The HEA Impact Assessment Protocol has been applied to the Future Direction programme, spanning the period 2010-2014. Source information has been drawn from working group documentation, event feedback, stakeholder interviews, websites, and case studies. It is concluded that Future Directions has achieved positive and significant impact within the higher education sector base on networking, satisfaction, outcomes and the strategic development of learning and teaching. Sector bodies have recognised the influence of Future Directions on learning and teaching practices as evidenced through key policy statements and guidelines from Welsh Government, the QAA and HEFCW.
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I. Executive summary

1.1 Context

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) Future Directions programme has provided a constructive and detailed response to For our future: the 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales (Welsh Government 2009). The primary aim of Future Directions is to support the enhancement of student learning experiences through partnerships between students and staff, with the sharing of good practice and generation of new learning and teaching methods being top priorities.

Over the last four years the Future Directions Steering Group (FDSG) has introduced two major enhancement themes for supporting the work of the higher education sector in Wales:

- Graduates for our Future (2010-2013);

Future Directions has organised 10 national conferences, sponsored six case study and Lessons Learnt publications as well as the student-led Jargon Buster, developed online video and podcast resources, and introduced seven enhancement projects within individual universities. This work has been facilitated by the following work strands:

- Learning in Employment;
- Learning for Employment;
- Students as Partners;
- Distinctive Graduates;
- Inspiring Teaching;
- Learner Journeys.

1.2 The evidence base

An overview of impact for the entire Future Directions programme throughout 2010-14 is based on the following evidence:

- minutes and reports from steering and work strand meetings;
- conference feedback;
- case study and Lessons Learnt publications;
- institutional team enhancement project and overview reports;
- HEA Wales and higher education institution websites;
- semi-structured interviews;
- policy and strategy documentation from the HEA, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and Welsh Government.

This evidence base does not however include surveys of a larger and more random sample of stakeholders drawn from the higher education sector in Wales.

1.3 Impact conclusions

The gauging of impact has been guided by the HEA Impact Assessment Framework, leading to the following nine conclusions:

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1 Gathered between 21 May and 15 July 2014.
1. Reach within the higher education sector
Future Directions has achieved extensive and comprehensive reach for universities, although there has been more limited engagement with further education. Students’ union sabbatical officers and student voices within institutions have been successfully involved in relevant groups and events, including the writing of case studies and giving presentations at conferences and seminars. There is evidence of reach outside Wales, in addition to securing sustained involvement with government and sector body agencies. The overall networking effectiveness of Future Directions has been recognised by sector bodies and the Welsh Government.

2. Satisfaction with progress
Conference and event feedback, documentation from meetings, case study and enhancement reports, project overviews, and comments from interviews all confirm high levels of satisfaction amongst stakeholders – alongside the importance of sustaining current success and momentum. This observation applies to consistent perceptions of high quality leadership and administration by the Future Directions team, and to the successful progress of projects and events.

3. Output and outcomes for the Future Directions programme
There is evidence of significant output from the FDSG, and the Graduates for our Future work strands, with the recently launched Global Graduates sub-themes focusing in particular on contributions to the 2014 biennial conference. Output has been converted successfully to outcomes through publications, high profile national conferences, online resources and the detailed promotion of employability and student engagement themes. The Welsh Government has recognised the range of achievement by Future Directions within the sector.

4. Awareness and understanding of change
Feedback from the events programme and interviews emphasises widespread awareness of change through Future Directions facilitation with the sharing of good learning and teaching practices, in addition to supporting understanding of policy changes within the higher education sector. The Lessons Learnt publications in particular provide evidence of impact of earlier case study material on awareness and understanding of change. The institutional team enhancement projects further illustrate informed choice of learning and teaching priorities by individual institutions based on their understanding of the Future Directions work strands. A wide range of evidence points to the continuing need for more awareness and understanding of student engagement with curriculum development activity.

5. Unintended, indirect or negative outcomes
No direct negative consequences were noted for Future Directions, although ongoing challenges include the need for more clarity with the new Future Directions Global Graduates programme and sub-themes as they replace the former work strands, the embedding of student partnership working, the importance of including more postgraduate students within representation systems, and the need for more evaluation of project work. Indirect outcomes identified by interviewees include the conversion of enhancement activity into research output, and developing new externally funded projects.

6. Change and inspiration for teaching and learning practices
Case study publications, student story material, conference feedback, and interview comments all point to significant levels of influence and inspiration through the facilitation of shared good learning and teaching practices by Future Directions. Six overall themes are identified for change: building a community of practice, new methods, strategic planning, employability, student involvement, and evaluation.

7. Reward and recognition of learning and teaching
The recognition and reward of learning and teaching is evidenced through extensive Future Directions publications, with the showcasing of good practice at institutional and sector levels. Future Directions has facilitated the expansion of Student Led Teaching Awards, in partnership with Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE).
8. Changes to procedures and structures
There is much evidence of impact at institutional levels through changes linked to strategic planning, senior management responsibilities, student representation systems, and curriculum design. There is also evidence for change at sector levels through dialogue between Future Directions and HEFCW concerning the development of Annual Student Relationship agreements and Skills and Employability Action Plans.

9. Policy and culture change at institutional and sector levels
Future Directions documentation, coupled with interview commentary and enhancement projects reports, point to significant impact at policy and cultural levels within institutions. The content of the institutional learning and teaching strategies reflect Future Directions strands and themes. One of the most dramatic examples of innovative change involves student-led staff development programmes, although there is still an ongoing challenge with the engagement by students in detailed levels of curriculum design. There is evidence of widespread and formal recognition of impact by the Future Directions programme on policy emanating from HEFCW and Welsh Government. The inclusion of Future Directions within the QAA handbook for the new Higher Education Review Wales method is a significant indicator of impact on the sector.

Future Directions has achieved considerable impact at individual, institutional and sector levels. There have been beneficial outcomes through developing and disseminating learning and teaching practices for enhancing student experience, with sector bodies and Welsh Government formally recognising Future Directions achievements within policy and strategy statements and guidelines. Future Directions has earned the respect of stakeholders within the higher education sector, extending beyond Welsh borders. The cessation of this work through funding or political change would limit the future sharing of good practice and partnership working between students and staff.
2. The Future Directions programme

2.1 Beginnings

In 2010 the Welsh Institutional Group (WIG) worked with the HEA in order to organise the watershed conference Designing for Diversity and Flexibility. This event provided the crucial evidence base for the launch of a programme of work that would become Future Directions for Higher Education Wales (HEW). It generated a set of initial expectations and baseline priorities for the higher education sector in Wales, with two crucial feedback questions generating the following responses from the delegates:

Question: What were the most useful aspects of the event for you (for example, significant ideas or practices etc. you have heard or developed during the event)?

Responses included: the opportunity to share ideas about the future direction of HE in Wales; networking; ideas discussed in breakout groups – e.g. streamlining quality assurance systems; HEFCW’s perspectives; sharing common problems and hearing how others have developed strategies; identifying enhancement themes; opportunity to share experiences; discussing issues with colleagues from comparable institutions.

Question: What are the main things you will do as a consequence of attending this event?

Responses included: how the themes will inform the planning for the biennial conference; consideration of the themes at the next Steering Group meeting; feeding back to colleagues; helping to inform and shape thoughts about the responses to For Our Future; discussing initiatives with senior managers; using ideas and plans for developing institutions learning and teaching strategy – to then cascade down to departmental practice.

These interests were to be overseen by the FDSG, a sector forum that succeeded in securing representation from all universities in Wales over the course of its 10 meetings. The FDSG includes members from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Colegau Cymru, Grwp Llandrillo Menai, the National Union of Students (NUS) for Wales, The Welsh Higher Education Staff Development Network, HEFCW, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), HEW, Estyn, and the Joint Information Systems Committee Regional Support Centre (Jisc RSC) for Wales.

Where relevant, meetings involved input from external colleagues – for instance, Scottish institutions engaging in enhancement activity, the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE).

2.2 Linking with institution and sector priorities

The group was highly strategic at the outset with its consideration of a key paper outlining forthcoming initiatives in the sector, noting the importance of dovetailing its work wherever possible with other organisations and agencies. Connections were established with HEW through their Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) learning and teaching advisory group, in addition to the ongoing and very close dialogue with WIG. Two FDSG meetings noted that the HEW network of senior university managers were advising that Future Directions work should be embedded within institutions and, where possible, linked to QAA institutional enhancement activity.

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2 Discussion paper – identifying an enhancement theme FDSG meeting, 5 November 2010.
3 Minute 2.5: 20 October 2011 and minute 5.2: 16 February 2012.
review themes.

A previous HEA Wales project entitled The first year student experience and action set, provided an important prototype for guiding output for the programme through wiki-based case studies. In tandem with published output, biennial conferences with consistent and clear branding of Future Directions activity were planned, with additional events being scheduled in accordance with sector needs and policy priorities.

Examples from 2011 include:
- Building on HEFCW’s confirmation [FDSG 4.3: 5 November 2011] that Future Directions themes will be taken into consideration when drafting the council’s guidance documentation for institutional learning and teaching strategies. In April 2011, the FDSG group organised a national workshop for key individuals in order to raise the quality of learning and teaching and access strategies being written by institutions.
- A separate workshop in May 2011 for individuals preparing widening access plans for their institutions.
- The organising of Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology, in partnership with JISC RSC and The Open University.
- Contributing to other events – such as Aberystwyth University’s Learning and Teaching conference, and the WISE conference.

The FDSG was also learning how important it was to ensure that information actually reached appropriate individuals within institutions:

It was noted that the 9 June Employability event had been cancelled due to low take up from the sector. Members expressed concern at this low level of interest given that two of the work strands are focused in this area [minute 10.3 FDSG 6 May 2011].

The FDSG therefore recognised a key communication challenge: the filtering of information and invitations through institutions to the right people.

2.3 Graduates for Our Future work strands

The FDSG established and monitored three work strands – Learning in Employment (LiE), Learning for Employment (LfE), and Students as Partners (SaP) – with shared milestones being provided through HEA deadlines for wiki-sites, case study publications, the 2012 Future Directions national conference, and a follow up series of Lessons Learnt publications for the work strands in 2013. Appendices A to C provide detailed commentary on the progress of these three areas over the last two years.

The 2012 biennial conference in particular helped to focus strand activity:

… the significance of the Future Directions conference should not be underestimated, as this is the first in a series where Wales can say something about itself in terms of provision. Wales has a unique advantage of including a wide range of mission groups, and being able to get all higher education institutions (HEIs) around the table to discuss how to take forward a common policy. The conference is an unparalleled opportunity in Welsh HE history to celebrate the sector’s work [minute 4.4 FDSG 20 October 2011].

There were important reminders of the need for ensuring sector ownership of Future Directions themes and work strands, including the need to connect with a pending HEFCW and QAA review of Foundation Degrees in Wales. Lessons were also being learned from other nations:

…Wales is moving along the same path which Scotland followed with regard to quality enhancement work. When the work began in Scotland, the themes were dictated to the sector, but as the work progressed, the sector owned and identified the theme, which helped to engage a wider audience for
the sector. The QAA then recognised these themes as one of the external references that HEIs should engage with [minute 5.3 FDSG 20 October 2011].

Case study publications disseminated outcomes from the three strands, with learners’ experiences being further documented through innovative online productions using alternative media formats.

2.4 Conference milestones

The FDSG supported the development of teaching and learning at institutional and sector levels through an extensive events programme. A total of 10 pan-Wales events disseminated Future Directions activity whilst also gathering information from institutions and individuals for future policy planning by sector bodies.

1 Future Directions for higher education in Wales – Designing for Diversity and flexibility. 15 October, Aberystwyth University.
2 Future Directions: Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology. 12 April 2011, University of Glamorgan.
3 Future Directions: Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Workshop. 13 April 2011, University of Glamorgan.
5 Future Directions Foundation Degrees: where Policy meets Practice. 29 February 2012, University of Glamorgan.
7 Students as Partners in Practice. 28 November 2012, University of Glamorgan.
8 Future Directions for Skills and Employability. 15 May 2013, University of Glamorgan.
9 Future Directions: Identifying the Next Enhancement Theme. 6 June 2013, University of South Wales, Caerleon Campus.
10 Future Directions: Global Graduates. 2–3 April 2014, Aberystwyth University.

The close involvement of institutional and sector leaders within the FDSG led in particular to the well-attended biennial national conferences in April 2012 and 2014. The Steering Group noted that there was a continual need to ensure that follow up activity tied in with institutional priorities:

the current theme was born out of issues in the Learning and Teaching strategies and discussions at HEW PVC Learning and Teaching Advisory Group. It was suggested that the conference outcomes steer institutional strategy, rather than the other way around, tensions may arise [minute 5.2 FDSG 16 February 2014].

The 2012 conference generated ideas and evidence for informing future sector priorities. The steering group recognised the value of networking, collaboration, and building a community of practice around teaching and learning. The case studies – and the follow up Lessons Learnt publications – were seen as invaluable dissemination methods and products, with a growing interest in generating different formats for recording and communicating student stories about the diverse learning journeys that have been experienced.

The need for increasing student engagement in curriculum design and for developing the student voice permeated future steering group discussions, reinforced by QAA enhancement themes surrounding student involvement in quality assurance. For this reason the Students as Partners work strand was to be embedded within all other activities, through the creation of a Students as Partners network5 rather than having a

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4 In addition, there were also joint seminars, meetings and conferences with other higher education organisations, including the QAA and The Open University in Wales.
5 Terms of reference have all been developed, chairs have been appointed and the opening meeting was held on 11 July. WISE are now providing administration for the Students as Partners network.
continuing separate identity.

The remits and case studies from the other two strands were viewed as overlapping, especially in relation to the exploration of work placement experiences and employability skills for full-time undergraduates and part-time work based learners. The work strands had therefore been productive, but there was now a need to consider new areas.

It was suggested that the HEIs will “dip in and out” of the themes when it benefits them, and the strands may affect HEIs in different ways, and as such, the Future Directions work must be flexible [minute 5.5 FDSG 16 February 2012].

2.5 The institutional team enhancement projects

The Steering Group’s overall interest in impact was with enhancement. An enhancement grant scheme was therefore introduced in 2013, whereby all institutions were awarded £2,500 funding in support of Future Directions activity, plus £500 for institutional dissemination activities. A requirement of the funding was the production of outcomes reports.

A comprehensive summary of progress over the last year has been completed by HEA Associate Professor Howard Colley, based on the returned institutional reports. There is evidence of continuing and sustained interest in all work strand themes, in addition to the exploration of new priorities and learning experiences:

Case studies for students learning, where six universities engaged with:
- the production of video and audio testimonials covering careers awareness and employability support;
- developing a media tool kit for use with student representatives and staff development support;
- using student internships to generate work experience case studies;
- compiling examples for learning in employment toolkits;
- innovative approaches to authentic assessment practice.

Supporting student needs, where three universities explored student–staff partnerships for:
- developing an academic manifesto linked to information drawn from Student Led Teaching Award data, including the involvement of student internships;
- building a speech and language therapy peer learning network, again involving the use of internships;
- promoting public speaking expertise through a student led oral presentation learning platform;
- offering work placements

Supporting staff and students experiencing institutional mergers, where two universities focused on:
- bringing together staff from different campuses for staff development workshops and events;
- providing co-ordinated work experience support;
- rolling out successful employability initiatives to the new institution;
- extending awareness and expertise in the use of Open Education Resources and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Internal dissemination, where all seven universities shared good practice through:
- using mainstream committees and boards associated with quality enhancement, learning and teaching, and employability – and in one instance establishing their own FDSG;
- organising staff development events with external speakers on occasions, including a teaching symposium on learning for and in employment, and workshops dedicated to innovation with assessment practices;
- implementing student-centred market research for a variety of learning journeys in order to generate material for staff development workshops;

6 Institutional Teams and Enhancement Projects paper prepared for the FDSG meeting on the 4 June 2014.
• developing online blogs and discussion groups for creating collaborative networks for staff interested in open education resources,

2.6 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning

In addition to noting the significant contributions of the three work strands to institutional learning and teaching strategies, the Steering Group’s discussion of the next steps for Future Directions emphasised the importance of making connections between flexible learning and inclusive curriculum development.⁷

The Steering Group adopted the phasing out strategy for current strand activity deployed by HEA Scotland, where an abrupt start and end to themes was deliberately avoided. The 2012-14 period allowed for the continuing operation of current strands as well as transition to new areas, including recruitment of new work strand members.

The Steering Group emphasised the importance of continuing momentum during the intervening years between the national conferences, with smaller and more focused sessions being scheduled during 2012-2013 – including the Students as Partners in Practice workshop, and contributions to other major events (such as the shared NUS Wales, The Open University in Wales, and HEA conference on part-time learning).

There was a strategic targeting of gatekeepers and opinion leaders in institutions through the involvement of National Teaching Fellows, as well as the exploration of Student Led Teaching Awards. Dedicated Future Directions web pages were created on the HEA website, which included animations and documentation from work strands and conferences. Student and staff use of technology for communications was highlighted, with particular reference to:

• social media and webinars for the enhancement of learning and teaching practices;
• the location of Future Directions material within institutional websites;
• the production of a Future Directions e-newsletter.

All of these action points were integrated into a Future Directions communications plan, with an accompanying interest in evaluating Future Directions progress through:

• supporting the development of impact statements by work strands⁸;
• completing a post-2012 conference survey⁹;
• working with the QAA in order to explore impact of case study material on quality management processes and structures¹⁰.

The Steering Group also noted an increasingly high profile for Future Directions:

The work of the Future Directions was referenced in the new higher education policy statement, which was evidence of impact. HEW has suggested that FDSG consider method of publicising Future Directions work to the Minister and the Welsh Government moving forward. One suggestion was to invite the Minister to the Spring 2014 conference [minute 4.3 FDSG 19 June 2013].

All of this activity helped to inform the choice of the next Future Directions theme, to be launched at the next biennial conference in 2014. A small planning group had responsibility for convening a closed event in June 2013 (therefore repeating the earlier 2010 tactic that led to the identification of Graduates for Our Future), followed by collation and analysis of all of the ideas and suggestions.

⁷ page 2 of Next Steps paper for FDSG 16 February 2012
⁸ minute 6.15 FDSG 20 June 2012
⁹ minute 6.22 FDSG 20 June 2012
¹⁰ minute 5.16 FDSG 5 October 2012
The new theme was agreed as Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning with sub-themes for Distinctive Graduates, Developing Teaching Excellence (later relabelled as Inspiring Teaching), and Learner Journeys. The sub-themes would be supported through the creation of three new work strands. These suggestions were then rehearsed with the Higher Education Wales PVC Teaching and Learning Advisory Group in order to ensure goodness of fit with institutional strategies. Appendix D provides detail for the progress of the new work strands since their launch at the beginning of the current academic year.

2.7 The most recent snapshot: the 2014 Conference

The recent work of the Steering Group has involved planning the 2014 Future Directions national conference at Aberystwyth University. This event went beyond sharing good practice through gathering sector-wide information from staff and students for Future Directions planning. The importance of collaboration and networking was therefore emphasised, and for this reason the Steering Group conference became a two-day event covering old work strands and the launch of the new sub-themes.

The Steering Group has also encouraged raising the profile of Future Directions outside of Wales with support in particular for student partnership contributions to other conferences further afield, including Students as Change Agents (Winchester University, February 2014) and the Undergraduate Research Conference (Nottingham University, April 2014).

