



TRANSFORMING TEACHING  
INSPIRING LEARNING

**Annual Report 2014 - 15**



# Introduction

Chief Executive and Chair of the Board



This year has been characterised by achievement, alongside really positive and progressive transition towards the HEA's self-funding business model.

Throughout this report there is clear evidence of the HEA's positive and highly productive engagement with the sector at individual, institutional and policy levels. As you will read in more detail in the report, this year our **key achievements include:**

- Fellowship numbers have exceeded 65,000;
- over 120 HE providers now have HEA-accredited CPD courses;
- the Grade Point Average project has been successfully piloted on behalf of the sector (with institutions representing mission groups and nations);
- the launch of our new Executive Development Programme for future leaders in the sector;
- the introduction of the Vice-Chancellors' Strategic Excellence Initiative, recognising the value of strategic leadership in learning and teaching.

These, among many other important strands of work, mark significant strides in supporting the sector's effort and shared aim to achieve teaching excellence and improve the experience and learning outcomes for students. Our partnership approach is well illustrated by our work with our PVC Network to influence the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework.

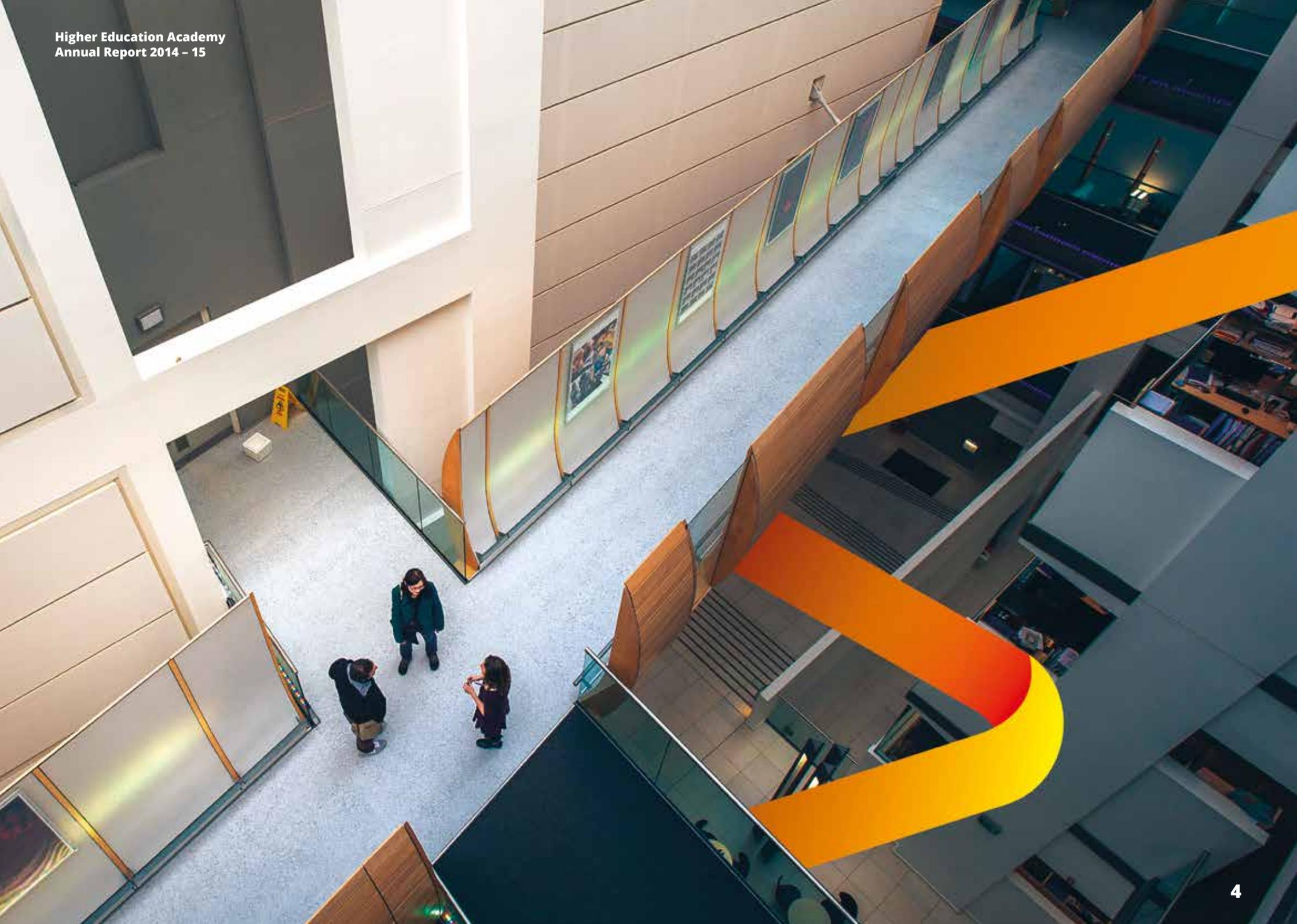
The reporting period highlighted some of the financial challenges the sector faces. The need for the HEA to become self-sufficient is well-documented. We have spent time in the development of a new business plan and corporate strategy, consulting widely with the sector. We have invested in a significant programme of market research and engagement across the sector to test and validate our plans. Your feedback is that our

