership with FECs to encourage and promote the provision of higher education in enabling those from geographical ‘coldspots’ to benefit from a higher education experience.

What are your views on the above proposals?
The HEA endorses the importance of such strategic relationships but would emphasise the need to ensure once again that there is clarity of purpose and clear benefits to all parties. Within HEIs there are opportunities to link outreach activity undertaken as part of their engagement with the schools sector and local community to other strategies through an enhanced understanding of the needs of diverse learners coming into HE gained through such community based activity (e.g. strategies to improve student retention; raise the attainment of learners through student support; and address curriculum design and delivery).

Question 8 – How should the already established relationships and interfaces with local communities and civic society be developed further to maximise their effectiveness?
The HEA endorses the importance of the proposals, in particular the need to increase opportunities for diverse learners to access HE, including those from families with no previous experience of HE and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds. It may be helpful to clarify more precisely what sort of activities are intended to ‘assist in the development of initiatives and programmes at the HEIs to ensure the establishment of an open and diverse society’.

In the context of ‘promoting the creation of sustainable outreach links’, the HEA would emphasise the importance of collaborative partnerships between HEIs and other sectors. Such partnerships need to have clarity of purpose so that all partners understand their role and benefit individually as well as collectively.

Partnership working between HEIs and FECs not only to address ‘coldspots’ in provision but also in the context of widening access to diverse groups of students is also encouraged (although the success of widening access initiatives in Northern Ireland is recognised – as evidenced in the UUK’s recent publication on widening participation).

Question 9 – If new relationships and interfaces need to be established, what should they look like?
Effective relationships tend to be lateral rather than hierarchical and mutually beneficial, contributing to each partners’ strategic aims and priorities. Collaboration means building relationships which involve partners working together towards a shared aim, and may often be an appropriate approach. Sometimes however a co-ordinated approach may be more appropriate (e.g. with different HEIs delivering comparable services to specific

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third sector partners), helping to avoid a less appropriate competitive relationship. Care needs to be taken, however, to ensure that partnership working continues to add value and does not become an end in its own right.

**Higher Education Finance and Governance**

**Proposals:**

- Changing the funding model for higher education to a simplified system that better reflects the need for part-time, modular study to ensure flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness in higher education.
- Assessing the extent to which MaSN, as a means of controlling expenditure, is still fit for purpose.
- Considering whether the Financial Memorandum between the Department and the Universities and University Colleges takes account of the UK-wide HEI Financial Memoranda and also reflects the appropriate degree of assurance.
- Striking a clear balance between HEI autonomy and the role of the Department through a renewed funding and governance framework to ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities.

**What are your views on the above proposals?**

The HEA is not responding to this question.

**Question 10 – How can we ensure that government funding is being used effectively to support learners and respond to economic priorities?**

The HEA would endorse the proposal for a funding model that reflects the need for enhanced opportunities for flexible learning, to include the opportunity to study part-time without being financially disadvantaged, and for mature learners to access HE. However, any such model should recognise the implications for HEIs in terms of the potential additional costs of providing more flexible provision\(^ {12}\), and supporting a more diverse range of learners so as to maximise their retention and potential to succeed\(^ {13}\). This raises similar issues to those outlined above under ‘a learning society’ i.e. the need to encourage cultural change through the development of more inclusive approaches to teaching and learning.

**Question 11 – What are your views on the higher education funding model in Northern Ireland?**

The HEA is not responding to this question.

**Question 12 – How could government funding, including student support, be revised to support modular and flexible study?**

It may be useful to look at how more flexible models are being funded in other countries in the UK, Europe and further afield; in particular, to consider what lessons may be learnt from the establishment of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and to take account of current discussions in England regarding the further development of credit frameworks. The HEA has been supporting the Flexible Learning Pathfinder projects in England\(^ {14}\). It is committed to supporting flexible learning as one of its

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\(^ {13}\) *Diverse provision in higher education: options and challenges: HEFCE report to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills* (2010) http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/flexible/Diverse_provision.DOC

\(^ {14}\) http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/flexible/
thematic priorities and would be pleased to discuss further these areas of work. It may also be helpful to take account of the forthcoming research from HEFCE on work placements when considering ways in which employer related flexible learning can be developed.

Question 13 – What are your views on the cap on student numbers (MaSN)?
The HEA is not responding to this question.

Implementing the Strategy

Question 14 – What are your views on the establishment of a strategic implementation body to oversee the implementation of the Strategy when it is finalised?
The HEA is not responding to this question.

Additional thoughts or comments on the consultation

There is an urgent need to challenge current practice and develop new solutions. HE is well placed to play a central role by developing and delivering provision; supporting employability and entrepreneurship within curricula and across discipline boundaries; providing hubs for innovation; and delivering CPD opportunities. The emphasis of HE needs to be on inclusivity and flexibility to encourage a multifaceted approach in supporting innovation and economic growth. Associated funding needs to recognise this.

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15 Forthcoming: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/challenge/broads.htm