![Figure 1: Percentage of 2014 conference sessions linked to work strands](chart.png)
3. Gauging impact

An overview of impact for the entire Future Directions programme throughout the 2010-2014 period is based on the following evidence:

- minutes and reports for meetings\(^{11}\);
- conference feedback\(^{12}\);
- the three sets of case study and lessons learnt publications;
- institutional team enhancement project and overview reports;
- HEA Wales and university websites;
- semi-structured interviews involving 16 individuals with experience of Future Directions\(^{13}\);
- policy and strategy documentation from the HEA, HEFCW, QAA and Welsh Government.

The gauging of impact has been guided by the HEA Impact Assessment Framework, leading to the following nine categories of findings:

1. reach within the higher education sector;
2. satisfaction with progress;
3. output and outcomes for the Future Directions programme;
4. awareness and understanding of change;
5. unintended, indirect or negative outcomes;
6. change and inspiration for teaching and learning practices;
7. reward and recognition of learning and teaching;
8. changes to procedures and structures;
9. policy and culture change at institutional and sector levels.

Appendices A to D provide more detailed analysis for the three Graduates for Our Future work strands and the new sub-theme work strands within Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning.

3.1 Reach within the higher education sector

**Meeting notes, minutes and reports**

Membership of staff and students from all of the universities in Wales\(^{14}\) was noted for Future Directions groups\(^{15}\). Appendix G supplies further details for individual groups and institutions, with the further education sector represented on the FDSG via Colegau Cymru, and membership of four colleges within all of the Future Directions work strands and the Global Graduates Learner Journey sub-theme group. Sustained attendance of the steering group is noted for the universities, in addition to HEFCW, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, NUS Wales, JISC RSC, and the QAA. There has been no representation of private training providers within the employability work strands.

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\(^{11}\) Including observation of the FDSG 4 June 2014.

\(^{12}\) Appendix E provides details of percentages for feedback and evaluation information returned by delegates following the events, with an overall response rate of 34.65% for eight events with eligible data.

\(^{13}\) Appendix F provides details for the interview procedure alongside the names of the 16 interviewees.

\(^{14}\) Nine current universities are identified: Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Cardiff Met, Glyndwr, the OU in Wales, Swansea, South Wales (the merged Glamorgan and Newport universities) the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (the merger of Swansea Met and Trinity with the recent addition of the University of Wales).

\(^{15}\) The Open University in Wales engaged more fully with Future Directions operations after 2011 following new staff appointments.
Involvement by the steering and work strands is noted with national networks and initiatives, including Jisc RSC, the Students as Partners Change Academy, WESB, the National Eisteddfod, the ESF High Performance Working programme, the Wales Advisory Health Group, Sector Skills Councils, the Centre for Recording Achievement, and GO Wales.

Substantial subject reach is reflected by case study and learner journey material from the following discipline areas: Advertising, Psychology, Education, Classics, Bioscience, History, Archaeology, Photonics, European Studies, Languages, Art and Design, Performing Arts, Law, Criminology, Mathematics, Creative Industries, Medicine, Religion, Environmental Management, Enterprise, Counselling, Geography, Pharmacy, Mechanical Engineering, Business and Management, Science, Careers, Food Science, Sport Leisure and Tourism, Engineering, Construction, Accounting, Physiotherapy, Dental Technology, Nursing, Care Science, and Midwifery. The most popular subject areas are business and management, education, and health and social care. The majority of case study work has been pitched at undergraduate level.

Conferences and events
The ten pan-Wales conferences and seminars have attracted a total of 871 delegates from all universities in Wales, in addition to representatives from further education colleges and sector bodies and agencies. Some of the conferences have been jointly branded with HEFCW, NUS Wales, Jisc RSC, and the QAA (see Appendix E).
The HEA asked delegates about the communication channels used for learning about the events, with email and websites often cited (see Appendix E). It is also worth noting the possibility of significant informal reach by Future Directions to academic communities of practice based on the high response rates from the two national conferences in 2012 and 2014 (events 6 and 10) to the question: ‘from a colleague’.

16 Based on feedback from five events supplying sufficient data.
Appendix E lists organisations and institutions outside of Wales attending Future Directions Wales events, with notable increases for the 2014 Global Graduates conference where six English universities contributed keynotes and sessions. Furthermore, content analysis of qualitative feedback from delegates notes plans by individual delegates to build communities of practice with institutions outside of Wales (see figure 7).

There is further evidence for specific Future Directions contributions to individual institution conferences and events – two examples involving learning and teaching conferences for staff and students at the universities of Aberystwyth and Newport in 2012 and 2013.

Enhancement projects and case studies
All of the current nine universities in Wales\footnote{The funding strategy for these projects did not extend to further education colleges.} were invited to engage in the enhancement projects and eight submitted reports on progress during the 2013-14 academic year. All but one of the universities, and four colleges, contributed case studies (Appendix I) to the three work strand publications:

![Total number of Future Directions case studies across three strands](image)

Interviews
Interviewees described extensive networking between universities through the Future Directions work strands and sub-themes as well the HEA event programme covering 2010-2014.

There were more mixed observations for the comprehensive and consistent involvement of further education sector representatives. At times this was described as very successful, with contributions to case studies, planning meetings, and conferences being cited as examples. At other times the involvement of further education colleagues was noted as ‘incidental,’ although there were plans to improve representation in the future.
The case studies showed that there was a lot of close involvement from further education, but perhaps they could have been involved in the groups. We relied on the universities to represent their colleges, but we might have missed a trick here [Interviewee O].

Two interviewees emphasised the potential of Wales becoming a leader for cross-sector higher and further education partnerships, based on the integration of colleges within the structures and governance of some universities.

Impact was also inferred through interviewees describing the positive reputation of Future Directions within the sector, with its name featuring consistently in policy circulars from sector bodies.

Brandining has been crucial. If we issue a circular or a statement we have to start from scratch but there is more continuity, familiarity, acceptance if we can retain a title everyone knows [Interviewee I].

We have had to work really hard to balance new work with the need for consolidation and making sure our reputation continues, it is important for “Future Directions” to be the dominant title [Interviewee K].

Policy Statement
The involvement of key stakeholders from across the sector in Future Directions work has been recognised by Welsh Government in their 2013 policy statement for the sector:

All Welsh HEIs, students' unions and key sector agencies are involved in the work, in a variety of ways, for example through membership of the FDSG, membership of the three work strand groups, submitting case studies, disseminating the work through networks, and participating in the Future Directions events [Policy Statement on Higher Education Welsh Government June 2013 page 25].

Conclusions: Future Directions has achieved extensive and comprehensive reach for universities, although there has been a more limited involvement of further education, with no involvement of private training providers for employability work strands. Student union sabbatical officers and student voices within institutions have been successfully involved in relevant groups and events, including the writing of case studies and giving presentations at conferences and seminars. There is evidence of reach outside of Wales, in addition to securing sustained involvement with government and sector body agencies. The overall networking effectiveness of Future Directions has been recognised by sector bodies and the Welsh Government.

3.2 Satisfaction with progress

Conference and event feedback
The Future Directions team collected conference, workshop and seminar feedback from eight of the ten pan-Wales events, with responses from delegates and participants being summarised in Appendix E. Consistently high levels of satisfaction have been recorded for administration and content.
Averaged over eight events supplying sufficient feedback data.

Averaged over seven events supplying sufficient feedback data.
Conference evaluations from six events gathered generally brief responses from delegates about “least useful” outcomes, with three criticisms being noted:

- the need for more time to discuss issues and to network with colleagues;
- shorter and more relevant key note presentations on occasions;
- improved venue facilities.

Singular comments were also recorded for the need to include more mature student perspectives, to address in more depth the needs of part-time students, and to explore more issues within further education.

**Institutional team enhancement projects and case studies**

The reviews of enhancement reports and case studies by HEA Associate Professor Howard Colley indicate high levels of satisfaction with the progress of projects through the Future Directions institutional enhancement strategy. One critical comment concerned the additional management workloads created through the administration of small grant schemes.

**Interview Data**

Interview conversations suggested that Future Directions had the initial challenge of ensuring ownership by practitioners because it was HEFCW driven, with fees and funding priorities that located student engagement and employability as the two top priorities.

These were not always the most important interests of lecturers so there were difficulties at first in selling Future Directions to institutions. No one seemed to be talking about teaching. But it gradually evolved and people came around, and the conference was very important for involving everyone [Interviewee C].

The enthusiasm, persistence and strategic leadership of Future Directions by Dr Helena Lim, and the overall efficient and reliable administrative support from the HEA Wales team, were singled out consistently by interviewees as key success factors for the programme.

[the HEA Assistant Director ] was outstanding with passion and commitment and a deep understanding of the sector. We would always walk the extra mile to make sure that we delivered. And the administration support was very good [Interviewee H].

Before the Aberystwyth conference [in October 2010] HEA were coming up with obscure ideas and had to make them more relevant. There was a strategic refocus from the outset and since then an ongoing dialogue has pulled it all together meaning things can be much more hands off because everything is on-track. And Future Directions people have made very good links at committee levels [Interviewee I].

It was helped by HEFCW’s institutional planning, but it was down to individual influence as well and the strong relationships built up by the Future Directions manager in Wales [Interviewee N].

[the Future Directions manager] built up a strategic networking approach with excellent logistics from the team forming the glue that stuck it all together [Interviewee O].

It should also be noted that recurring concerns were expressed by interviewees about the need to retain the current high satisfaction levels with Future Directions. A potential loss of confidence in the sector with the

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20 The three Lessons Learnt overview publications in 2013 as a follow up to the 2012 case study reports, and the Institutional Teams and Enhancement Projects paper prepared for the FDSG meeting on the 4 June 2014.

21 HEA Assistant Director, Wales and Northern Ireland Head of Partnerships.

22 Over the four-year period this included Rachel Cable and Lizzie Badrick (Policy and Partnerships Officer for Wales and Northern Ireland) and Cara Marcheselli (Policy and Events Intern for Wales).
HEA was signalled as a very real possibility if the current success with networking, reach and impact is not sustained.

Conclusions: Conference and event feedback, documentation from meetings, case study and enhancement reports, project overviews, and comments from interviews all confirm high levels of satisfaction amongst stakeholders, alongside the importance of sustaining current success and momentum. This observation applies to consistent perceptions of high quality leadership and administration by the Future Directions team, and to the successful progress of projects and events.

### 3.3 Output and outcomes

| Table 1: Output from Future Directions steering and work strand activity 2010-2014 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                 | Minutes and notes               | Case studies and learner journeys | Conference workshops | Other activity |
| FDSG                            | Minutes and papers from 10 meetings | 3 case study and 3 follow up Lessons Learnt publications | 10 national conference and events | Enhancement project reports and overview analysis Website and newsletter output |
| LiE                             | Notes from 6 meetings           | 26 case studies                   | 6 (2012 biennial conference) | Foundation Degree and Skills and Employability conference planning |
| LIIE                            | Notes from 5 meetings           | 66 case studies                   | 6 (2012 biennial conference) and 28 (2014 conference) | Foundation Degree and Skills and Employability conference planning |
| SaP                             | Notes from 8 meetings           | 33 case studies                   | 6 (2012 biennial conference) and 20 (2014 conference) | Students as Partners in Practice conference planning |
| Distinctive Graduates           | Notes from 4 meetings           | n/a                             | 10 Distinctive Graduate related contributions at the 2014 biennial conference student panel | Interactive poster at the 2014 conference for listing skills and attributes |
| Learner Journeys                | Notes from 4 meetings           | 20 Learner Journey stories        | 18 Learner Journey related contributions at the 2014 biennial conference | Online blogs and discussion groups |
| Inspiring Teaching              | Notes from 4 meetings           | n/a                             | 23 Inspiring Teaching related contributions at the 2014 biennial conference | Interactive poster at the 2014 conference for listing the qualities of an inspiring teacher |
| Students as Partners Network    | n/a                             | n/a                             | 2 student panels at the 2014 biennial conference | Definitions, expectations, and terms of reference have all been developed with Chairs appointed and the opening meeting was held on 11 July |

Additional output covers support materials for 10 conference and seminar events, the review of the enhancement projects by Professor Howard Colley in 2013, and the production of learner journey online animations and blogs.
Table 2: Outcomes from Future Directions steering and work strand activity 2010-2014

A series of ten national events including:

- biennial Future Directions conferences: Designing for Diversity and flexibility (2010), Graduates for Our Future (2012) and Global Graduates (2014);
- Employability, Skills and Foundation Degrees conferences (2012 and 2013);
- Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology conference (2011);
- the planning of the new Global Graduates theme (2013);
- seminars providing support and guidance for the writing of Learning, Teaching and Widening Access Strategies (2012).

Three case study publications for the LiE, LfE and SaP work strands

Three Lessons Learnt publications following up the case studies

The Students as Partners Jargon Buster publication

Dissemination of Future Directions work through presentations to national conferences and workshops in England including HEA UK, and the Universities of York, Lincoln and …

Eight Institutional Team Enhancement Projects supported by the HEA Wales Future Directions small grant scheme

The HEA Wales Future Directions website and learner journey/student story online material

The creation of Students as Partners Student Panels for gathering learner perceptions of new initiatives and projects

The launch in 2014 of a Future Directions newsletter

Specific recognition of Future Directions within policy and strategy guidance statements from HEFCW, the QAA, and Welsh Government

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**Policy statement**

The Welsh Government 2013 sector statement for higher education recognised Future Directions outcomes, especially in relation to the work strands and conference organisation:

The Future Directions programme has also been delivered through a range of sector events including “Future Directions: Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology” in April 2011, and “Future Directions: Foundation Degrees – where policy meets practice” in February 2012. [Policy Statement on Higher Education Welsh Government June 2013 page 25].

Conclusions: There is evidence of significant output from the FDSG and the Graduates for our Future work strands, with the recently launched Global Graduates sub-themes focusing in particular on contributions to the 2014 biennial conference. Output has been converted successfully to outcomes through publications, high profile national conferences, online resources and the detailed promotion of employability and student engagement themes. The Welsh Government has recognised the range of achievement by Future Directions within the sector.

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3.4 Awareness and understanding of change

**Conference and event feedback**

Future Directions delegates identified the following topics as useful for raising awareness and increasing understanding of teaching and learning practices and strategies:

- sharing good practice through case studies;
- enhancement outcomes in Scotland;
- technology enhanced learning;
- identifying and using Jisc resources;
- policy and strategy developments by HEFCW, QAA and Welsh Government;
- preparing for QAA review;
- developing teaching and learning strategies;
• employability and skills;
• work based learning toolkits;
• higher apprenticeships;
• developing employability plans;
• widening access and social inclusion;
• graduate attributes;
• foundation degrees;
• careers and curriculum development;
• bite-sized learning;
• students leading staff development programmes;
• GO Wales;
• student representation;
• student involvement in curriculum design as an area for further development;
• further education perspectives;
• social networking.

Case study and enhancement reports
Prominent themes emerging from case study and enhancement project reports, in addition to the 16 interviews, include:

Learning in Employment
• comprehensive support for part-time work based learners engaging in alternative forms of assessment, including bite-sized learning and the accreditation of prior experience;
• improved retention of work based learners through the use of flexible online technologies;
• advantages of involving alumni in work based learning;
• the need for staff development for validation panels engaging in the approval of work based learning frameworks;
• the potential for recruiting more postgraduate work based learners.

Learning for Employment
• the need for generating evidence in order to share good practice for the development of employability;
• effective models for successful partnership working between academic staff, students, and careers services;
• identifying the impact of employability on retention and student motivation;
• including LfE programmes and initiatives within widening access plans and strategies, including civic engagement.

Students as Partners
• the effectiveness of mixed staff and student teams for learning and teaching conference presentations, case study writing and learner journey audio and video productions;
• the contribution of students to curriculum design in order to develop relevant and clear learning outcomes and strategies that enhance attainment and progression;
• the importance of achieving a balance between students’ union officers and student voice representatives within partnership working;
• the widespread development of student ambassador and peer mentoring schemes.

Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning
• international dimensions for engagement with employers and students;
• the financial challenges of fees and funding, advances in global digital information, the democratisation of higher education and public accountability;
• the expansion of internship schemes;
• engagement with open education resources associated with MOOCs and Open Educational Resource university (OERu);
• the importance of developing understanding of the distinctiveness of graduates from Welsh universities, including the concept of cultural agility;
• the importance of generating appealing multimedia material for recording student and staff experiences via Learner Journeys.

Interviews
Interviewees agreed that Future Directions had raised awareness of the need for change, in line with the early priorities from the Welsh Government’s For Our Future policy. The programme also helped other organisations to develop more awareness of developments in Wales:

They’ve been like a key holder to the sector; you get a better picture about what’s going on. It’s been ideal for us, especially with understanding student perceptions because Future Directions made them the heart of the matter [Interviewee I].

There was increased understanding of the need to identify and showcase much good practice already underway in Wales – learning in particular from Scotland’s success in publicising various enhancement achievements.

It was quite ironic to take a trip to Aberystwyth to find out what was going in my own university [Interviewee D].

The case studies showed that student representation was very advanced, but curriculum design was most challenging because there was so little evidence of involvement [Interviewee G].

Conclusions: Feedback from the event programme and interviews emphasises widespread awareness of change through Future Directions facilitation with the sharing of good learning and teaching practices, in addition to supporting understanding of policy changes within the higher education sector. The Lessons Learnt publications in particular provide evidence of impact of earlier case study material on awareness and understanding of change. The enhancement projects further illustrate informed choice of learning and teaching priorities by individual institutions based on their understanding of the Future Directions work strands. A wide range of evidence points to the continuing need for more awareness and understanding of student engagement with curriculum development activity.

3.5 Unintended, indirect or negative outcomes

Documentation from meetings, case studies and interview commentary highlighted some difficulties and challenges for individual institutions and the sector based on Future Directions experiences, although it is emphasised that these have not been described specifically as counter-productive or negative:
• awareness of the need to develop more detailed evaluation strategies for projects and initiatives;
• concern about a complicated Future Directions strategy containing three strands whilst launching another theme and three new work strands at the same time (with one interviewee suggesting the need for each session within the biennial conference to be clearly labelled, so that delegates can identify more relevance to their own work);
• recognition of the need to avoid overlapping responsibilities for the Students as Partners work strand and network, leading to agreement that administration of the network would be through WISE rather than Future Directions.
• recognition of the need to involve more postgraduate students within Students as Partners activity;
• the importance of recognising increased workloads for the regular provision of training and support for new student representatives;
• the need for careful and detailed planning for the embedding of student engagement in other work strands;
• under-representation of the further education sector in some work strands.

Unintended or indirect outcomes – that were nonetheless beneficial – were identified by interviewees:
• recognition of the potential for converting employability and learning and teaching projects and case studies into research output, including the writing of bids, journal articles and books;
• support for planning and securing a major regional HEFCW project for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

Conclusions: No direct negative consequences were noted for Future Directions, although ongoing challenges include the need for more clarity with new Future Directions programmes and sub-themes as they replace the former work strands, the embedding of student partnership working, the importance of including more postgraduate students within representation systems, and the need for more evaluation of project work. Indirect outcomes identified by interviewees include the conversion of enhancement activity into research output and developing new externally funded projects.

3.6 Change and inspiration for teaching and learning practices

Meeting notes, case studies and conference feedback
Documentation from Future Directions groups and case studies provides an abundance of detail about change and inspiration in teaching and learning practices within numerous academic subject and discipline levels, in addition to more generic education development at institutional level. Appendices A to D provide examples drawn from the work strands and the sub-themes.