commitment to focus exclusively on the contribution of teaching as part of the wider student learning experience is very welcome. We have also restructured and recruited to support discipline communities far more effectively and developed an exciting programme of events, networking opportunities, and far better access to our resources.

This report celebrates the year's achievements and lasting impact. We look forward building on this through our work with you next year

**Professor Stephanie Marshall**  
Chief Executive

**Professor Rama Thirunamachandran**  
Chair of the Board



# August 2014

The HEA began the year by reaffirming its work around the four key areas of curriculum design, innovative pedagogies, student transitions and staff transitions.

These themes formed the basis of its work with individuals and our subscribing institutions, and underpinned the activity seen in this annual report.

To reflect these changes the HEA website was redeveloped significantly. These were the first steps in a series of changes to ensure the site meets the changing needs of the HEA's audiences. The site was streamlined, with more intuitive navigation, and feedback showed that the changes were well received. An ongoing programme of enhancements is continuing.



# September 2014

A series of enhancement events provided opportunities for networking and sharing best practice among strategic leaders and colleagues from across the higher education sector.

Each themed event included a keynote address from a leading academic in the field, followed by a choice of workshops ensuring delegates could attend sessions best suited to their specific requirements. Participants explored and shared examples of effective practice and considered how these might be applied in their own contexts. Themes included developing discipline communities, engaged student learning through partnership, student transitions and internationalisation.

Over 100 teams from HE providers across the UK participated in one (or more) **strategic enhancement programmes (SEPs)** to develop their student learning experience in strategic priority areas.

Launched during the Autumn, the six strategic areas are: embedding employability into the curriculum; internationalising the curriculum; engaged student learning; staff transitions and career progression; flexible learning; and retention and attainment. Each of the programmes has been designed to enable participants to develop approaches and practices that relate to their institutional context and priorities.

The HEA ran two cohorts of the **Leading Transformation in Learning and Teaching (LTLT)** programme with a total of 36 delegates. Jointly designed by the HEA and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, the programme helps participants develop the skills, approaches and insights needed to lead course

"The support received from HEA... has been crucial to the success of our project. Discussions with our HEA consultant have also been invaluable... This both highlighted issues that we had not considered and needed to address, and encouraged reflection on successes which provided encouragement and motivation for further progress."

**Project Lead**  
Dr Christine Rogers,  
Reader in Psychology and Faculty Lead for Employability  
Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences at the University of Manchester



# October 2014

HEA research, *Shifting academic careers: implications for enhancing professionalism in teaching and supported learning*, highlighted that career paths for academics are becoming increasingly differentiated, bringing up a range of important issues for the sector including the changing professional development needs of staff.



Fiona Shaw  
HEA Fellow



The report shows that there is a predominance of teaching-only contracts among part-time academics, and explores a clear hierarchy in higher education, with research widely seen as 'more important' for institutional reputation and career advancement than teaching.