Qualitative conference feedback (see Appendix E) provides more detailed insight into potential impact through responses to direct questions about what Future Directions delegates particularly valued in relation to plans for changing their professional practices. Content analysis of delegate feedback identified seven categories of inspiration and change:
• exploring new learning and teaching methods, including new technologies and curriculum design;
• networking and building a community of practice;
• strategic planning of learning and teaching at subject, department, institution, and sector levels – including quality assurance;
• employer engagement including higher apprenticeships and work based learning;
• student involvement in learning and teaching development;
• applications of learning and teaching to social inclusion and widening access;
• evaluating and researching learning and teaching innovations and practices.
While these data are based on relatively small numbers of qualitative comments within returned evaluation forms, there is the suggestion that impact is less prominent for evaluating outcomes of innovatory practices in teaching and learning.

**The institutional team enhancement projects**

The institutional team enhancement project reports\(^\text{24}\) provide more detailed evidence of impact on teaching and learning practices at subject and institution levels.

Popular strategies for the use of funding have included the creation of student internships, payment for guest speakers, staff development workshops, the exploration of open education resources, and the online production of learning journey materials. Institutions also commented on the importance of continuing with this kind of grant support in order to keep a sustainable momentum and avoid short-term initiative fatigue.

**Interviews**

Interviewees emphasised the effectiveness of Future Directions for supporting and inspiring changes in learning and teaching practices with sample quotes including:

> We want to achieve something substantial and not be a talking shop. For it to maintain momentum members have to see we are creating something new. But it depends on how much time they are prepared to give [Interviewee D].

> The staff and students as co-presenters was very impressive especially the quality of the student contributions. It worked very well, deep thinking and tackling substantial issues [Interviewee C].

> This is not just about compiling lists of resources – you can ask “so what?” We are asking what is the difference we are going to make in two years’ time in order to say there was a change [Interviewee N].

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\(^{22}\) Based on delegate feedback from six events supplying sufficient feedback data.

\(^{24}\) Including the HEA co-published *Authentic Assessment* enhancement report from the Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching within Swansea University.
Conclusions: Case study publications, student story material, conference feedback and interview commentary all point to significant levels of influence and inspiration through the facilitation of shared good learning and teaching practices by Future Directions. Six overall themes are identified for change: building a community of practice, new methods, strategic planning, employability, student involvement and evaluation.

3.7 The reward and recognition of learning and teaching

Documentation from Future Directions groups and case study evidence confirms impact on the reward and recognition of learning and teaching, including:

- the publication of case studies and learner journeys audio-visual material, Lessons Learnt from the case study publications and the Students as Partners Jargon Buster guide;
- facilitating the recognition of prior learning through the HEFCW funded South East Wales Capital Network project;
- employability initiatives within the LiE and LfE work strands and the Distinctive Graduates sub-theme – including exhibitions, conferences, national enterprise and entrepreneurship challenges, Dragons Den style competitions and surgeries;
- the development of Student Led Teaching Awards for lecturers and support staff, in partnership with WISE;
- responsiveness of students to the National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and contributions to subsequent action planning at subject and institutional levels;
- the exploration and active promotion of HEA accredited programmes including fellowships schemes;
- the development of PGCertHE frameworks through the Inspiring Teaching sub-theme;
- employability awards in four universities;
- the planning of video material for staff learner journeys via the Inspiring Teaching sub-theme;
- The recognition of the Students as Partners strand and network by the national QAA student engagement team;
- facilitating the recognition of good practice with teaching and learning across campuses within recently merged institutions.

Interviewees noted that the recognition of the value of students in curriculum design and assessment was less prominent in case study material compared with the more dominant and popular theme of student representation. Curriculum design was however highlighted as an area gaining recent momentum for student partnership working:

Curriculum involvement has been gathering pace in Welsh universities with more and more reporting on outcomes, the appointment of interns, ambassadors, doing Moodle surveys of modules and using students in a paid role to take on quality assurance tasks [Interviewee E].

There was further confirmation within case study and interview material of Future Directions as an effective promoter of external project funding, student led teaching awards and of national teaching fellowships schemes involving large numbers of staff.

The strands gave universities the chance to apply for seed money for projects and they gave everyone advance notice of calls for proposals. Projects could be flagged up in a short period of time – employability in particular [Interviewee I].

Supportive comments were also noted for the facilitation of teaching-led promotion routes and opportunities for lecturers and support staff within individual institutions.
Teaching led promotion routes inside the universities have grown and there is more participation in national fellowships with more recognition of teaching [Interviewee A].

The Student Led Teaching Awards have been a huge success. The students have sometimes done this off their own bat but with university support. It’s been great and very emotional, a sense of community and celebration, and it’s theirs but Students as Partners has helped promote it [Interviewee E].

Future Directions has not hand on heart had impact on promotions through learning and teaching but it has created the space for these conversations to take place within the institutions and given opportunities for leadership through sharing good practice [Interviewee H].

3.8 Changes to procedures and structures

Documentation from Future Directions work strands, case studies, learner journeys and enhancement projects recorded the following examples of change at procedural and structural levels:

- inclusion of Future Directions output within institutional learning and teaching strategies and quality assurance monitoring and action plans, linked to QAA Quality Code expectations for enhancement, student inclusion and employability themes;
- the more frequent use of focus groups and staff–student fora for the gathering of detailed information for learning and teaching strategies;
- the embedding of accredited employability modules within undergraduate and Foundation Degree programmes;
- the design and validation of work based learning frameworks, alongside toolkits for staff development and the accreditation of ‘shell modules’;
- improvements to final destination data and student tracking through online links with alumni graduates;
- increased representation of students on a wide range of institutional committees and boards;
- developing the Welsh medium student voice through collaboration with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol;
- the development of Student Charters and the expansion of You Said We Did procedures;
- the introduction of annual students’ union reports for informing institutional learning and teaching strategies;
- closer partnerships between students’ unions and specialist learning and teaching teams and centres within individual institutions;
- the appointment by institutions of student representative co-ordinators;
- the introduction of online meetings by the Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning sub-theme work strands.

Interviewees noted increased change at structural levels within institutions, with new senior management appointments dedicated to student partnership working, including Pro-Vice-Chancellor level posts.

Each institution has one although the titles may change. There has been a strong link with Future Directions in order to develop all of the representation and student involvement [Interviewee E].

Commentary from interviewees also highlighted the amount of change within the sector caused by mergers, although caution was expressed about any direct contribution by Future Directions to these developments.
With all the networking people all knew each other through Future Directions and they knew their priorities so this helped because they had worked together before. This helped to have a common plan [Interviewee O].

It is difficult to identify the individual elements in the perfect storm [Interviewee E].

The value of the work strands and sub-themes for the non-political sharing of interests and good practice in teaching and learning was however emphasised. This has had the advantage of creating “positive platforms” for bringing together colleagues from different campuses within newly created institutions as well as within the sector more generally.

We moved the conversation from the political to the pedagogic to the curriculum. We helped both sides to consider a wider range of matters they needed to meet and discuss. Whether it was just us that did this I don’t know [Interviewee E].

The Learning in Employment and Learning through Employment work strands were viewed by interviewees as important fora for informing HEFCW about the planning and content of institutional skills and employability action plans (SEAPs).

The SEAP was a major outcome that combined Learning in Employment and Learning for Employment very effectively [Interviewee B].

Students as Partners was viewed as one of the important support networks for the production by HEFCW of sector-wide student partnership statements. Interviewees underlined Wales’ sector-leading achievement through the production of student charters and relationship agreements. It was further emphasised that these were not “one off” documents; they are to be reviewed on an annual basis as a HEFCW requirement for all of the Welsh higher education institutions and their students’ unions. Close dialogue between Future Directions and WISE, as the key driver for the agreements and statements, was recognised as a significant process leading to these agreements.

Conclusions: There is much evidence of impact at institutional levels through changes linked to strategic planning, senior management responsibilities, student representation systems and curriculum design. There is also evidence for change at sector levels through dialogue between Future Directions and HEFCW concerning the development of annual student relationship agreements and Skills and Employability Action Plans.

3.9 Policy and culture change at institutional and sector levels

One of the earliest changes at policy and culture levels involved movement by Future Directions towards themes for enhancement that were valued by the sector, as compared with a previous emphasis on research into teaching and learning.

It was noted that when the Steering Group was first established, there was a greater focus on Learning and Teaching scholarship and pedagogic research aspects, and that the conference was a milestone, starting a movement in Learning and Teaching in Wales. Members agreed that maintaining the momentum of Future Directions was essential [minute 5.7 FDSG 20 June 2012].

Future Directions documentation from the steering and work strands, alongside case study material, points to the following contributions to policy and culture change at institutional and sector levels:

- the use of JISC open educational resources;
• contributing to HEFCW’s introduction of Skills and Employability Action Plans and the revision of employability statement by all institutions in Wales, including presentations and workshops within the 2013 Future Directions Skills and Employability conference;
• the involvement of students in writing institutional teaching and learning and widening access strategies as well as fee plans and employability action statements;
• student led staff development workshops involving close partnerships between students’ union, student voice and learning and teaching teams within institutions.

The FDSG further noted powerful evidence of impact of the work strands through a review by the HEA of learning and teaching strategies from all of the universities in Wales. One institution even structured its entire internal strategy through using the three Future Directions work strand headings. In general, the review concluded that:

Students as Partners; Learning for Employment; and Learning in Employment form the focal point for the strategies. This demonstrates that the enhancement theme and three work strands are being embedded at the institutional strategy level. The strategies also give an indication of how these work strands may evolve in the near future [page 2 of Next Steps paper for FDSG February 2012].

Conference and event feedback
Conference and seminar activity has been used by the HEA as a method for interpreting and reinforcing decisions already made by sector bodies and agencies. These events have been closely aligned to HEFCW, QAA, Jisc, NUS Wales, and Welsh Government interests, thereby maximising impact on policy for the higher education sector in Wales. By way of illustration:
• the 2012 and 2014 biennial events addressed priorities from the HEW PVC Teaching and Learning Advisory Group;
• the two Learning Teaching and Widening Access seminar in 2012 supported institutions with their HEFCW planning;
• the 2011 Technologies for Enhanced Learning conference shared good practice and available resources from JISC;
• the 2012 Students as Partners in Practice reflected NUS Wales and sector interests in student representation and engagement in quality assurance, prior to the writing of QAA policy for the new Higher Education Review Wales method and the introduction of student charter agreements by HEFCW;
• contributing to the organisation of a national conference led by The Open University in Wales and HEFCW, in order to develop policy and strategy for recruiting more part-time learners to higher education.

The Future Directions Foundation Degrees: where Policy meets Practice February 2012 conference provides an important example for the way that Future Directions has helped to shape future national policy and strategy. The event informed QAA planning of enhancement in Wales and it also included two follow up actions at government level:
• the role of the government and the Wales Employment and Skills Board in promoting Foundation Degrees to employers, with particular reference to anchor companies in Wales;
• connections between foundation degrees and higher level apprenticeship schemes.

The Future Directions for Skills and Employability May 2013 conference provided perspectives and feedback to HEFCW about the introduction of skills and employability action plans for all higher education institutions in Wales. Extracts from HEFCW Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) minutes (see Appendix H) provide further examples of Future Directions conference and seminar impact on planning, policy and dissemination:

Members noted the proposal to brand the joint QAA/HEA event in May with Future Directions and WISE [note 5.11 Quality Assessment and Enhancement Subgroup of the SETQC 21 March 2013].
Members agreed that good practice arising from institutional reviews should be fed into the Future Directions biennial conference and ongoing Future Directions work. The QAA and HEA should liaise on the best methods to achieve this [Note 7.2 Question 16; Quality Assessment and Enhancement Subgroup (QAESG) of the SETQC 21 February 2014].

A joint QAA-HEA Future Directions event had been arranged for 27 November at the University of South Wales to share good practice in the delivery of foundation degrees and reflect on what was learned from the process. All agreed that within the outcomes report, institutions with areas of good practice would be identified for ease of dissemination. Barbara Edwards would launch the report and further education institutions should receive the reports through their HEI franchise partner. It was important that concerns raised in reports regarding sustainability of provision were covered at the event [Minute 4.3 of the Quality Assessment and Enhancement Subgroup of the SETQC, 20 September 2013].

The institutional team enhancement projects
The institutional team enhancement project reports provide evidence for culture change through embedding strand activities within institutional learning and teaching practices. Whilst the grants were relatively small, and sometimes created additional increased administrative workloads for learning and teaching centres or units, the HEA sponsorship raised the profile of enhancement activities:

HEFCW’s focus on the Future Directions theme in the Learning and Teaching Strategy annual monitoring was a key factor in securing institutional commitment to the activities [Institutional Team Enhancement Project Report April 2014].

In some cases institutions applied a match funding policy in order to increase the resource base for successful applicants.

If such funds were available in future we would match them with internal funding and label the activity Future Directions Teaching Fellows, based on approving small enhancement projects [Institutional Team Enhancement Project Report April 2014].

The reports provided insight into policy and strategy for the development of learning and teaching within the universities and across the sector:

- bringing together key learning and teaching development staff in merged institutions and harmonising the approach and activity to the Future Directions project;
- identifying ‘gaps’ within current Welsh institutional learning and teaching strategies, especially with the use of open education resources and work based learning;
- increasing use of innovative approaches for compiling material for informing teaching and learning, including podcasts and student story video and audio productions;
- greater involvement of students, for example through internships and student stories, in institutional learning and teaching developments.

There were some reservations about continuing with the use of conventional case study publications, with a more flexible format having the potential of creating a national reputation for Wales as a leader of learning and teaching enhancement in higher education:

The HEA face the challenge of fatigue with the format of outputs from the new work strands ... the HEA could support a more innovative way of sharing good institutional practice around the work strands by funding innovative approaches to case studies including podcasts, videos etc. which could become a distinctive feature of the Welsh Enhancement Theme. [Institutional Team Enhancement Project Report April 2014].
One report further emphasised that the main challenge facing teams has been involving staff in Future Directions work at a time when there are other substantial demands on their time (e.g. merger, institutional review).

**Interviews**

Interviewees commented on Future Directions contributions to culture and policy change at institutional and subject level ownership of activities.

> It’s taken time for the sector to feel like they own it. It is now their Future Directions and they want it in ways that also allow for different priorities for different institutions. It feels like institutions are buying in rather than just having a champion [Interviewee I].

> The sector can now be trusted to develop its own learning and teaching strategies, it knows what it’s doing Future Directions has helped to explain this government and funding council [Interviewee O].

This was viewed as a key indicator for the future survival of Future Directions activity as a new funding strategy emerges for the direct allocation of fee grants to institutions rather than sector bodies.

> There is the slight worry that with the gradual withdrawal of money then all of this will have to be self-sustaining, but there will still be a need for logistical support and co-ordination will be the challenge for the future [Interviewee O].

Comments from interviewees pointed to perceptions of significant influence by Future Directions on strategies and policies emanating from sector bodies – including improved alignment over the last three years, and the style of communication used:

> HEA has facilitated the sector theme, not the other way around [Interviewee F].

> There is no distance at all between the PVC group and Future Directions. It is hard to put a piece of paper between the two. Future Directions is just that, a direction of travel for each institution. Our strategies and polices might not mention Future Directions, but it is definitely there [Interviewee H].

> The language of the QAA, HEFCW and Welsh Government changed in the light of our work – students were now change agents, experts, decision makers, students were seen as the key influencers on course design. It changed from “we met with them” to “they decided and we did” [Interviewee J].

> We are far better aligned with the PVC group on the second theme rather than the first. [Interviewee K].

Comments addressed issues of enhancement, with Future Directions being seen as having played a significant role in facilitating policy developments through sharing experiences of institutions and sectors in England and Scotland. This journey has involved the QAA at all stages through their meta-analysis of case study reports, the planning of the foundation degree conference, and exploration of employability and student involvement themes. The outcome has been dramatic:

> All institutions in Wales can sit around a table and its relatively small when compared with Scotland. It has been delicate and uncertain at times and it would be naïve not to be aware that each has competing interests. But there has been a quiet and huge development in the QAA methodology for Wales, and Future Directions has arrived [Interviewee E].

**Policy and strategy impact at sector levels**

Appendix H provides further details of policy statements alongside extracts from minutes of HEFCW meetings. The review of all institutional learning and teaching strategies for the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 noted that:
It is apparent that in identifying priorities for learning and teaching strategies, the Welsh institutions have been strongly influenced by the Welsh Government’s For our future: the 21st century higher education strategy and plan for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government 2009), and the subsequent Future directions for higher education in Wales quality enhancement work in the HE sector co-ordinated by the HEA (Colley and Healey 2012 Page 13).

It is clear that Future Directions has been recognised by sector bodies as a vehicle for the dissemination of good practice as well as a method for gathering information prior to the writing of new guidelines and strategies for higher education institutions. The Welsh Government singles out Future Directions activity:

Right across the sector, HE institutions are making great strides towards enhancing graduate employability, and enhancing learning in the workplace. Since 2010, the pan-Wales quality-enhancement programme Future Directions co-ordinated by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) has collected and shared good practice across the sector [Policy Statement on Higher Education Welsh Government June 2013 page 8].

Future Directions has also focused on the accreditation of part, or all, of a student’s learning programme through formal recognition of experience in the workplace. Innovative practice already in evidence in Wales includes efforts to develop a formal academic qualification for learning support assistants in local schools, giving students a taste of real “live” research, and enabling students to access an employer-focused modular curriculum through flexible learning approaches [Policy Statement on Higher Education Welsh Government June 2013 page 9].

The enhancement theme Graduates for Our Future was developed to support the sector in addressing the Welsh Government’s twin priorities of delivering social justice and supporting a buoyant Economy [Policy Statement on Higher Education Welsh Government June 2013 page 25].

The recent inclusion of Future Directions within the QAA Higher Education Review Wales handbook is further testimony for impact on the sector:

22. The provider prepares a specific self-evaluation document for the review. The review team will also look at the effectiveness of the provider’s ongoing internal self-evaluations, and to their engagement with Future Directions, the national quality enhancement themes in Wales.

23. The review team's comments on the institution's engagement with the Future Directions themes will be included in the report.

Section 6: Enhancement of students' learning opportunities.

The basis for the judgement in this area is the review team's assessment of whether, and how, deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Reference the evidence that your organisation uses to assure itself that this Expectation is being met and that it is managing enhancement effectively. Also reference any relevant benchmarked datasets.

Particular reference should be made here to the institution's engagement with Future Directions.

[QAA (2014) pages 6,7 and 44].
Conclusions: Future Directions documentation, coupled with interview commentary and enhancement projects reports, point to significant impact at policy and cultural levels within institutions. The content of the institutional learning and teaching strategies reflect Future Directions strands and themes. One of the most dramatic examples of innovative change involves student-led staff development programmes, although there is still an ongoing challenge with the engagement by students in detailed levels of curriculum design. There is evidence of widespread and formal recognition of impact by the Future Directions programme on policy emanating from HEFCW and Welsh Government. The inclusion of Future Directions within the QAA handbook for the new Higher Education Review Wales method is a significant indicator of impact on the sector.
Appendix A: The Learning in Employment work strand

Origins and early progress

The Future Directions Steering Group (FDSG) used the discussion paper Identifying an Enhancement Theme\textsuperscript{25} to generate a series of statements for guiding the formation of a Learning in Employment (LiE) strand:

- working with employers to adapt to flexible working environments;
- a new relationship with employers and employer engagement;
- adapting to changing careers paths;
- agility/flexibility;
- bite-size modules – deconstructing courses: granularity without triviality;
- short development time for flexible programmes;
- accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning.

The LiE work strand was chaired by Dr Karen Fitzgibbon (University of Glamorgan\textsuperscript{26}) four months later, with all 10 universities, WESB, Jisc RSC Wales, and four further education colleges being represented in early meetings. The strand did not discuss the possibility of membership extending to private training providers but it did consider employer representation:

Members agreed that consideration must be given to the employer voice [Note 3.4 LiE working group 13 June 2011].

It was up to each institution to include the views of employers [Interviewee B].

The group anticipated difficulties with securing consistent and comprehensive student representation because of the challenges posed in finding an appropriate individual who would be able to represent all of the Welsh regions, employment sectors, and levels and modes of study.

It was agreed therefore, that each members of the group would endeavour to represent the broad opinions of their student populations [note 4 LiE working group 8 March 2011].

The group invited NUS Wales to send a representative, although actual attendance of strand meetings was noted on only one occasion.

The work strand members agreed a working definition for the concept of Learning in Employment: the accreditation of part or all of a student’s learning programme through formal recognition of experience in the workplace. This definition embraced numerous enhancement activities offered by various institutions, including accredited work placements, bolt-on work experience programmes, and the accreditation of informal as well as accredited continuing professional development by employers.

We debated the need to have a boundary for discussion of Learning in Employment that provided a way of differentiating with Learning for Employment [Interviewee B].

They also highlighted the need for responding to important current demands and influences on the sector including:

- employer aspirations for higher level skills;
- public private and voluntary sector needs;
- regionalisation;
- more effective use of ICT;

\textsuperscript{25} FDSG 5 November 2010.

\textsuperscript{26} One year later the University of Glamorgan merged with the University of Newport to form the University of South Wales.
CPD support for alumni.

The LiE strand was clear about its status as a task and finish group, and set about designing a work schedule with a deadline for submitting information to the HEA Future Directions team. The priority was to provide evidence from the sector that would contribute to an all-Wales conference as a mid-way point in the group’s life cycle.\(^{27}\)

There was immediate recognition of the usefulness of generating achievable output through a collection of short case studies highlighting good practice. The group was strategic at the outset in deploying the template developed by the First Year Experience Action Set project for case study reports. It suggested more formats for later dissemination through case study collections on a wiki site, the use of two page working briefs, and the creation of audio or podcast material. Their planning included consideration of the importance of demonstrating later impact of the strand’s work, with suggested measures including an increase in the number of learners registered for accredited work based learning and the amount of credit achieved, the use of portfolios for recording CPD activities, improved NSS and PTES survey feedback, and the development of more successful administrative and student support systems for work based learning.

… this led to recognition that impact will be achieved in multiple ways depending on the nature of stakeholder context [Note 5 LiE working group 8 March 2011].

There was, at this early stage, the further recognition of a potential Work Based Learning Forum for Wales.

The strand reported on a very wide range of projects and initiatives with case study potential. They included Foundation Degrees, developing an employability strategy, part-time postgraduate programmes, placements, short courses, skills modules, developing an Institute of Work Based Learning, and research Summer internships.

Challenges were discussed openly amongst the group, including difficulties in recruiting learners from small companies, encouraging students to spend a year in employment as a part of their studies, the impact of the recession on work based learning opportunities, insufficient labour market intelligence, employer perceptions of higher education qualifications and awards, and ensuring student representation:

… to collect work based learner voices for the QAA Student Written Submission for Institutional Review. It was suggested that employers also need to be brought into this process [Note 3.5 LiE Working Group 13 June 2011].

Connections were therefore emerging with QAA enhancement activity in England and Scotland, with a mapping (rather than audit or review) exercise being supported by members. At the same time the group discussed the concept of an Employer Challenge via WESB, where universities in Wales could be encouraged to explore a variety of learning in work good practice activities identified elsewhere in the higher education sector. Links were also established with the emerging ESF funded High Performance Working Programme led by Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Conference planning included the recognition of good practice in other universities and provided the essential focus for the strand’s core task of collecting and categorising the case studies into three LiE morning sessions:

- views across the sector: HE in FE, pre and post ’92 institutional approaches;
- technology enhanced learning in employment;
- opportunities for learning in employment from levels 2-7.

The strand recognised the need to go beyond the case studies and use the conference as a chance to explore new themes and directions. Key areas were agreed for the afternoon workshops:

\(^{27}\) Note 4.4 LiE working group 13 June 2014
• expanding the use of, and measuring the impact of technology in learning in employment (including the use of electronic voting, a World Café format where delegates write on table cloths, and Twitter);
• future learner scenarios based on a flexible credit system (including credit transfer, and discussion of scenario cards for learners including Drifter, Full Time Employee, Community Leader, Union Learner, Apprentice);
• encouraging and enabling institutional change (including the use of the JISC WBL Maturity Toolkit).

One of these LiE afternoon workshop sessions helped to set an agenda for future FD planning through its exploration of learning experiences in workforces:

Delegates will consider how a learning journey takes place in a traditional learning environment, and how it takes place in a flexible environment [Note 4.6LiE working group 3 April 2012].

The case studies

The HEA published the complete set of 26 LiE case studies in April 2012, drawn from the Wiki site. This publication provided a working definition for Learning in Employment, and clustered material into five themes – Learner Experiences, Employer Experiences, Assessment, Alumni Engagement, Quality Assurance.

The case study reports used a common template for providing a high amount of consistency for structuring narrative. They drew on projects and initiatives from eight universities, in addition to two from the further education sector (Coleg Llandrillo Cymru and Cardiff and Vale). The studies reflected a mixture of institutionally and externally funded project work covering the discipline areas of Psychology, Education, Photonics, Languages, Performing Arts, Law, Creative Industries, Mechanical Engineering, Business and Management, Food Science, Sport Leisure and Tourism, and Health and Social Care. The vast majority of this work was pitched at undergraduate level.

Fifty-four per cent of the case studies were at the time of writing in their early stages or at the end of their first year of operation. They did not therefore include detailed evaluation or monitoring information, although there was frequent inclusion of qualitative commentary from staff and students. The more established projects – especially those supported by external funding – were associated with more rigorous monitoring and evaluation including the tracking of learners into employment.

The case study content pointed to numerous beneficial outcomes associated with collaboration and partnerships, including improvements to:
• careers aspirations and choice;
• networking with alumni for careers and placement support;
• work placements including vacation, sandwich, gap-year programmes;
• professional body accreditation and recognition;
• skills awareness by students;
• employer awareness of students’ skills;
• college higher education;
• collaboration with local businesses and communities;
• links with QAA codes of practice;
• FdAs;
• WBL modules and curriculum design’
• Sector Skills Councils’
• online support and reduced drop-out;
• ESF and JISC projects.

The case studies also revealed less frequent but powerful outcomes associated with student partnership activity. These included:
• internationalisation and globalisation agendas;
• student destination data improvements;
• research opportunities for students during Summer vacations and for staff working with employers offering placements;
• shell modules for RPL/APEL;
• niche workforce opportunities including Learning Support Assistants and dyslexia assessors
• eCPD for staff;
• validation panels understanding WBL frameworks and modules and non-traditional teaching & assessment methods;
• culture change in using open educational resources;
• learning contracts and critical reflection diaries;
• complete WBL programmes and frameworks with toolkits;
• internships;
• bilingual support;
• unions.

One year later an HEA LiE Lessons Learnt publication reflected on the progress and outcomes of the case studies. Some of this commentary revealed significant overlaps with the Learning for Employment work strand, with positive outcomes being noted for Foundation Degree students completing work placements, and undergraduates completing research placements during their holidays.

Positive outcomes for the Learner Experiences theme included the recognition that time in the workplace leads to greater self-reliance and confidence, leading to more control and ownership of learning. Continuing challenges included the need for students to be made more aware of the employability skills they are developing, a better understanding of RPL and credit accumulation and transfer systems, and the inclusion of more reflection in work based learning modules about employment practice.

With the Employers Experiences theme it was noted that placements require careful matching of students to employers (suggesting the use of a moderation process for pre-selection), and more local business and employer and SSC input is needed for work based learning and foundation degree programmes.

The Development and Assessment of Projects theme noted the potential of postgraduate level work based learning provision in the public sector, as well as the general usefulness of frameworks and toolkits that offer flexibility – including small modules that allow accreditation of short courses. Learning and teaching proposals should be assessed by a panel including senior managers, educational development experts, students and employers. Continuing challenges for projects included difficulties in finding specialist staff with eLearning and eTraining expertise, and briefing validation panels thoroughly in order to ensure full understanding of the rationale and method of work based learning. There was also a need for more critical reflection about outcomes of projects:

There has been limited evaluation of impact of work-based learning but a study at Glamorgan has shown that students completing a work placement in business studies attain higher degree classifications [Learning in Employment Lessons Learnt HEA 2013 page 3].

The Staff and Alumni Engagement theme noted that students respond positively to work based learning initiatives when alumni are also involved. There were also significant advantages with exchange programmes for staff working with employers outside the higher education sector.

Finally, the Quality Assurance theme emphasised that projects with mentoring activity require careful monitoring and evaluation. Some work based learning projects depended on short term resources (for example from ESF programmes) and required longer term funding strategies in order to ensure sustainability. Another important reminder concerned the need to clarify copyright issues and the overall appropriateness of open educational resources created elsewhere.
Post conference activity

The FDSG asked the LiE strand for feedback on the 2012 biennial conference, and noted divided opinion about the strand’s distinctiveness. Some members could see advantages to merging with the Learning for Employment strand based on overlap of content - as well as ease of engagement of a single but larger strand with employers. Other members wanted to retain LiE identity in order to focus on a post-conference interest in gathering Learner Stories from a wide range of work places. This position won the day with the Steering Group, with continuation of the LiE strand being agreed.\(^{28}\)

The FDSG also made suggestions about how the strand could engage more fully with student representatives, including use of Alumni and developing a communications plan for Foundation Degree students. The expertise and networking of The Open University was further emphasised, with the OU in Wales planning a 2013 conference on part-time learning:

> The event will address the priorities set out in For Our Future, and will include the LiE case studies \[Minute 6.5 FD Steering Group 5 October 2012\].

The strand showed much initiative in generating proactive suggestions for future work following feedback from both the conference and the Steering Group, building on the case studies. Ideas for future activity included:

- a scoping study that explores the creation of a collaborative National Graduate Internship Scheme for Wales;
- a practical guide for Learning in Employment derived from the case studies;
- the embedding of technologies in a broad communications strategy in order to disseminate LiE output;
- the involvement of a wider group of staff, including librarians, careers specialists and learning technologists;
- contributions to further HEA, QAA and HEFCW events;
- designing and developing a research proposal based on the LiE strand leading to applications for funding and a suitable journal for publication;
- contributions by the group to the HEFCW draft plan for a Skills and Employability Framework for Wales;
- involvement within the QAA’s review of impact for the LiE case studies.

Despite the continuation agreement for the strand, there appeared to be more of an interest in pursuing the new Future Directions themes than in following the old LiE agenda. The LiE strand chair switched to Professor Jo Smedley (the University of South Wales), with the FDSG continuing to discuss LiE topics and agendas – including the need for recording the experiences of learners in work based settings\(^{29}\).

In order to provide a dynamic perspective and to link to the other work strand themes, it was decided to develop Student Voice audio and video sound bites. It was thought that this would provide a link to the other work strands but also demonstrate Learner Journeys thereby providing a seamless transition to the new work strand in the Future Directions theme \[minute 5.16 FDSG 25 September 2013\].

It can therefore be seen that LiE transformed into the new Learning Journeys work theme with many of the LiE members continuing their involvement in Future Directions work through generating material for the 2014 Global Graduates conference. At this event 10 distinctive workshops and presentations addressed workforce engagement in higher education, including:

- continuing professional development – including support for higher education lecturers;
- inter-professional learning;
- the use of new technologies;
- the recognition of prior experience;
- designing an employer responsive curriculum;
- applications of mindfulness within workforces;

\(^{28}\) minute 6.15 FDSG 20 June 2012

\(^{29}\) minute 6.14 FDSG 13 February 2013
staff development for higher education lecturers.

**Additional evidence for informing impact analysis**

**Conference feedback**
Conference feedback noted high levels of satisfaction and understanding with LiE related presentations and workshops:

- 2012 annual conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction with sessions led by strands (with averages ranging between 3.86 and 3.77 out of a maximum score of 5), including a specific workshop for Employer and Work Based Learning Routes into Higher Education.
- The 2012 Foundation Degrees conference generated scores of 38.9% and 52.8% for “satisfied” and “very satisfied” ratings respectively with 72.2% of delegates stating that they will change their practice.
- Feedback for The 2013 Skills and Employability conference noted 31.3% and 68.8% of responses within the “satisfied” and “very satisfied” categories.
- 72.2% of delegates providing feedback for the Future Directions foundation degrees conference stated that they will change their practice because of the event.
- 87.5% of delegates providing feedback for the skills and employability conference stated that they will change their practice because of the event.

**Institutional Teams Enhancement Projects and case studies**
Strand meetings generated evidence for members using the experience of writing case studies to strategically embed suggestions and ideas from the LiE within their own institutions. One example involved setting up a group on employability for an entire university. The institutional team enhancement projects generated further information on LiE impact, especially through the development of work based learning toolkits for use with work-forces, and for the recognition of prior learning. One report in particular recognised that whilst LiE projects were being taken forward, they were not as popular as the other two work strands.

Working in partnership with students was highlighted in the majority of strategic plans, and Learning for Employment was also a key feature, however Learning in Employment was far less prevalent. … this could be perceived as a significant gap to be addressed and presents an opportunity for institutions in Wales. In identifying and communicating that this gap exists, this project has the potential to influence institutional policy and practice in relation to work-based learning and the ‘unbundling of higher education’ (Barber et al 2013) [Institutional Team Enhancement Project Report April 2014].

**Interviewees**
Learning in Employment impact was explored with seven interviewees, with consistently high levels of satisfaction expressed with progress over the three years of operation. They emphasised the importance of a balanced Future Directions programme that provided a framework at the outset, allowing institutions to plan for impact through working group activity that had purpose.

Learning in Employment was not a hard one for us [Interviewee B].

There was also a strong strategic interest in learning from the case studies in order to embed good practice effectively, rather than being content simply with the collection and publication of a compendium of evidence. In this way the LiE strand adopted an outcomes rather than output approach to impact, and initiated discussions with the FDSG regarding the need for a subsequent Lessons Learnt publication.

We did not want to just collect more case studies for another year. It is important to learn from them [Interviewee B].

Note 2.11 LiE working group 14 October 2011
The case studies pointed to numerous advances in work based learning with QAA interest in examples of enhancement being seen as an important influence:

QAA were on the group and their interest in overall impact put Learning in Employment on the radar [Interviewee N].

The strand developed subsequent strategies for extending its work. One illustration involves an institutional project with the HEA Change Academy leading to the recognition by four faculties of over 3,000 additional credits through work based learning.

There was awareness that the popularity of interest in exploring undergraduate student placements and work experience activities had the potential of creating overlaps with the LfE strand. When the FDSG recommended the merger of the strands following the 2012 conference, there was concern that this could have led to part-time work based learning being “swallowed up” by a more mainstream focus on full-time learners.

It was important not to lose the impetus of Learning in Employment, it’s not just APEL, its frameworks for the work place. Learning for Employment is much bigger than this, it’s a known quantity of full time undergraduates compared with the unknown quantity of work based learners. Learning in Employment is radical, innovative and it challenges the way universities do things and it takes a lot longer to become an established way of working [Interviewee B].

The 2014 Global Graduates conference ensured that work based learning contributions were included following the merger of the strand, although interviewees emphasised that the embedding of the case studies and good practice should be monitored and highlighted in order to generate ongoing evidence of impact within part-time learner populations.

A significant further sector-wide development involved advisory discussions between LiE and LfE chairs and the Funding Council regarding the introduction of Strategic Employability Action Plan (SEAP) statements by institutions:

The SEAP was a major outcome that combined Learning in Employment and Learning for Employment very effectively [Interviewee B].

Interviewees were asked about accidental outcomes emerging from strand activity. The recently established South East Wales Capital Network Recognition of Prior Learning Project was identified as an example of partnership working that was reinforced by the strand’s networking capacity:

Even though the RPL project was not approved until after the strand finished, the first draft of the bid reached HEFCW before that time [Interviewee J].

It was further emphasised that connections should be made to the original starting point for planning the recognition of prior learning through facilitation from HEA consultants working within the higher education sector for Wales:

Yes there was awareness of Learning in Employment and the case studies and the Future Directions community. But it was also the work of Freda Tallantyre from the HEA a few years before that helped us to plan our work based learning and this resulted in the HEFCW pilot studies [Interviewee M].
## Impact summary

### Reach

All universities and four further education colleges engaged in strand meetings. Discussions and planning included JISC and WESB involvement, with NUS Wales being included in the circulation of strand papers. There is no inclusion of private training providers.

Numerous disciplines and subject areas have been involved in the production of material from Psychology, Education, Photonics, Languages, Performing Arts, Law, Creative Industries, Mechanical Engineering, Business and Management, Food Science, Sport Leisure and Tourism, and Health and Social Care. The vast majority of this work was pitched at undergraduate level.

Continual dialogue has taken place with the LiE strand in particular leading to the eventual merger of the strands.

Welsh language interests have emerged for the support of bilingual workforces.

Connections have been made with the HEA Change Academy Programme and with the ESF funded pan-Wales High Performance Working programme.

Input from the strand to the HEA National Conference as well as Sector Skills Councils.

### Evidence for output

- Minutes from six strand meetings.
- Eight FDSG meeting minutes containing specific LiE agenda items.
- 2012 and 2014 HEA biennial conference programmes and delegate feedback.
- Eight institutional enhancement projects reports.
- Seven semi-structured interviews.

### Outcomes

- The creation of a LiE Wiki site for accessing case study material.
- Publication by the HEA of 26 case studies.
- Publication of a follow up Lessons Learnt publication.
- Delivery of six workshops at the Future Directions Graduates for Our Future 2012 conference.
- Delivery of 18 workshops and papers addressing work based learning themes at the Future Directions Global Graduates 2014 conference.
- One Institutional team enhancement project.

### Satisfaction

2012 annual conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction with sessions led by strands (with averages ranging between 3.86 and 3.77 out of a maximum score of 5), including a specific workshop for employer and work based learning routes into higher education.

The 2012 foundation degrees conference generated scores of 38.9% and 52.8% for “satisfied” and “very satisfied” ratings respectively with 72.2% of delegates stating that they will change their practice.

Feedback for The 2013 Skills and Employability conference noted 31.3% and 68.8% of responses within the “satisfied” and “very satisfied” categories.