It was written by William Locke, Reader in Higher Education Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London, and formerly Head of Learning and Teaching at HEFCE.

The sixth annual **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)** recorded its highest ever number of respondents (67,580) and participating higher education institutions (100). The survey found the main sources of funding cited by students were family or friends, personal income and savings – raising questions about the affordability of entry to many professions. Comparison with the National Student Survey found taught postgraduates were less positive than undergraduates about course organisation and resources.

The HEA's **writing retreats** for people looking to gain Fellowship of the HEA began in October. One of the first delegates, Fiona Shaw from Northumbria University said:

"I found the writing retreat very useful. The HEA's Rajesh Dhimar was an excellent tutor, with the flexibility to respond to people teaching very different subjects and in different ways. His feedback on

my drafted Fellowship I found especially useful. Rajesh also did a great job in explaining and conceptualising the place of the Framework and the function it played in Higher Ed (sic) teaching."



# November 2014



Fifteen leaders in higher education began a ten-month **Executive Development Programme (EDP)**, designed to deepen and strengthen their strategic expertise. The programme comprises five residential seminars on themes including the policy framework, leading innovation and change, issues of risk management, governance, student engagement and the international context of higher education.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the EDP so far. The programme achieves a successful balance of master classes with inspirational university leaders, presentations from influential people working in HE policy and workshops that facilitate structured reflection and collaborative learning from peers. It has really helped me to make the step up to leading innovation and change at an institutional level."

Professor Helen O'Sullivan  
Academic Lead for Online Learning  
University of Liverpool

Results from the second pilot of the **UK Engagement Survey (UKES)** found pronounced differences between institutions, with students in very large universities reporting that they worked with others significantly less than students in medium-sized institutions. Students also reported greater levels of skills development as they progressed through their degree, particularly improvements in critical thinking, clear and effective speaking and numerical analysis. Participation in UKES increased to 32 institutions, with responses from 25,533 undergraduate students.

For the first time the HEA ran three national student surveys including the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). With 123 HEIs taking part, PRES again reached near complete coverage of research postgraduates in the UK.



# December 2014

In partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) the HEA awarded grants of up to £40,000 to four HE providers to develop projects that help improve the skills of graduates and address the shortage of **cyber security** skills. The projects were launched at a Cabinet Office event for industry, academia and government leaders to highlight how the UK is building skills to boost an increasingly flourishing cyber security sector in the UK.



# January 2015

The HEA participated in a staff engagement survey that is part of **The Sunday Times top 100** organisations to work for. It was placed in the top 100 in the not-for-profit organisations category.



Its community volunteering programme was highlighted. For example, through a partnership with York Cares, HEA colleagues cleared brambles in a cemetery, painted railings in a park and helped to create a playground. Some volunteered for Right to Read, helping local primary children improve reading skills. Over £1,000 was also raised for a range of local and national charities including Comic Relief, Macmillan and the British Heart Foundation.

The first of the 2015 series of **breakfast seminars** in conjunction with the **Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI)** examined the threats and



opportunities for higher education following the general election. Other themes have included the wellbeing of students and the cost of a degree – is it worth it?

The HEPI-HEA breakfast seminars run monthly from January to March at the House of Commons, bringing together senior leaders from HE and politics to discuss the impact of Government's HE policy. Speakers have included David Willetts, former Minister for Universities and Science, and Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter.

# February 2015

The *Tackling transition in STEM disciplines* report identified five themes related to the issues students face in transitioning into HE including their preparedness for the transition itself and the initiatives put in place to ease their move.



Data collected from 381 delegates during the HEA's 2013-14 transition project across eight STEM disciplines fed into the report. Amongst the recommendations was the need for clearer signaling and a better dialogue between the pre-university and higher education sectors. This would enable students entering higher education to have a better understanding of what is expected of them within specific STEM disciplines.

As part of the HEA's **consultancy work**, HE teachers from India who were taking part in the Fostering Linkages between Academic Innovation and Research (FLAIR) programme, joined the HEA

to learn more about teaching excellence while sharing their experience. They were introduced to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), put in touch with National Teaching Fellows and discussed key developments in learning and teaching in the UK which they intended, through the programme, to share with colleagues in India.