### Awareness and understanding of change at individual, institutional and sector levels

- The importance of recognising part-time work based learning by workforces in the public private and voluntary sectors.
- The need to provide comprehensive support for part-time work based learners in order to ensure equality of opportunity with full-time students.
- Anticipating difficulties and challenges to institutional systems and procedures when work-based learners engage with alternative forms of assessment, including bite-sized learning the accreditation of prior experience.
- The advantages of establishing an all-Wales work based learning forum or institute.
- The benefits of making connections with the ESF High Performance Working programmes.
- The need to introduce and refine flexible credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- Sharing LiE good practice within discipline and subject areas to entire faculties and institutions.
- The advantages of involving alumni in work based learning networks and support.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The potential for improving retention of work based learners</td>
<td>through the use of flexible online technologies.</td>
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<td>Improvements to the quality of student destination data through LiE</td>
<td>activities</td>
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<td>The effectiveness of targeting local niche workforces.</td>
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<td>Staff development for colleagues engaging in the validation</td>
<td>and approval of work based learning programmes and procedures.</td>
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<td>The potential for recruiting more postgraduate work based learners</td>
<td>from the public sector.</td>
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<td>The general usefulness of frameworks and toolkits that offer</td>
<td>flexibility – including small modules that allow accreditation of short courses.</td>
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<td>Unintended, indirect, or negative outcomes</td>
<td>Awareness of the need to develop evaluation strategies for projects and initiatives.</td>
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<td>The need for differentiating between LiE and LfE activity in order</td>
<td>to avoid potential confusion.</td>
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<td>Recognition of the potential for converting work based learning</td>
<td>activity into research output, including the writing of bids and journal articles.</td>
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<td>Support for the planning of a major regional HEFCW project for the</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning.</td>
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<td>Inspired / effective teaching and learning</td>
<td>The 2012 Annual conference feedback recorded:</td>
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<td>• 72.2% of delegates providing feedback for the Future Directions</td>
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<td>• The demonstration of effective teaching and learning through</td>
<td>extensive case study and conference material associated with five areas:</td>
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<td>• learner experiences;</td>
<td>• employer experiences;</td>
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<td>• assessment;</td>
<td>• alumni engagement;</td>
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<td>• quality assurance.</td>
<td>Application of the JISC Work Based Learning Maturity Toolkit.</td>
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<td>The development of portfolios containing learning diaries, logs,</td>
<td>and contracts – and associated assessment strategies.</td>
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<td>Introducing themes of mindfulness to work based learning.</td>
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<td>contracts – and associated assessment strategies.</td>
<td>Developing internationalisation and globalisation agendas through curriculum design.</td>
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<td>Inclusion of more support for critical reflection in work based learning modules.</td>
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<td>methods including online applications, the World Café, work-based</td>
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<td>curriculum design.</td>
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<td>Recognition and reward of effective teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Inclusion of more support for critical reflection in work based</td>
<td>learning modules.</td>
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<td>Changes to procedures and structures</td>
<td>Two institutional team enhancement projects.</td>
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<td>The publication of case studies.</td>
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<td>Use of the Employer Challenge from the Wales Employment and Skills</td>
<td>Board.</td>
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<td>Promoting and supporting the recognition of prior learning.</td>
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<td>Exploring the potential for a national graduate internship scheme</td>
<td>for Wales.</td>
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<td>Evidence of improved degree classifications for students who have</td>
<td>engaged in work based learning.</td>
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<td>The effectiveness of mentoring activity accompanied by monitoring</td>
<td>and evaluation.</td>
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<td>Professional body accreditation and recognition of work based</td>
<td>learning programmes.</td>
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<td>Institutional quality assurance monitoring and action plans linked</td>
<td>to QAA Quality Code expectations and indicators for enhancement and employability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The design and validation of complete WBL programmes and frameworks,</td>
<td>with</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in culture or policy</td>
<td>Culture change in the use of JISC open educational resources JISC. Contributing, in partnership with The Open University, to policy and strategy for recruiting more part-time learners to higher education programmes. Contributing to HEFCW’s introduction of Skills and Employability Action Plans for all institutions in Wales, including presentations and workshops within the 2013 Skills and Employability conference. Involvement with two presentations by the QAA to the 2013 Skills and Employability conference, covering themes of Quality Management and Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.</td>
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Appendix B: the Learning for Employment work strand

Origins

The “next steps needed” section of the 2010 HEA Wales conference feedback questionnaire were incorporated within the Discussion Paper Identifying an Enhancement Theme. Members from seven universities as well as NUS Wales, the QAA and HEFCW then agreed that Learning for Employment (LfE) would become a work strand. The Steering Group generated a series of statements for guiding the formation of the strand and its working group:

- enterprise;
- identifying graduate attributes at generic and discipline levels;
- case studies of graduates;
- new skills including information gathering and evaluation;
- methods used by academics for delivering discipline graduate attributes;
- adaptability, agility, flexibility;
- how to articulate and sell graduate skills;
- placements and professional modules.

A key interest concerned the importance of embedding and integrating graduate attributes into the curriculum, rather than relying on what the Steering Group called “add-ons”.

Early progress

The LfE Working Group convened four months after the FDSG decision. All higher education institutions were invited to nominate members, with eight universities attending early meetings in addition to representatives from NUS Wales, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the QAA, the Centre for Recording Achievement, and the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB). Membership included staff from four University careers centres. Although colleges were invited to early meetings there was no attendance by representatives, and invitations were not issued to private training providers offering higher education opportunities.

The strand valued this popular definition of graduate employability:

The skills, understandings and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure employment and be successful in their chosen occupations to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy [Learning for Employment HEA Wales 2012 page 6 citing Yorke (2006) page 8].

Meetings were chaired by Colleen Connor from Cardiff Metropolitan University, with an agreed action plan for:

- a communication forum with an LfE wiki;
- exploring the Welsh context for employability;
- considering the potential of a pan-Wales Employability Award framework;
- exploring ways of gathering learners views;
- making connections with QAA Scotland based on the good practice identified through analysis of enhancement themes.

The proposed collection of case studies had less initial support:

FDSG 5 November 2010
Some group members showed resistance to collating case studies, and expressed an interest in producing something forward looking, rather than sharing current best practice [minute 8.1 FDSG 6 May 2011].

Strand members became more enthusiastic about case study work through their recognition of three underlying advantages:

- showcasing good practice and illustrating the sector responses to For Our Future Welsh Government policy;
- recognising any gaps in practice and identifying areas for development;
- focused activity of the LfE group, with notable previous successes for this tactic coming from the First Year Student Experience and the Research-Teaching Nexus pan-Wales projects.

The forthcoming HEA 2012 Graduates for Our Future conference provided the essential focus for collecting material, using a template in order to provide more consistency with reporting. Strong connections were made with Welsh Government advisory policy developments throughout the 2011-12 period as illustrated by LfE’s awareness of WESB’s recommendations including the Employer Challenge.

The 2012 conference planning process led to the analysis of six themes for the case studies.

- authentic learning;
- careers and application skills;
- developing graduate attributes;
- developing leadership and enterprise;
- expanding professional networks;
- resources to support employability.

These case study areas guided the planning of three morning LfE workshops at the conference, with the afternoon LfE sessions addressing the strand’s emerging interests in the Welsh context for LfE, measuring impact, and the global graduate.

The case studies

Future Directions published the complete set of 66 LfE case studies in April 2012, drawn from the Wiki site. The studies reflected a mixture of institutionally and externally funded project work involving careers education embedded within a very wide range of discipline areas: Psychology, Medicine, Sport, European Studies, Creative Industries, Computing, Counselling, Education, Law and Criminology, Careers, Drama and Theatre, Business and Management, Art and Design, Classics, Bioscience, Dietetics and Nutrition, History, Archaeology, Religion, Environmental Management, Enterprise, Nursing, Advertising, Engineering and Construction, Accounting, Physiotherapy, and Dental Technology. As with the other strand case studies, the vast majority of this work was pitched at undergraduate level.

Fifty per cent of the case studies were at the time of writing in their early stages or at the end of their first year of operation. They did not therefore include detailed evaluation or monitoring information, although there was frequent inclusion of qualitative interim commentary from staff and students. The more established projects – especially those supported by external funding – were associated with more rigorous monitoring and evaluation including the tracking of learners into employment.

The case study content pointed to numerous beneficial outcomes associated with collaboration and partnerships, including improvements to:

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32 The Challenge helped the strand to identify case study material for themes surrounding transferable skills, mentoring and peer tutoring, and personal and professional development [page 4 LfE Working Group 27 July 2011].
employability skills with team working, communication, problem solving, self-management, knowledge of the business, literacy and numeracy, ICT, initiative, creativity and leadership, understanding of work environments;
linking PDP, careers awareness and employability planning with QAA enhancement themes;
developing understanding between employers and academics regarding graduate skills;
work experience placements and sandwich/gap years;
mentoring, buddying and coaching in schools;
volunteering in communities;
opportunities for professional body accreditation;
live projects generated by employers;
careers support for personal and professional development;
online resource provision;
exhibitions, conferences, fairs;
project work and case studies;
CV planning and production;
careers choice;
the use of portfolios and ePortfolios;
employer visits, panels and surgeries;
retention and motivation.

The case studies also revealed less frequent but powerful outcomes associated with student partnership activity:
pre-placement experience including ethical awareness in Psychology, Nutrition Science, Advertising and Health and Safety Awareness;
community counselling by postgraduate students;
research and consultancy developments for students;
the need to balance academic and work experience workloads, to carefully match individual students to appropriate placements, to ensure high quality placements, to view the search by a student for a placement as a valuable form of learning for employment in its own right;
problem solving in Law including magistrates courts and citizens advice bureaus;
involve with GO Wales;
graduate start-ups;
employability awards and certificates for extra-mural activities and volunteering;
the involvement of alumni as mentors;
securin internships;
solving the Catch 22 problem of engaging students who are least likely to engage in work placements;
the use of pre and post work experience questionnaires for demonstrating change;
Targeting NEETS through Technocamp volunteering in community centres and schools
preventing national decline in take-up of computing and languages through student placements in schools;
supporting students who have difficulties with self-reflection;
Dragons Den / Apprentice style competitive scenarios involving employers;
supporting students who find group work difficult;
targeting part-time students including FdA and WBL students progressing from level 5; dental technicians, Network 75;
participating in national challenges and charity fund raising;
enterprise projects for interdisciplinary and cross-faculty group work;
placements in social enterprises;
modules in Organisational Consultancy;
improvements for final destination data and student tracking including online links with alumni;
field trips linked to major events such as the Olympics.
One year later the LfE Lessons Learnt publication reflected on the progress and outcomes of the case studies. The general observation was that whilst the notion of “employability” was open to interpretation, the strand’s use of Yorke’s (2006) definition helped to guide and structure content. With reference to the six themes, lessons learnt included:

**Authentic learning:**
- Placements require careful planning and preparation, with the clear definition of skills to be developed and a balancing of students’ academic and placement workloads. Gap years can be extremely beneficial, although time is needed for ensuring that appropriate employment experiences are identified and applied for – with significant input from careers specialists.
- Employers can get frustrated by students who are not well prepared and/or demand a significant amount of support time - emphasising the importance of some kind of contract or formal understanding between all stakeholders at the outset.
- Placements should, where possible, have equal status - some students see other students’ placements as more beneficial and rewarding. Where placements are secured through a competitive process, unsuccessful students can still benefit from the application and selection process.
- Students returning from placement can have significant positive impact through mentoring other students who are planning their own placement work experiences.
- Benefits extend to community relations and civic engagement, with examples including networking with schools, courts and community groups.
- Placements can be supported very successfully through creating a clearly defined post for the management and organisation of work experience, and through capitalising on enterprise, consultancy and research and development activity.

**Careers awareness and application skills:**
- PDP can involve dedicated modules or embedded programmes within the rest of the curriculum, with tutorial and online support targeting the production of reflective commentary and CV material.
- Modules addressing entrepreneurial skills through projects with employers are a successful way of developing careers awareness.
- Employability awards that are certificated by the institution raise the profile of careers planning and application skills, targeting extra-curricular activity - including volunteering, sport, student societies, campus based work and community service. The GO Wales additional qualification via City and Guilds (level 4) also offers much potential.
- Most of the schemes are in their pilot stages with the biggest challenge involving up scaling based on their popularity.

**Developing graduate attributes:**
- There is a challenge with ensuring that schemes for developing skills and competencies have sufficient priority with students and staff who are more concerned with summative assessment than longer term formative developments. This requires a change of culture.
- Good practice with assessment methods can be identified in medical and health professional programmes, with potential transfer to other discipline areas. Exploration of some of the lesser known attributes – such as emotional intelligence – can cross discipline boundaries.
- Particular approaches and initiatives are required to develop critical reflection skills at postgraduate level.
- Outreach schemes – such as mentoring in local schools, computer clubs and technocamps – provide very good opportunities for skills development.

**Developing leadership and enterprise**
- Students appreciate the opportunity of presenting business plans in competitive situations, based on perceived relevance to professional careers and real-world authenticity. There is less enthusiasm in some cases for group work – especially when this activity spans an entire semester or academic year - with a need for careful briefing and planning alongside explanations about the importance of group working skills for later employment.
Collaboration with employers through the evaluation of students’ business plans and projects can lead to employment opportunities and business start-ups.

An important added feature of enterprise projects involves inter-disciplinary working.

**Expanding professional networks**
- Specific activities and methods can be linked with discipline-based networks. Examples include the use of exhibitions and festivals by Art and Design students, networking with trusts by health care programmes, and links with business consortia for the support of engineering placements. Some of these developments require sponsorship in order to make them sustainable.
- The involvement of professional networks is popular with students and takes many forms – including dedicated modules, embedded activities or events within other modules, and the use of work placements.
- Networking for employment and placement experiences in the first and second years of study are beneficial for networking during the final year, thereby improving employment opportunities.

**Resources to support employability**
- Online resources are commonplace and play a significant role in developing support for diverse student groups, including part-time learners who find it difficult to attend campus events and support programmes.
- Online resources are valued as a method for reinforcing rather than replacing face-to-face contact.

**Post conference activity**

During the case study stage of strand output there was an interest in more sustained activity where the 2012 FD conference “was not seen to be an end to this work but a staging post” [note 1 FD work strands meeting 27 January 2012]. This point followed through earlier discussions:

The group believed the LfE work strand should continue longer than 12 months, rather than ending the work at the LfE conference [page 2 LfE Working Group 26 July 2011].

Mutual interests of other strands had also been recognised:

The group noted the importance of defining boundaries for the group, and potential cross-overs with the Learning in Employment group. For example, where should work experience placements fit in? [page 4 LfE Working Group 14 October 2011].

The later meetings welcomed the FDSG decision to continue LfE operations for the 2012-13, and recognised the value of shared LfE and LiE meetings given the various overlaps of content. Learning for Employment members were however self-critical about their group “preaching to the converted” with a need to “widen the net” [minute 6.8 FDSG 20 June 2012].

Post-conference activity therefore looked to new activities and operations that would engage more staff and students. Priorities included recruiting more student and employer representatives to the group, addressing the interface between careers staff and academics, and gathering reflection from recently employed graduates about their higher education experiences.

The strand’s agenda shifted towards curriculum development through:
- enhancing the student voice, including the use of appropriate terminology by staff through clear and focused students consultations;
- exploring what a Welsh graduate looks like within a global citizenship and education for sustainable development (ESD) context. Two ESD guidance publications were noted: First Year attitudes towards, and skills in, sustainable development (Bone E and Agombar J 2011 HEA and NUS) and Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development (Drayson R Bone E and Agombar J 2012 HEA and NUS);
• bringing together resources in various institutions and networks through creating a toolkit for use with students, and all academic and support staff;
• improving the interface between curriculum design and the careers service;
• measuring employability more effectively through the use of more longitudinal data for tracking destinations of leavers from higher education.

The final stage of the strand’s work involved producing three student story videos, aimed at recording learner and employer perspectives on employability skills gained from degree courses. This material was screened at the 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling flexible learning conference, and prepared the ground for transition to a new work strand entitled Distinctive Graduates.

Additional evidence for informing impact analysis

Conferences
Conference feedback notes high levels of satisfaction and understanding with LfE related presentations and workshops:
• the 2012 Graduates for Our Future conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction with sessions led by strands (with averages ranging between 3.86 and 3.77 out of a maximum score of 5);
• the 2012 Foundation Degrees conference generated scores of 38.9% and 52.8% for “satisfied” and “very satisfied” ratings respectively, with 72.2% of delegates stating that they will change their practices following the event;
• feedback from the 2013 Skills and Employability conference noted 31.3% and 68.8% of responses within “satisfied” and “very satisfied” categories, with 87.5% of respondents stating that they will change their practice because of the event.

Institutional Team Enhancement Projects
The institutional team enhancement projects generated further information on impact. It is worth noting that five of the projects explicitly addressed LfE themes through the production of audio and video online resources for supporting employability, testimonials from part-time learners, and work experience case studies and internships.

Interviewees
Learning for Employment impact was explored with five interviewees, who expressed high levels of satisfaction with progress over the three years of operation - although there was acknowledgement of the challenges associated with ensuring appropriate employer representation.

We looked at quasi-representation using the sector skills councils but it is very difficult to cover all the subject areas without ending up with a huge working group. And would employers come to meetings if there is no immediate relevance to their own working lives? [Interviewee A].

Initial discussions were described as difficult because of differences in opinion about priorities for members who were based in careers services and academics with an interest in employability. One illustration concerned a proposal by careers staff for developing sector-wide Employability Awards compared with other interests in documenting student and staff employability experiences. The strand managed to balance these expectations as meetings progressed, with a strong emphasis on the production of tangible and measurable output through case study material.

There was a consistent recognition of the need for securing widespread appeal and ownership within the sector based on links with other mainstream developments:

33 minute 5.12 FDSG 30 January 2014
We have initiatives all the time that ask us to do things over and above the day job. But the strand was fortunate because people were doing lots of things with employability and it was no problem to collect all the examples [Interviewee A 17 June 2014].

The major challenge appeared when so many case studies had to be collated and organised with the strand being aware that sub-categories were needed for helping the sector to make sense of all the information. Impact was seen as two-fold: networking between colleagues within and between institutions, and providing evidence for good practice that could be shared through the generation of case studies.

The discursive face-to-face environment was important as well as the case study clusters. Networking and forging relationships was crucial and engaging with academic was the most valuable thing [Interviewee D].

It was stressed however that whilst brief accounts of good practice were very useful, it was equally as important to embed activities within programmes and institutions.

Everyone was pleased with the case studies. But it was the Lessons Learnt that was crucial, to help us learn about them; get to the kernel of it all, what can people get out of them [Interviewee K].

There were also comments about partnerships between staff and learners being strengthened through gathering evidence, co-authorship, and presentations at conferences. These kinds of activity were seen as invaluable for helping students to gain confidence in their development of employability skills – especially with team-work, communication, and problem-solving. Their involvement with the conferences in particular also raised awareness about behind-the-scenes staff development support for academics:

In the first conference the students said “we didn’t know the staff actually think about teaching and learning in such detail and bother to look at what they are doing”. It was quite an eye opener for them [Interviewee A].

Interviewees consistently and repeatedly noted that the strand had impacted on institutional systems and procedures. They cited various action plans and learning and teaching and employability strategies that acknowledged Future Directions networks, conferences and case studies. There was also recognition of other causal factors having impact on sector policy – such as the WEB Employer Challenge and the request by HEFCW for institutional employability statements.

It’s hard to say “so and so did this because of Learning for Employment”. I am convinced this is a part of the picture. But HEFCW and the QAA did take note of HEA activity when they asked for cross-sector action on employability [Interviewee K].

The later stages of LfE operations involved growing awareness of the distinctive qualities of graduates from universities in Wales, including the involvement of Welsh medium students through Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol representation. This interest was a significant influence on the emerging graduate attributes agenda, with new institutional representatives becoming involved:

The strand has enabled new networks to develop. It’s broadened out, it’s not just the in-crowd. Normally the sector view is from those leading departments and units, now it is involving more people [Interviewee A].