# March 2015



The HEA and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) joint report highlighted the importance of independent learning in higher education and how it is best supported by universities and colleges.

The research shows the need to direct independent learning through integrating it into programmes and ensuring its benefits are clearly communicated to students. These benefits include the development of deep understanding, taking personal responsibility for learning and the enhancement of the skills expected of graduates. It also illustrated that effective independent learning involves providing a clear structure and ongoing support for students, especially as they make the transition into higher education. A collection of good practice from across different disciplines has been created.

**Over 65,000 thousand learning and teaching professionals are now Fellows of the HEA.**

The 60,000<sup>th</sup> Fellow was Dr John Spencer, Reader in Chemistry from the University of Sussex, who gained recognition as a HEA Fellow (FHEA). Dr Spencer applied for HEA Fellowship via the experienced route which recognised the expertise he has gathered through years of teaching practice. For this, he was required to complete an Account of Professional Practice (APP).

“I’m really proud to have gained this recognition. I’ve been teaching in HE for nearly ten years, but I had no formal recognition of my professional teaching experience. Having a focus to the reflection of my own professional practice was a really valuable and fulfilling experience.”

Dr John Spencer FHEA  
Reader in Chemistry from  
the University of Sussex

HEA Scotland delivered an extensive programme of activities, emphasising its commitment to the enhancement and partnership ethos. A series of cross-sector student and staff transitions workshops developed in partnership with Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs), three significant research projects and a further 11 grant projects supporting positive change within discipline context, have supported the national **Enhancement Theme: Student Transitions.**



# April 2015



The HEA launched its new **approvals system**, open to all providers of higher education and organisations that offer materials and resources to support universities and colleges including private companies, charities, and traditional HE providers.



Achieving HEA Approval demonstrates that a resource or product (e.g. a CPD module) is aligned to the UKPSF. HEA Approval may therefore be used as evidence towards an application for HEA Fellowship.

The HEA's **international consultancy work** has become more established this year and in April Taibah University in Saudi Arabia signed up for its two-year Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE) programme. This was designed to enable higher education providers who do not currently have continuing professional development (CPD) provision for their staff to set up appropriate programmes,

benchmarked against the UKPSF. Similar programmes are operating successfully throughout the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions.

As part of the debate to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes teaching excellence, the HEA published *Teaching excellence initiatives: modalities and operational factors* by Professor Ray Land, Durham University, and George Gordon, University of Strathclyde. Originally produced as a stimulus paper for a roundtable event on the theme of teaching excellence organised by the HEA and hosted by HEFCE, it analyses the nature and direction of initiatives and strategies for fostering,

recognising and rewarding excellent practice in teaching and learning in higher education worldwide.

# May 2015



## Regent's University London became the 100<sup>th</sup> HE provider to have an institutional continuing professional development (CPD) scheme accredited by the HEA.



Using the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) as the foundation, Regent's University worked to develop an accredited postgraduate certificate and a wider CPD scheme supporting staff to achieve professional recognition as an Associate Fellow, Fellow or Senior Fellow of the HEA.

"The HEA accreditation for our Regent's Effective Academic Practice (REAP) scheme gives confidence to our staff and students about the quality of our professional development for teaching staff. We found working with the accreditation team at the HEA was a productive, collaborative process, and I am sure our new scheme has been enhanced by that collaboration."

Professor Mark Allinson  
Head of Academic Practice at Regent's University London

The *Grade Point Average* report was published. It highlighted the pilot project 2013-14, which involved 21 HE providers and was designed to test the use of various GPA scales and explore implementation issues. An additional 32 higher education providers attended facilitated meetings about the pilot.

The report, which was authored by the national GPA Advisory Group, recommends the 'dual running' of a GPA system alongside the Honours Degree Classification for a period of up to five years.

As part of the **Embedding Equality and Diversity** in the Curriculum project the HEA published five discipline-specific practitioner guides for embedding equality and diversity into learning and teaching experiences and environments. They offer objective and practical guidance on how to do this within a disciplinary context so that all students are able to reach their potential, to feel included in their learning journeys and to become more aware of diversity issues. The disciplines covered are Art and Design, Classics, Education, Physical Sciences and Social Work.