Interviewees were also asked about unintended impact, with the overlap of activities being noted with the LiE strand prior to merger in 2013. There were also some concerns about the danger of the new Distinctive Graduates strand title having less clarity for lecturers and students.
## Impact summary

| Reach | All universities were engaged in strand meetings, including representation from NUS Wales. Discussions and planning included WESB, QAA, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Centre for Recording Achievement, GO Wales and NUS Wales. Whilst the strand has not included representation from the FE sector the case studies reflected College Higher Education good practices. Numerous disciplines and subject areas have been involved in the production of material from Psychology, Medicine, Sport, European Studies, Creative Industries, Computing, Counselling, Education, Law and Criminology, Careers, Drama and Theatre, Business and Management, Art and Design, Classics, Bioscience, Dietetics and Nutrition, History, Archaeology, Religion, Environmental Management, Enterprise, Nursing, Advertising, Engineering and Construction, Accounting, Physiotherapy, and Dental Technology. The vast majority of this work was pitched at undergraduate level. Continual dialogue has taken place with the LiE strand in particular leading to the eventual merger of the strands. Welsh language interests have emerged for the support of bilingual workforces. Input from the strand to the HEA National Conference. |
| Evidence for output | Minutes from five strand meetings. Eight FDSG minutes containing specific LiE agenda items. 2012 and 2014 HEA biennial conference programmes and delegate feedback. Eight institutional enhancement projects reports. Five semi-structured interviews. |
| Satisfaction | 2012 annual conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction with sessions led by strands (with averages ranging between 3.86 and 3.77 out of a maximum score of 5). The 2012 Foundation Degrees conference generated scores of 38.9% and 52.8% for “satisfied” and “very satisfied” ratings respectively, with 72.2% of delegates stating that they will change their practice. Feedback for The 2013 Skills and Employability conference noted 31.3% and 68.8% of responses within the “satisfied” and “very satisfied” categories. |
| Awareness and understanding of change at individual, institutional and sector levels | The importance of case study material for sharing good practice for the development of employability for the themes of: authentic learning; careers and application skills; developing graduate attributes; developing leadership and enterprise; expanding professional networks; resources to support employability; the effectiveness of partnership working between academic staff, students, and careers services; the impact of employability on retention and student motivation; |
| **Unintended, indirect, or negative outcomes** | Awareness of the need to develop evaluation strategies for projects and initiatives. The need for differentiating between LfE and LiE activity in order to avoid potential confusion. The potential lack of clarity with new strand titles. |
| **Inspired / effective teaching and learning** | 72.2% of delegates providing feedback for the Future Direction foundation degrees conference stated that they will change their practice because of the event. 87.5% of delegates providing feedback for the skills and employability conference stated that they will change their practice because of the event. The demonstration of effective teaching and learning through extensive case study and conference material including:  
- personal and professional development, careers awareness, and employability;  
- work experience placements, sandwich/gap years, and live project work generated by employers;  
- online employability resource provision;  
- the use of portfolios and ePortfolios;  
- employability through community and school volunteering;  
- the involvement of Alumni as mentors and for the support of internships;  
- the use of pre and post work experience questionnaires for demonstrating change.  
- supporting students who have difficulties with self-reflection.  
- Dragons Den / Apprentice style competitive scenarios involving employers.  
- five institutional team enhancement projects. |
| **Recognition and reward of effective teaching and learning** | The publication of case studies and student stories. Exhibitions, conferences, and employer fairs. Employer visits, panels and surgeries. Employability awards and certificates for extra-mural activities and volunteering. Participating in national challenges and charity fund raising. |
| **Changes to procedures and structures** | Inclusion of the strand’s work within institutional learning and teaching strategies. Preparing the ground for the new Future Directions work strand Distinctive Graduates, launched in 2013. Institutional quality assurance monitoring and action plans linked to QAA Quality Code expectations and indicators for enhancement and employability. The embedding of accredited employability related modules within undergraduate and FdA programmes. Employability planning with QAA enhancement themes. Mentoring, buddying and coaching in schools. Pre-placement work experience briefings and induction. Increased involvement with GO Wales. Improvements for final destination data and student tracking. Online links with Alumni. |
| **Changes in culture or policy** | Developing institutional and programme employability statements. Contributing to HEFCW’s introduction of Skills and Employability Action Plans for all institutions in Wales, including presentations and workshops within the 2013 Skills and Employability conference. Involvement with two presentations by the QAA to the 2013 Skills and Employability conference, covering themes of Quality Management and Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. |
Appendix C: the Students as Partners work strand

Origins

Three key areas were identified by the FDSG for a work strand dedicated to enhancement of the student learning experience:

- student voice and representation;
- the first year student experience;
- student involvement in curriculum design.

These areas emerged from the “next steps needed” section of the 2010 Designing for Diversity and Flexibility conference feedback questionnaire. Key topics included sharing good practice, involving and engaging students, sharing best practice regarding students on validation panels, and investigating the accreditation for student representatives. Students as Partners (SaP) became a work strand in its own right, guided by the following priorities listed by the FDSG:

- partnership working;
- respect for students as experts;
- curriculum renewal and design;
- flexibility and inclusivity with the celebration of diversity;
- recognition of part-time as well as postgraduate learners;
- higher education in further education;
- inspirational learning and teaching.

The Steering Group also emphasised the importance of aspiration through developing a clear focus on the future, and going beyond the status quo. These priorities formed the starting point for the strand’s work, beginning in March 2011 with the inaugural meeting of the work strand. Representatives from all universities, NUS Wales and the QAA explored definitions of partnerships and the potential scope of future work:

“…at the March meeting the group approached the topic theoretically at first. Provocative phrases were used deliberately to draw out disagreement and debate in the group” [minute 8.17 Future Directions Steering Group 6 May 2011 meeting].

The group was self-critical of its membership in terms of being dominated by academic staff and resolved to honour the theme of student partnership through issuing invitations to student representatives and students’ union sabbatical officers throughout Wales.

This was a decision based on the practical perception that the work of the strand would be severely limited if we did not include student members as well as the recognition that we could not expect any credibility if we did not. [work strand leader feedback 25 June 2014].

The subsequent seven meetings succeeded in achieving a more balanced profile where approximately one third of members were students, in addition to representation from one further education college.

Early discussions searched for tangible short and longer term outputs with the production of case studies being prioritised:

That outputs for the moment (for the next meeting) be regarded as the collection of case studies but that should opportunities arise for evaluation, analysis/dissemination of impact, new proposals they should not be overlooked or postponed” [note 6 SaP work strand March 2011].

Subsequent planning recognised the value of case study writing as a form of organisational learning as well as the production of output. This exercise was to be supported by the use of technology for sharing information and formats so that some consistency was encouraged:
That with the case studies the process is just as important as the product so institutions are urged to use the Wiki for project minutes as well as the finished product [Note 5 SaP work strand 6 June 2011].

The group was aware of inherent difficulties in securing consistency in reporting across institutions, with student representation being described by some members as “patchy”34. The group encouraged the exploration of case studies that are looking to the future and in their early stages of development, as well as more established projects and initiatives Good practice further afield was valued with the Students as Change Agents and Academic Partners projects from Exeter and Birmingham City Universities pointing to the importance of building an evidence base (for example through using focus groups) for student and staff responses. It is also worth noting the Group’s valuing of case studies specific to departments or schools as well as an entire university or college:

… what has been identified in this meeting is the difference between local and institution level student engagement. The QAA are starting to engage at the local level and have started to realise that this is where student engagement works best [Note 9 SaP work strand 6 June 2011].

**Early progress**

There was recognition at the outset of the need to balance SaP student involvement between students’ union sabbatical officers and student voice representatives from course programmes and faculties.

We ended up with both – out Students’ union Vice-President and a member of our student voice [Interviewee HB].

The outcomes of these early meetings were reported by the chair – Dr Nick Potter from Swansea Metropolitan University - to the FDSG, with members suggesting that the strand should establish links with the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE). There was further recognition of the need for connecting with the QAA Scotland enhancement themes, where a collaborative approach to student participation in quality was described as key to success35. The Steering Group also noted that the other two work strands were making progress with the identification of emerging themes from their case studies, with this being less prominent for Students as Partners.

Noted that SaP strand is all embracing and needs to look deeper after the conference, for example into Welsh Medium, estates-accommodation and learning spaces, postgraduates, international students [minute 5.5 FD Steering Group 16 February 2012].

One reason for relatively slower progress in the identification of emergent themes revolves around the challenge of consistent student representation when there is turn-over of sabbatical officer posts within students’ unions. The strand was proactive in anticipating possible continuity difficulties with student leadership, and in early meetings developed a procedure where the nominated chair and deputy chair would involve a staff and a student member. Further action included a request to the NUS for a paper documenting the various student representative structures from across Wales36.

The strand valued a think piece document from an HEA academic associate [Aaron Porter] for making sense of their case study material before the conference. There were also impressive signs of embedding strand activity within mainstream committees inside universities:

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34 Item 7e SaP Work Strand 6 June 2011
35 FDSG 6 May 2011
36 SaP meeting 25 November 2011
[HB] stated that the University of Glamorgan have put the work strand as a standing agenda item on his Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee agenda [Note 2 SaP work strand 27 January 2012].

The case studies

The HEA published a complete set of 33 case studies in April 2012, drawn from 46 documents on the SaP Wiki site. This publication deliberately avoided a definition for student partnerships:

We wanted to cover all the democracy, voice and structural possibilities for student partnerships. We had to ensure that institutions did this their way [Interviewee J].

They were written by teams of staff and students and clustered into the three themes - Representation, Students Supporting Students, and Curriculum Development. The case study reports offered institutional rather than individual or discipline-specific perspectives. Unlike the other two work strands they did not use a common reporting template, and drew on projects and initiatives from eight universities, in addition to three from the further education sector. The vast majority appeared to be based on institutional mainstream funding rather than external project income or sponsorship.

Sixty-three per cent of the case studies were in their early stages or at the end of their first year of operation and did not therefore include detailed evaluation or monitoring information. Evaluation drew mainly on qualitative evidence with some quantitative data coming from student survey feedback. Few specific links were made to the other two employability-related work strands.

Content revealed numerous beneficial outcomes associated with collaboration and partnerships, including improvements to:

- the overall learning experience;
- employability;
- facilities and services, including the SU;
- inclusivity;
- representation and the student voice;
- student representation training and support;
- networking with other universities and colleges;
- feedback via focus groups, student councils and other fora;
- Student Charters;
- the use of eLearning and virtual learning platforms;
- NSS & PTES analysis and responsiveness;
- student involvement in curriculum design;
- you said we did initiatives;
- ambassador schemes;
- mentoring and peer assisted support activities;
- induction support for new and returning students;
- study skills;
- events, festivals, exhibitions and fairs.

The case studies also pointed to less frequent but powerful outcomes associated with student partnership activity. These included:

- developing an annual evidence based SU report for the institution;
- improving the postgraduate experience;
- reinvestment of profits from university services into student facilities;
- student led teaching awards for staff;
- partnerships between SU and learning and teaching centres;
systems for advertising, nominating and electing student representatives and securing buy-in from all students;
student participation in the writing of Learning and Teaching Strategies;
student involvement in the writing of widening access strategies including support for disabled learners;
international student support via Ambassadors;
Student Surveys Operational Group;
Welsh Medium student voice;
retention and drop-out;
mature student support;
students as e-guides;
appointing student representative co-ordinators;
student involvement in staff development and curriculum design;
establishing an undergraduate journal;
establishing broadcasting media platforms;
close collaboration between students and senior management.

One year later a SaP Lessons Learnt publication reflected on the progress and outcomes of the case studies.

**Student representation** was associated with varying hierarchies and methods with success characteristics including course and module level operations, and the allocation of extra responsibilities to more senior representatives. This extended to the facilitation of links with the SU and senior management, often through establishing a Staff-Student Forum or Council, and developing feedback systems to students based on gathered information. This process made a difference through representation activity being more visible with outcomes being transparent through the open and regular recognition of challenges. In contrast to the above success factors, inconsistencies were noted for:

- **reward systems** (with awareness that financial payment can reduce independence) including the use of in-kind benefits (such as free courses or tickets) and awards for representatives;

- **recognition of the actual representation system** through clothing, badging, branding, logos – all of which improve the visibility and approachability of representatives.

The theme of **Students Supporting Students** was linked to an increasing amount of strategic embedding of activity and projects, with a focus on student induction and the targeting of particular groups – such as disabled and mature learners. Success factors included assessing the need for support through student data, measuring project outcomes, student ownership of projects, and training.

The theme of **Curriculum Development** was described as the newest area; with this theme’s title changing half through the strand’s working life to the Student Voice in Teaching and Learning. Projects were described as small scale – often at modular level – and based on the enthusiasm of individual tutors and students rather than being embedded in university strategy. Success factors included the use of induction and end of year reflection processes for engaging students in curriculum design, students researching options (especially through focus groups) rewarding students through Summer internships for completing projects, and having clearly defined communications and expectations between staff and students.

**Post conference activity**

The HEA 2012 conference enabled the dissemination of outcomes from the case studies via two workshops for each of the Students as Partners themes. There were also some critical comments from students underlining the importance of simplifying terminology where possible – for example, replacing the word “curriculum” with “course design”.
Some students reported they had found the conference to largely be “academics talking to academics” with little opportunity to take part, although felt overall it was a valuable experience. [Minute 5.6 Future Directions Steering Group 20 June 2012].

The strand therefore authored and published a guide for students in order to explain acronyms and terminology.

We produced a Jargon Buster that was first used at the Students as Partners in Practice event in November 2012 and has been a very useful resource ever since [Interviewee K].

Following the conference Sarah Ingram – a projects officer from Cardiff University and previously a students’ union sabbatical officer – took over the strand chair. The group noted the need for an additional event later on in the year targeting student sabbatical officers and representatives who could not attend the Easter conference, culminating in the completion of a Students as Partners in Practice conference in November 2012 (reinforced by Face book pages via NUS Wales and accompanying podcasts).

The case studies and conferences generated further SaP interests following the HEA’s decision to continue the strand’s work throughout the 2012-13 session. Such continuation was accompanied by the need for more inter-strand connections, with the LfE and LiE groups featuring more student engagement activity in their own work. These overlapping interests inevitably blurred the distinctiveness of the strand’s identity.

Nevertheless, many new ideas emerged for student partnership working. Suggestions for future exploration included the championing of Welsh Medium student engagement and representation by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. There was recognition of the need to include more post graduate student partnerships, to make links with the emerging QAA Student Engagement team, and to support dissemination by students who attend HEA events. Interest was also expressed in auditing and developing a national rather than local scheme for promoting Student Led Teaching Awards. Although no concrete action plan emerged from these discussions, further project work was identified:

- sharing good practice from the Grwp Llandrillo-Menai Higher Education conference on Engaging all Students;
- involvement within the Students as Partners Change Academy Programme;
- planning the next FD conference scheduled for 2014;
- supporting higher education in further education colleges (with many colleges not having formal students’ unions).

The strand did not however want to repeat the case study strategy used for 2010-2012, and did not pursue the possibility of a new formal HEA publication for their work:

Following the “Student Voice – sites of engagement” session at the FD conference, it was suggested a different approach is needed to drive forward the SaP work. The aim should not be to present another set of case studies at the 2014 conference, but focus the SaP work on thematic areas, reflecting institutions’ strategic priorities [note 5.7 SaP work strand 19 July 2012].

SaP members considered the deeper embedding of student partnerships in other activity, and asked four key questions about the case studies:

- what had the SaP publication had been used for?
- had it reached students?
- did they inspire similar work in other institutions and students' unions?
- what have HEA and HEFCW gained from the initiative?

The agenda was shifting towards the key focal point of curriculum design as a way of integrating student engagement with other work strands:
Many institutions are at the very early stages of engaging students in the design, delivery and validation of curriculum. Both the Welsh Government and HEFCW have made it clear this area should be a priority … Work around curriculum design could explore examples of where students have been engaged in the process successfully at all levels, and explore how a culture change of involving students in curriculum design could be delivered [note 5.12 SaP Work Strand 19 July 2012].

Curriculum design did not however dominate subsequent strand activity. A different suggestion was introduced by The Open University in Wales via a Student Stories proposal for prospective, current and Alumni students. The central activity of peer-to-peer digital story telling was to be self-managed and online, drawing on iTunesU technology. It had attracted interest from the Welsh Government, the HEA, HEFCW and Jisc Regional Support Centre. A small working group was charged with developing the proposal with the FDSG advising that Student Stories be linked with the work of WISE that the QAA should be involved as a project partner, and that good practice via Oxford University’s Wall of Faces initiative should be explored. Student Stories experienced some delays until a co-ordinator was appointed, leading to all stories being located within a detailed video production that was shown to delegates at the 2014 conference.

Unfortunately there were delays on getting the project off the ground … this meant that the project had to be drastically reduced but in the event stories were produced for the ‘14 Future Directions conference. Nonetheless, the digital story approach has been readily adopted by the new work strands. [Interviewee K].

A wide range of students were identified by SU sabbatical officers and representatives, including the targeting of fresher’s fairs, the National Eisteddfod for Welsh medium material, and networking with NUS Wales Officers. Website material made links to other strands for the collection and dissemination of stories, and identified the FD 2014 conference as the launch date.

Throughout 2013 the strand continued to disseminate its work through conference presentations and workshops at the HEA Annual Conference, the Students as Producers Conference, a Students as Partners workshop at the University of Lincoln, a Students as Change Agents conference at the University of Winchester, and the Undergraduate Research Conference at Nottingham University. In addition the strand learned of good practice through visiting speakers at meetings from Lincoln and York universities.

**From strand to network**

The crucial FDSG meeting on the 19th June 2013 agreed that SaP activities were to be embedded in all Future Directions work, and there was renewed emphasis on student participation within curriculum development as an over-arching priority.

Whilst there was concern about capacity in terms of gathering sufficient student representatives for the embedding of Students as Partners outcomes within the three new themes, the strand identified advantages with setting an objective for transforming itself into a student managed network. This was facilitated by:

- the production of fliers for NUS Wales Course Representative Conference (February 2014);
- the use of social media options;
- support from an HEA Policy and Events Internship;
- the involvement of WISE.

Two challenges in particular were recognised at the strand’s 9 December 2013 meeting: ensuring open dialogue between the network and the new themes, and identifying how the network would communicate through face-to-face as well as electronic communications.

Despite these difficulties the strand’s interests and activities were reflected within 20 sessions at the 2014 conference, with popular topics covering learning journeys, curriculum planning, teaching awards, and distance
learning. It is also worth highlighting one presentation that involved significant sector-wide dialogue: the Student Voice in Governance presentation by HEFCW and the NUS Wales.

**Additional evidence for informing impact analysis**

**Conferences**  
Appendix E provides detail for general conference feedback with the following observations being noted for the 2012 Students as Partners in Practice conference:  
- 89% satisfied or very satisfied with content;  
- average ratings of 3.9 (out of a maximum of 5) for questions “helped me to carry out my role” and “4.1 for “met my expectations” and “helped my understanding of Students as Partners”.

**Institutional Team Enhancement Projects**  
The institutional team enhancement projects generated further information on impact. It is worth noting that four of the projects explicitly addressed student partnership working, including the development of an Academic Manifesto linked to student-led teaching awards, the development of peer learning networks, the involvement of student generated staff development material, and the production of a media tool kit for student representatives. The outcome has been:

Greater involvement of students, for example through internships and student stories, in institutional learning and teaching developments [Colley H (2014) page 4 Overview of Future Directions Activity within Institutions paper for FDSG 4 June 2014].