However, the principles they contain are of use to all subjects and practitioners of learning and teaching in higher education.



# June 2015

## Fifty-five new National Teaching Fellows were announced for this year's awards.



The successful Fellows for the most prestigious awards in higher education teaching were nominated by their institutions. To do so they had to show evidence of individual excellence, raising the profile of excellence and developing excellence in teaching.

Representing a wide range of disciplines, National Teaching Fellows also include learning enhancement specialists who work across the disciplines to develop innovative approaches to learning and teaching.



"The National Teaching Fellowship is a highly prestigious award and I am immensely proud of the role the Higher Education Academy has in its management. I know that Fellowship is valued and respected by staff at all levels - from those new to teaching, right up to Vice-Chancellors."

**Professor Stephanie Marshall**  
Chief Executive

The HEA began a year-long campaign with The Student Room to help students at participating institutions to better understand and engage with their **Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)**. Students and prospective students can visit The Student Room site to get ideas about what activities they might want to undertake, find out what employers are looking for in a HEAR, and learn how different HE providers are supporting their students with regard to their report.

A supporting video was created to help students think about their own activities so they don't overlook their extra-curricular achievements.

The **2015 Student Academic Experience Survey** was published, an annual report in partnership with the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI). A key finding focused on the importance that students put on their teachers in higher education being trained to teach. When asked to rank the importance of three characteristics of the people who teach them, 39% rated staff having been trained to teach as their first priority. Also, 44% placed professional or industry expertise top and just 17% rated staff being active researchers as number one.

# July 2015

The roll-out of the new **Inspire programme** was completed to all HEA staff. Led by a team of 'Firestarters' (colleagues recognised for their engagement skills) the programme was developed to help ensure the new values are not only understood but are embedded in all the HEA's every day practice.



Through a series of workshops and practical sessions, Inspire ensured that staff were involved in the development of the behaviours underpinning the values of progressive, agile, collaborative and trusted.

An HEA initiative funded 34 Vice-Chancellors and their senior teams to develop institutional strategies in specific areas of learning and teaching.

The successful strategies, including approaches to the metrics to measure teacher excellence, curriculum design and internationalisation and the global citizen, were chosen

in a review process from over 80 HE providers. The learning from these strategies will be shared with the sector via the HEA website in 2016.

HEA-published research found that **students with vocational qualifications are less likely to get a First or a 2.1**, with the differences in degree outcome greatest at research-intensive universities. This study also showed that these students – who mostly hold BTECs – are highly capable and possess qualities that can help them succeed at the highest levels in HE.

This research highlighted that more needs to be done to support the learning of students with vocational qualifications while they are in higher education. Different pathways into HE prepare students in different ways. All are valid and the report showed that as a sector we must work to fully understand the implications.



# Finances

## Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 July 2015

	2015 £000	2014 £000
<b>Income</b>		
Funding body grants	12,669	14,982
Other income	3,509	3,524
Investment income	53	38
	.....	.....
<b>Total income</b>	<b>16,231</b>	<b>18,544</b>
	.....	.....
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff costs	(4,871)	(8,446)
Other operating expenses	(11,292)	(8,268)
Depreciation	(149)	(248)
Interest and other finance costs	(13)	(12)
	.....	.....
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>(16,325)</b>	<b>(16,974)</b>
	.....	.....
	.....	.....
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus for the year retained within the Income and Expenditure reserve</b>	<b>(94)</b>	<b>1,570</b>
	.....	.....

There were no gains or losses other than those reported in the income and expenditure account.

The HEA full financial statement is available at: [www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)

# Contact us

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## The Higher Education Academy

Innovation Way  
York Science Park  
Heslington  
York, YO10 5BR  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)1904 717500  
[enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk)  
[www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)  
[www.twitter.com/heacademy](http://www.twitter.com/heacademy)

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Higher Education Academy has knowledge, experience and expertise in higher education. Our service and product range is broader than any other teaching and learning organisation throughout the world.

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