**Interviews**  
Students as Partners impact was explored with six interviewees, who expressed high levels of satisfaction with progress over the three years of operation.

What most stood out was the Students as Partners in Practice conference in November 2012. The Future Directions earlier April conference was mostly staff with some students, we wanted it the other ways around. On the day there was so much enthusiasm [Interviewee G].

Their reflections went beyond listing all of the various outputs, with a fundamental valuing by the universities of genuine and equal student – staff partnerships throughout Wales. This has allowed catch up with some of the England universities (examples including Birmingham City, Lincoln and Exeter) that inspired the strand’s work during the earlier stages of operation.

We went beyond thinking that student partnerships meant talking to students as they moved between the lecture theatre and seminar room [Interviewee J].

A key outcome involved significant influence on strategies and policies from key agencies and organisations within the higher education sector. This extended to the style of communication used:

The language of the QAA, HEFCW and Welsh Government changed in the light of the strand’s work – students were now change agents, experts, decision makers, students were seen as the key influencers on course design. It changed from “we met with them” to “they decided and we did” [Interviewee J].

Interviewees cited examples of achievement with the introduction of new initiatives. There was strong interest in pooling knowledge and practice by the Students Unions for SLTAs, with the strand collating information for use by WISE. The strengthening of student engagement in the governance of higher education institutions was another key development – including more widespread student membership of boards and committees.
Student issues are now covered in the first formal part our meetings, they are not any more the last thing on our agenda [Interviewee J].

The involvement of external speakers from English universities was cited as a key feature of the strand’s reach in order to identify good practice. Members were also invited to give presentations at a major staff development event within a large further education college, and at a student university conference. There were further observations about the growing reputation of the strand based on student representatives contacting the strand for advice and information – health care and medical science programmes being examples cited.

Interviewees agreed that impact included student contributions to objectives and targets within institutional employability, learning, teaching and widening access strategies, and with fee plans. Whilst advances with student representation were described as a major success story, student involvement in programme planning and assessment strategies was seen as more challenging.

In the last two years involvement with curriculum design has improved but it has not got to the university strategy level in the same way as the student voice has [Interviewee G].

Some comments addressed policy and strategy impact at institutional and sector levels through discussions between SaP members and HEFCW, and through ongoing dialogue with QAA. Some of the strand members were engaging in institutional reviews, with anecdotal comments during interviews suggesting that SaP and Future Directions had been cited in some of the self-evaluation documents produced for the review panels.

Interviewees emphasised the value of effective student-led staff development workshops and events. Partnership working between the students’ unions and learning and teaching or educational development centres was specifically cited in this respect. Examples of activity include helping staff to give effective assessment feedback, and to improve induction and retention support.

As a student panel they each share their experiences, they do an activity for all the staff using group work, staff say what they would have done, students then say what actually happened to them [Interviewee B].

It should be noted that interviewees emphasised that it would be overly simplistic to attribute this kind of impact to the SaP alone.

The students with staff have made changes in their institutions, but it is hard to know whether this has just been identified by the strand - or was it initiated by us? Even if it is identification only, the strand has been a platform for giving recognition at the ground level [Interviewee SI 24 June 2014].

They emphasised that it was more a matter of the sector agreeing a work strand theme carefully because of the recognition of an emerging agenda that placed students at the centre of the higher education stage.

But the strand gave us the impetus to push on agendas that we wanted as we were going to senior management for changes to our QA systems, helping students to write a bid for SLTAs, changing committee agendas and membership. The HEA gave us the context and rationale for all of this [Interviewee G].

Interviewees were asked about possible negative consequences. Responses referred to the increased workloads for staff and students’ union officers who were very aware of the need to succession plan based on fixed time frames for elected officers and student voices. This implies the provision of annual training and support cycles for student representatives, shared where possible between institutions on a regional or national basis. There were also warnings about likely difficulties with embedding student engagement in the work of the new Global Graduates strands, and with ensuring that progress and outcomes are monitored now that SaP has moved from a distinctive group to a sector network.
## Impact overview

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reach</th>
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<tr>
<td>All universities have engaged with the strand.</td>
<td>Students constitute one third of strand members, including Students’ union elected officers and student voice representatives.</td>
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<td>One further education college has been involved in meetings and has contributed to case studies.</td>
<td>Representation has included NUS Wales and the QAA.</td>
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<td>Discipline/subject areas have been reflected in activities and evidence gathering, as well as institutions.</td>
<td>Links have been made to other Future Directions groups, leading to the decision to embed all student engagement activity in Future Directions work strands.</td>
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<td>Welsh medium provision has been included, with input to the National Eisteddfod.</td>
<td>Welsh medium provision has been included, with input to the National Eisteddfod.</td>
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<td>Partnerships have been formed with WISE.</td>
<td>Connections have been made with the Students as Partners Change Academy Programme.</td>
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<td>There has been reach outside of Wales via contact with Lincoln, Exeter, Birmingham City, Winchester and York universities.</td>
<td>There has been reach outside of Wales via contact with Lincoln, Exeter, Birmingham City, Winchester and York universities.</td>
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<td>Input from the strand to the HEA National Conference.</td>
<td>Input from the strand to the HEA National Conference.</td>
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<th>Evidence for output</th>
<th>Minutes from eight strand meetings.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Minutes from eight FDSG meetings containing specific SaP agenda items.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2012 and 2014 HEA biennial conference programmes and delegate feedback.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eight Institutional Team Enhancement Project reports.</td>
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<td>Si semi-structured interviews.</td>
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<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>The creation of a SaP Wiki site.</th>
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<td>46 case studies published by the HEA.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Follow up Lessons Learnt HEA case study publication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Delivery of six workshops at the Future Directions Graduates for Our Future 2012 conference.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organisation of the 2012 Students as Partners in Practice Conference.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Delivery of 20 workshops and papers addressing SaP themes at the Future.</td>
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<td>Directions Global Graduates 2014 conference.</td>
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<td>Publication of the Jargon Buster.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Launch of the Student Stories project.</td>
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<td>Four institutional team enhancement projects.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>2012 annual conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction with all parallel sessions involving the work strands.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>The 2012 Students as Partner in Practice conference recorded an 89% satisfaction rating for the event.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Awareness and understanding of change at individual, institutional and sector levels</th>
<th>The 2012 Students as Partners in Practice conference returned ratings of 3.9 (out of a maximum of 5) for “helped me to carry out my role” and “4.1 for “met my expectations” and “helped my understanding of Students as Partners”.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>The sharing of good practice through networking with other universities and colleges in Wales, including student contributions to learning and teaching conferences and events.</td>
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<td>The contribution of students to curriculum design in order to develop relevant and clear learning outcomes and strategies that enhance attainment and progression.</td>
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<td>The effectiveness of case study material co-authored by staff and students when it comes to generating evidence for demonstrating change.</td>
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<td>The recognition of learning about student engagement in other universities outside of Wales.</td>
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<td>The importance of achieving a balance between students’ union officers and student voice representatives.</td>
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<td>Enabling succession planning and well planned advance training and support for new</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unintended, indirect, or negative outcomes</th>
<th>Awareness of the need to develop evaluation strategies for projects and initiatives. Recognition of the need to involve more postgraduate students in representation activity. The importance of recognising increased workloads for the regular provision of training and support for new student representatives. The need for careful and detailed planning for the embedding of student engagement in other work strands. Difficulties with the recruitment of student delegates at national conferences because of high fees.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspired / effective teaching and learning</td>
<td>The 2012 Students as Partners in Practice conference returned ratings of 4.0 (out of a maximum of 5) for “will change my approach to student partnerships”. The demonstration of effective teaching and learning through extensive case study and conference material associated with three areas: - curriculum development; - student representation; - students supporting students. Learning and teaching strategies and activities for improving retention. The involvement of students as e-guides. Using Student Dialogue Sheets to Inspire Teaching. Four Institutional Team Enhancement Projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and reward of effective teaching and learning</td>
<td>The production of student stories and case studies. The development of Student Led Teaching Awards in partnership with WISE. Student-led staff development programmes. Responsiveness of students to NSS and PTES surveys and contributions to subsequent action planning at subject and institutional levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes to procedures and structures</td>
<td>Inclusion of the strand’s work within institutional learning and teaching strategies. Increased representation of students on a wide range of institutional committees and boards. The more frequent use of focus groups and staff-student fora for gathering detailed information for informing learning and teaching strategies. Developing student voices for Welsh medium provision through partnerships with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The promotion of Student Charters. The expansion of You Said We Did procedures. The introduction of annual Students’ union reports for informing institutional learning and teaching strategies. Co-working between Learning and Teaching support centres and units with students’ unions. The appointment by institutions of student representative co-ordinators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in culture or policy</td>
<td>The involvement of students in writing institutional teaching and learning and widening access strategies as well as fee plans and employability action statements. Student leadership of staff development workshops. Reference in HEFCW and Welsh Government policy and strategy statements to students as change agents and experts. QAA recognition of SaP outcomes linked to enhancement themes for the sector.</td>
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Appendix D: the new Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning programme

In June 2013 the FDSG considered policy priorities provided by four leaders of policy in Wales:

**Higher Education Wales:** the financial challenges of fees and funding, advances in global digital information, the democratisation of higher education, and public accountability.

**The QAA:** the international dimension, and engagement with employers and students.

**NUS Wales:** value for money, access and flexibility and students as active partners in their learning.

**HEFCW:** the importance of enhancement as well as regulation, communicating effectively the purpose of a degree, collaboration, and meeting Welsh Government priorities in a business context.

The above challenges and opportunities resulted in agreement of a new over-arching Future Directions programme entitled Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning. Three new sub-themes were identified: Learner Journeys, Teaching Excellence, and Distinctive Graduates.

**Learner journeys**

A broad remit was identified for Learner Journeys within the newly created Global Graduate programme:

- stepping on/off learning experiences;
- portable learning experiences;
- pace/place;
- curriculum design;
- HE pathways and progression.

This agenda built directly on LiE outcomes, with a major new emphasis on flexible learning following the HEA Summit in June 2013. The group was convened in September 2013 by the LiE chair – Jo Smedley (University of South Wales) – with its four meetings to date using a balance of face-to-face and online formats. Minutes of these meetings note a significant number of new representatives drawn from all universities, one college, NUS Wales, Jisc RSC, the QAA and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Sub-theme discussions identified a variety of student categories for the theme of learning journeys, including:

- Welsh, the UK, and International;
- access and mature;
- apprentice and FdA top-up;
- work based;
- professional;
- alumni.

Members recognised various kinds of learning within journeys, including non-vocational, experiential, work placement, bite-sized and part-time. There has also been a strategic awareness of potential outcomes for the sub-theme, linked to whole-sector pan-Wales developments covering:

- the attributes of a Welsh graduate;
- agreement on credit transfer;
- a framework for staff development;
- a framework for experiential learning.
Interest in the production of hard copy case studies has been replaced with innovative technology enhanced output inspired by the earlier Future Directions exploration of learner stories. Members have valued sound-bite and video contributions hosted on YouTube, the construction of a Learning Journey blog site, and the use of a Wordle cloud for summarising and presenting key concepts. Clear guidelines were agreed for helping to structure video clips in advance of the 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning conference, using three simple questions for learners:

- What made you embark on your journey (current job/role, life challenges, and personal development strategies)?
- About your journey (what, how, when and why are you learning)?
- What are the outcomes of your journey (employment focus and learning as a life skill)?

A prominent interest has emerged with going beyond short-term output:

The group considered what work they could undertake in the longer term. They were keen to enable something that would be sustainable. Ideas discussed included: the development of a toolkit, something to enable transferability between institutions, a community of practice and developing a visualisation of what a learner journey might look like [notes 6.6-7; Learning Journeys 11 December 2013].

This objective was accompanied by the valuing of communication and dissemination strategies, not just in the use of flexible technologies (deploying Jisc RSC and OU expertise where feasible) but also in terms of the need to ensure clear and consistent branding by the HEA of sub-theme output. The group succeeded in collecting 20 peer reviewed learner journeys videos for the 2014 conference.

### Inspiring teaching

The FDSG initially identified the importance of teaching excellence as a future priority:

> Developing appropriate technologies for flexible delivery, developing appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver digital learning, reward, recognition and promotion of teaching, student experience of learning that informs teaching [minute 8.23 FDSG 19/6/13].

The Inspiring Teaching work strand was chaired by Graham Lewis from Aberystwyth University:

> The initial take was how we inspire teachers. At the first meeting we disentangled this question and expanded this to include how we identify, encourage and reward those who continue to invest time in developing teaching. All of this in general, as well as in the specific context of flexible learning. [Interviewee C].

The four meetings to date have used a mixture of face-to-face and online formats involving six universities plus HEFCW, the QAA and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and NUS Wales. Discussions have addressed the definition of inspiring teaching:

> how we inspire academic staff to engage with the teaching facet of their roles and how we identify, recognise and reward inspired teaching (Minute 6.2 FDSG 25 September 2013).

It was emphasised that successful progress with the sub-theme involved recognising and respecting the possible tension between teaching and other academic responsibilities. It was essential to recognise and disseminate effective CPD frameworks for capturing the teacher voice, and to explore ways by which the student voice could inspire teaching. The group expressed interest in developing a formal arrangement to increase collaboration through mutual benchmarking and the sharing of practice in the implementation of HEA accredited UKPSF-mapped frameworks.
Links are being made with the Learner Journeys sub-theme based on their progress with collecting video material through using flexible technologies. Members identified the potential for securing HEA institutional team enhancement project grants for funding multi-media productions for Inspiring Teaching, with such partnership between institutions constituting a longer term distinctive feature of collaboration in Wales.

Progress has included the peer review of conference contributions, the production of a conference poster, and links to 24 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning conference sessions associated with learning and teaching good practice. The group also have a keen interest in writing articles for educational development journals with three ideas emerged from the March 2014 group meeting:
- the collaborative nature of educational development in Wales;
- active research around teaching development in Wales;
- an article that considers what is meant by teaching excellence.

### Distinctive graduates

The FDSG [19/6/13] identified the new work strand Distinctive Graduates for furthering the work of the former LfE strand with a new emphasis on the distinctiveness of Welsh students, internationalisation, global citizenship, employability, mobility of learning, and sustainability. The group was convened by Lloyd Williams from the University of South Wales in September 2013, with a predominantly new group of members from six universities as well as HEFCW, the QAA and Jisc RSC. The group includes post graduate interests, and there was also recognition of the need to include NUS representation. Areas of individual expertise include teaching and learning, technology enhanced learning, and employability – with less representation from careers services as compared with the former LfE strand.

The group has held four meetings, and used the Future Directions biennial conference in 2014 as a staging post to gather views from students and academics about attributes they felt were evolving and distinct to the Welsh landscape. Discussions highlighted skills and knowledge associated with sustainability in the curriculum, social justice, Wales as a fair-trade nation, and advanced communication skills through bilingualism.

There is interest in making links with a new HEFCW employability funding initiative for 2013-14, and in learning from the HEA funded project on graduate attributes in Scotland. The group has discussed good practice associated with the use of employability awards and the involvement of students in curriculum design:

Bangor are developing a framework for their employability award in which students are asked to come up with their own employability framework/statement [page 2 Distinctive Graduates meeting 9 December 2013].

Employability awards at other institutions have also been recognised, including Trinity Saint David (using a Gold Silver and Bronze framework), the University of South Wales (GlamEdge and the use of ePortfolios), and Cardiff Metropolitan University (with coordination by their Students’ union).

The group has focused on the conference as an opportunity to showcase work from institutions, to present case studies, and to develop an interactive poster board. Members also agreed to convene a student panel for the conference in order to lead a session on Distinctive Graduates. The group identified four key questions for guiding panel discussions by students:
- Why do you study in Wales?
- What do you understand by the term graduate attributes?
- What has helped/hindered your skills at university?
- What extra-curricular activities have you undertaken?

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37 Distinctive Graduates notes 9 December 2013
This work was reinforced through using feedback from the Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life Road Show in Bangor; an initiative that proved to be a powerful opportunity for sharing good practice\textsuperscript{38}. The overall intention was to gather staff and student views about graduate attributes in Wales in order to further develop a typology on distinctiveness.

**The Students as Partners Network**

The network was launched on 11 July 2014 at the USW Atrium campus in Cardiff, with chairs being appointed and terms of reference agreed. The former SaP strand valued the QAA in particular as a helpful source of good practice based on the establishment of their student engagement team:

> We borrowed the QAA idea of having two chairs for the network, the advantage is having continuity of people because student reps and sabbatical officers can change every year [Interviewee G].

The outgoing strand succeeded in organising two Student Panels for the 2014 conference as fore-runners of the new network. The embedding of the network is also reflected in the number of workshops and papers at the 2014 conference involving breakout sessions led by students, often with staff as co-presenters. These included:

- Nano-teach A- Online asynchronous thinking reinforces student learning;
- poster 4-Preventing decay: a novel partnership between students and staff to maintain dental undergraduate practical skills over time;
- belonging and transition: a postgraduate experience;
- from freshers to finals: five fillips to fan flames;
- I'm not a clone!;
- learner journeys: a self-woven tapestry of experiences;
- inclusive education: ensuring a positive learning experience for students from Welsh medium education;
- engaging staff in student engagement;
- employability and skills enhancement student internship project;
- student-led teaching awards – what, why, how, outcomes, future actions.

**The 2014 conference**

The 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning national conference at the University of Aberystwyth provided an opportunity for disseminating the work of the merged LfE and LiE strand and the SaP network, alongside the three new sub-themes. This two day event had the dual purpose of sharing good practice and gathering sector-wide information from staff and students for Future Directions planning. All of the universities in Wales gave presentations or facilitated workshops, in addition to external speakers from Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Birmingham City, Worcester, London and Manchester Metropolitan universities in addition to Jisc RSC and the Centre for recording Achievement. One of the sessions was led by a further education college, and nine sessions involved teams of staff and students – including students’ union sabbatical officers and NUS Wales.

Seventy three per cent of the conference sessions addressed general pedagogic practices within institutions and faculties, with 23 sessions focusing on specific discipline and subject interests covering science, geography, pharmacy, education, law, business, health, mathematics, social science, interior design, care science, creative industries, history and classics, dental technology, and midwifery. Appendix E identifies five categories for the 84 workshops, discussions, papers, and Nano-teach sessions within the conference:

- Students as Partners (20 sessions);
- Learning in Employment / Learning Journeys (18 sessions);

\textsuperscript{38} note 2.1 Distinctive Graduates meeting 7 March 2014
• Learning for Employment (28 sessions);
• Distinctive Graduates (10 sessions);
• Inspiring Teaching (23 sessions);

The conference content reflected the ongoing activities of the former strands, the quick progress of the new sub-theme working groups, and the involvement of all universities (and a small number of colleges) in Wales - in addition to the success of the event in attracting interest from universities in England.

Additional evidence for informing impact analysis

Conference feedback
Feedback based on 64 returned evaluation forms for Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning noted:
• 42.2% ‘satisfied’ and 43.8% ‘very satisfied’ with the content;
• 12.5% ‘satisfied’ and 71.9% ‘very satisfied’ with the administration;
• 75% of delegates stated that they would ‘change their practice’.

Content analysis of qualitative information from returned comments noted the following four prominent themes for intended action by delegates following the conference:
• Networking and building a community of practice (N=28);
• Exploring new learning and teaching methods, including new technologies and curriculum design (N=26);
• Strategic planning of learning and teaching at subject, department institution, and sector levels – including quality assurance (N=9);
• Sector reach including links to colleges, employment and universities outside Wales (N=7).

Institutional Teams Enhancement Projects
The institutional team enhancement project reports, considered by FDSG in June 2014, have generated recent information on impact. It is worth noting that seven out of the eight reports included dissemination outcomes for staff development that enhanced learning – thereby reinforcing the new sub-theme of Inspiring Teaching. Examples included a Teaching Symposium, online discussion groups and blogs, and the generation of learning journey videos and podcasts as staff development material.

Through the student and staff stories and case studies learning and teaching unit websites now have a more interactive element that encourage teachers to use these resources to improve their teaching [Colley H (2014) page 4 Overview of Future Directions Activity within Institutions paper for FDSG 4 June 2014]

One institution commented specifically on the achievement of process impact through changes in the activities of exemplar teachers, and systems impact where online case study scenarios were being used more effectively.

The institution is also undergoing a cultural change with regard to the prominence and value of teaching and the process of reward, recognition and progression. The project is timely within that change as we move towards more supportive means of developing teachers, enabling our best to excel and those still developing to sustain improvement. Respect for teachers and teaching is increasing [Institutional Team Report on FD Enhancement Project April 2014]

Interviews
The emerging closer alignment with the HEW PVC Learning and Teaching group was noted by seven interviewees.

The locus of control has shifted more towards a top-down approach with the PVCs being the direct route into the universities. [Interviewee J].
The new work strands were valued as providing opportunities to clarify and gather student perspectives based on a wide range of questions from the floor. One example concerns Distinctive Graduates:

The questions the staff asked about ‘what do students want from a careers service’ produced answers they had not been expecting and I think it got them to rethink some of their strategies. It was a very lively debate! [Interviewee G].

There was also a marked difference to the 2012 Graduates for Our Future conference:

In 2012 the student and staff team presentations were prescriptive – the strand had six sessions in total run by the strand members. In 2014 it was more organic. New people – staff and students together - were suggesting ideas for a wider spread of sessions – some we had never heard of [Interviewee G].

Three of the interviewees referred to the acknowledgement of Future Directions within self-evaluation documentation for institutional reviews, especially in relation to enhancement, student representation, and employability. There was further recognition of difficulties posed by the successful embedding of student-staff partnerships for the demonstration of impact, based on the more spontaneous activities in disciplines and subjects areas. In this respect interviewees were confident about the success of student representation within institutions, but noted that it had been far more difficult to identify examples of systematic partnership working for curriculum design themes. It is worth noting that the same observation was made for earlier SaP outcomes.

High levels of satisfaction with the progress of the new groups were noted in all interview commentary, although with reference to representation there was awareness of the need to involve more further education colleagues within future meetings and planning, and more employer representation through using graduate recruiter contacts within higher education careers services as well as GO Wales.

**Distinctive Graduate related interview material**

Interview material emphasised the value of having a unique set of graduate attributes centring on flexible learning applications, rather than repeating earlier LfE work on employability.

We want to achieve something substantial and not be a talking shop. For it to maintain momentum members have to see we are creating something new. But it depends on how much time they are prepared to give [Interviewee D].

Over the academic session the group considered very ambitious proposals, including the design and accreditation of a shared all-Wales Distinctive Graduates module for employability that could be integrated by individual institutions within a variety of undergraduate programmes. This idea was however recognised as over-ambitious at this point in time, with a danger of ‘treading on the toes’ of universities that have validated their own programmes linked to employability awards.

Comments were noted for the work strand’s success in making links with the emerging SaP network, with the Student Panels at the 2014 conference providing invaluable guidance about student perceptions of employability - rather than generating employability inventories and checklists that staff can introduce to students.

We can all agree on a taxonomy of attributes but how do we help them understand what they are and what is their goal for succeeding on the global stage [Interviewee D].

The key task has been searching out the best methods for ensuring engagement with the development of graduate attributes, including the recognition of challenges and barriers. One example concerns the need to be wary about assuming an immediate understanding of all the terminology on employability:
Do we really understand things like ‘social justice’ and ‘employability’ and ‘sustainability’ and ‘global citizenship’? We need to know which students ‘get it’ and why [Interviewee D].

The focus is on student ownership of methods and projects that lead to awareness and definitions of attributes that define the experiences of students in Wales. Advanced communication skills have been highlighted as one possible area for exploration, based on the advantages of bilingual communities.

Cultural agility was mentioned at the outset, with students arriving in Wales adapting to a new culture and then travelling elsewhere and doing the same again. And there is also a group of students who come from Wales and stay in Wales and helping them to understand different cultures [Interviewee D].

The sub-theme has therefore valued and shared good practice in individual universities and has located the student voice at the centre of this debate. Examples that were cited during discussions included student led teaching and employability awards, conferences that bring together employers and students, simulated recruitment cycles, live projects in voluntary and community organisations, the formation of inter-disciplinary teams and working groups, and employability modules. There has also been a strong interest in expanding internship schemes – including the HEA’s creation of two internship positions for supporting the overall Future Directions programme.

Interviewees were asked about impact on institutional policy and strategy, with agreement that the new sub-theme (and the earlier LfE strand) had led to a revisiting of institutional employability statements prepared for HEFCW, with active involvement in the writing of Skills and Employability Action Plans. They further noted more indirect contributions to Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies. Connections were also being made to professional body developments for careers advisers in higher education through AGCAS.

**Learner Journey related interview material**

Interview commentary associated with the Learning Journeys sub-theme confirmed fast progress during the current academic session, including the use of over 20 existing and new online video productions of Learner Journeys for the 2014 conference. The sub-theme succeeded in gaining staff and student representation from throughout the sector, including further education colleges, with the involvement of employers being planned as a future development.

The concept of the learner journey was viewed as appealing and easily understood, based on a predominant focus on individual student stories.

Learning Journeys is in just about everything now, inside the university but also on working groups including people from HEFCW and QAA [Interviewee N].

Having said this, there was also recognition that the work strand was raising awareness and understanding about the sheer amount of flexibility associated with the learning journeys of global graduates:

You can start full-time then go part-time then go online and back again. This is the learning journey concept [Interviewee N].

Interviewees referred to potential impact of Learning Journey output for supporting and illustrating discussions about expectations for learning opportunities within the QAA Quality Code. The sub-theme also explored strategically the HEW PVC group’s priority for supporting the sharing of learning resources between institutions.

Comments were noted for strategic impact through charting part-time student journeys, and incorporating support and pedagogy within learning and teaching strategies. The sub-theme – especially through its further education college partners- also succeeded in generating material that documented the experiences of non-traditional students. In so doing contributions were being made to widening access and employability plans.
People want to hear about impact and change rather than just talking about social inclusion. The philosophy is the same, it all comes down to people and their experiences and what works. This is employability and access coming together, because it is about motivation to learn [Interviewee N].

One interviewee considered more far-reaching impact for the sub-theme Learning Journeys on the entire higher education sector in Wales. This comment focused on significant merger activity between institutions, with Wales being recognized as succeeding with such transition through ongoing collaborative partnerships – Learner Journeys being one example.

Rather than getting embroiled in the details and the politics of mergers, we became a strategic enabler because we had a positive focus [Interviewee N].

In these discussions the journeys of staff as learners has been highlighted as an area for future exploration following their experiences of merger and institutional change.

**Inspiring Teaching related interview material**

Interviewees noted the importance of the biennial conference as a focal point for activity culminating in presentations and workshops by teams of staff and students. This extended to longer term plans for the 2016 conference, especially in relation to recording the learning journeys of staff, securing grants to resource project work, and co-authoring articles or books.

The group has gathered evidence from university PGCertHE programmes and continuing professional development frameworks associated especially with the HEA accreditation and fellowship programmes. This work has extended a former smaller network of universities that developed PGCertHE awards, and it has reached out beyond lecturers to staff who support teaching and learning. The overall value of the work strand was the power of networking throughout Wales:

Some of us had never sat down to talk together in that format. We had discussed things as individuals and now there is more dialogue between practitioners and the educational developers [Interviewee C].

Interview data noted that work strand discussions went beyond the initial FDSG interpretations of Global Graduates: Enabling flexible learning:

The HEA’s take on flexible learning seems to focus on internet technologies to deliver the learning, but this has been a minor element in the discussions that the strand has had. Also, as Prof. Ron Barnett pointed out at the April conference, flexible learning has a much wider definition than this. [Interviewee C].

Individuals noted the interest of the group in exploring video productions for the learning journeys of staff as they develop their teaching practices, coupled with an awareness of the need to go beyond more conventional and widespread support and recognition activities within the sector:

We have discussed whether PGCertHE and excellence awards provide what academics truly need to support the development of their teaching and how we might better understand the learning journey of developing teachers in HE [Interviewee C].

The planning of a video project was valued as one way of capturing narratives about this journey. Interviewees noted how many of the 2014 conference sessions were related to Inspiring Teaching themes, although it was difficult to identify them specifically for impact purposes:
Although we were harvesting case studies and themes they were not tagged as belonging to a particular strand or theme. It was not easy to identify each session as belonging somewhere [Interviewee C].

The imbalance between research and teaching as a pathway for advancement of academic staff within universities was highlighted, with the need for culture change. One interviewee concluded that the recent development of HEA accredited frameworks for recognising continuing development – if implemented in detail by institutions – can be a powerful mechanism for altering the culture and perceptions around teaching development. An emerging outcome for the Inspiring Teaching sub-theme involves the creation of more connections between Welsh universities with regard to their frameworks.

**Impact summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>All universities contributed to the 2014 conference, including teams of staff and students working together. All universities have been involved with one or more of the sub-theme working groups. Discussions and planning included QAA, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Centre for Recording Achievement, GO Wales, Jisc RSC, HEW, HEFCW and NUS Wales. The sub-theme work strands have recruited many new institution representatives, rather than relying on transferral of membership from the former work strands. The involvement of PGCertHE practitioners through the Inspiring Teaching sub-theme. There has been limited representation from the Further Education sector. The Students as Partners Network has established advanced connections with WISE for the administration of the network. Numerous disciplines and subject areas have been involved in the production of material including science, geography, pharmacy, education, law, business, health, mathematics, social science, interior design, care science, creative industries, history and classics, dental technology, and midwifery. External Input to the 2014 National Conference has been achieved for the Institute of Education, the Centre for Recording Achievement, and Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Birmingham City, Worcester and Manchester Metropolitan universities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence for output</td>
<td>Minutes from 12 sub-theme meetings. Three sets of FDSG minutes containing specific Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning agenda items. HEA 2014 biennial conference programme and delegate feedback. Eight institutional enhancement projects reports. Seven semi-structured interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>The creation of three new sub-theme work strands. The two-day 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning conference. The launch of the Students as Partners Network. The production of a detailed video loop containing student story and learner journey audio and video material. 84 sessions at the 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning conference. The creation of Learner Journey blog sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>2014 annual conference feedback noted very high levels of satisfaction: • 42.2% ‘satisfied’ and 43.8% ‘very satisfied’ with the content; • 12.5% ‘satisfied’ and 71.9% ‘very satisfied’ with the administration. Interviewee feedback notes satisfaction with the progress of the new work strands and the overall Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and inclusion</td>
<td>Inclusion within the new programme of priorities for change and development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Understanding of change at individual, institutional, and sector levels

Through consultation with the following sector bodies:
- **Higher Education Wales:** the financial challenges of fees and funding, advances in global digital information, the democratisation of higher education, and public accountability.
- **The QAA:** the international dimension, and engagement with employers and students.
- **NUS Wales:** value for money, access and flexibility, students as active partners in their learning.
- **HEFCW:** the importance of enhancement as well as regulation, communicating effectively the purpose of a degree, collaboration, and meeting Welsh Government priorities in a business context.

The importance of generating appealing multimedia material for recording student and staff experiences via Learner Journeys.

The effectiveness of partnership working between academic staff and careers services via Distinctive Graduates.

Graduate attribute enhancement outcomes from Scotland.

The importance of developing understanding of the distinctiveness of graduates from Welsh universities, including the concept to cultural agility.

Engagement with open education resources associated with OERu.

The importance of focusing on flexible learning that extends beyond the application of new technologies via Inspiring Teaching.

The need to embed student engagement and representation though the Students as Partners network.

The continuing challenge of securing extensive student involvement in curriculum design and the planning of assessment.

The expansion of internship schemes.

### Unintended, indirect, or negative outcomes

The potential lack of clarity with the new sub-theme titles and confusion with the old work strands.

Under-representation of the further education sector in some of the sub-theme groups.

### Inspired / effective teaching and learning

Feedback from the 2014 Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning conference noted that 75% of delegates who returned evaluation forms stated that they would ‘change their practice’.

Content analysis of qualitative comments noted the following four prominent themes concerning intended actions following the conference:
- networking and building a community of practice;
- exploring new learning and teaching methods, including new technologies and curriculum design;
- strategic planning of learning and teaching at subject, department institution, and sector levels – including quality assurance;
- sector reach including links to colleges, employment and universities outside Wales.

22 conference sessions addressed teaching and learning innovation at subject or discipline levels.

Seven institutional team enhancement projects addressed areas relevant to Inspiring Teaching.

Nine conference sessions were led by teams of staff and students working together.

### Recognition and reward of effective teaching and learning

The exploration and active promotion of HEA accredited programmes including fellowships schemes.

The development of PGCertHE frameworks.

Employability awards in four universities.

Supporting the development of SLTAs.

The planning of video material for staff learner journeys via Inspiring Teaching.

The Students as Partners Network has developed procedures through identifying
| Changes to procedures and structures | The introduction of online meetings by sub-theme working groups. Contributions by sub-theme work strands to institutional learning and teaching strategies, and skills and employability action plans. Institutional quality assurance monitoring and action plans linked to QAA Quality Code expectations and indicators for enhancement and employability. |
| Changes in culture or policy          | Agreement of overall Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning and associated sub-themes through close dialogue between Future Directions and the HEW PVC Learning and Teaching Group. Revisiting and revising previous employability statements produced for HEFCW. |
Appendix E: the Future Directions Events Programme

Milestone events
The Future Directions programme included 10 milestone events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date/Venue</th>
<th>No. delegates</th>
<th>Feedback responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales – Designing for Diversity and flexibility</td>
<td>15 October, Aberystwyth University</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions: Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology</td>
<td>12 April 2011, University of Glamorgan</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions: Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Workshop</td>
<td>13 April 2011, University of Glamorgan</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions Foundation Degrees: where Policy meets Practice</td>
<td>29 February 2012, University of Glamorgan</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaugural Future Directions Conference – Graduates for our Future</td>
<td>26 April 2012, Glyndwr University</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students as Partners in Practice</td>
<td>28 November 2012, University of Glamorgan</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions for Skills and Employability</td>
<td>15 May 2013, University of Glamorgan</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions: Identifying the Next Enhancement Theme</td>
<td>6 June 2013, University of South Wales, Caerleon Campus</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Closed event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Directions: Global Graduates Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning</td>
<td>2-3 April 2014, Aberystwyth University</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Externality
These events included contributions from the following external organisations and individuals:
- Andrea Nolan, University of Glasgow [event 3];
- Celia Hunt, HEFCW [event 3];
- Helen May and Liz Thomas, HEA [event 3];
- HEFCW [event 4];
- Barbara Edwards, QAA [Event 5];
- Gavin Thomas and John Graystone Colegau Cymru [Event 5];
- Jeff Cuthbert Welsh Government [Event 5];
- Ann Baxter and John Rowe Newcastle College [Event 5];
- David Parry HE Consultant [Event 5];
- Phil Gummett HEFCW [Event 5];
- Prof Craig Mahoney HEA [Event 6];
- Dr Victoria Gunn University of Glasgow [Event 6];
- Rhiannon Hedge Swansea University SU [Event 6];
- Dr Dafydd Trystan CCC (Event 6);
- NUS Wales [Event 7];
- Dr Annett Loescher QAA [Event 8];
- WCVA [Event 8];
- Graduate recruiter [Event 8];
- Professor Ron Barnett Institute of Education [event 10];
- Professor Shan Waring Buckinghamshire New University [event 10];
- External members of conference committees;
- Brigitte Stockton, QAA [event 10];
- Howard Colley Academic Associate, HEA.

Satisfaction
Conference, workshop and seminar feedback has been collected over the four year period, with responses from delegates and participants being summarised in tables E1 – E6.

Table E1: “Communication channel for learning about the event”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of communication</th>
<th>Percentages for events with eligible data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event 1 (N= 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>web</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twitter</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colleague</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E2: “Level of satisfaction with the content of the event”
(1 – not satisfied at all; 5 – very satisfied)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Percentages for events with eligible data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table E3 "Level of satisfaction with administration for the event"  
(1 – not satisfied at all; 5 – very satisfied)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plans to change practice

Six events involved asking delegates about their plans to change their professional practice following the conference or workshop.

Table E4 “Planning to do things differently/change professional practice”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentages for events with eligible data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative feedback provided more detailed insight into potential impact through responses to questions about what Future Directions delegates especially valued, with plans to change their professional practices. The frequencies of individual comments were clustered into categories through the use of content analysis:

Table E5: Content analysis themes for conference feedback about planned changed to professional practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency count by event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking and building a community of practice</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring new learning and teaching methods, including new technologies and curriculum design</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning of learning and teaching at subject, department institution, and sector levels - including quality assurance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications of learning and teaching to social inclusion and widening access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating and researching learning and teaching innovations and practices</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector reach including links to colleges, employment and universities outside Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer engagement including higher apprenticeships and work based learning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected quotations from feedback:

Cascade to colleagues and discuss in appropriate committees and learning groups. Also include some aspects into research strategy [Event 2].

This event has been a bit of an eye opener as to how much funding HEIs have received over the last three years to enhance L&T, through technology that FECs could badly use to replicate similar practices across the FEI sector in Wales. [Event 2].

The different dimensions of the graduate attributes scheme at Glasgow [Event 3].

Useful to involve students in the discussion [Event 3].

Look for opportunities to involve experiential learning into accredited provision [Event 5].

Network in more depth with other institutions [Event 5].

Focus on the QAA review (Event 5).

Follow up with the relevant SSCs on their involvement in FD development for higher apprenticeship framework development in Wales [Event 5].

Think about handovers and continuity for student led initiatives [Event 6].

I will use the content from the second workshop for a “Lunch and Learn” staff development event in our University [Event 6].

Consider writing an article [Event 6].

Inform colleagues, reflect on what my organisation needs to take to inform its work for the future [Event 6].

Disseminate some of the issues to the university’s teaching and learning roundtable [Event 6].

I will try and engage 3rd year students to support skills training in 1st/2nd years [Event 6].

This will feed into our Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee [Event 6].

I think it would benefit students in participating more in programme design [Event 6].

Ideas will feed into the Academic Affairs Committee [Event 6].

The case studies will be useful for the Academy of Teaching Fellows Conference we are planning for December [Event 6].

Gaining relevant information to inform future policy making [Event 8].

We would have worked on definitions earlier [SaP feedback to question about whether they would have done anything differently, Event 9].

Probably not, the process has grown and evolved with time [LfE feedback to question about whether they would have done anything differently, Event 9].
No, the recent turbulence of the sector could not have been predicted when the work strands were established [LiE feedback to question about whether they would have done anything differently, Event 9].

How do we move away from dissemination to embedding [page 3; Event 9].

Future Directions is gaining prominence across the UK [HEFCW feedback page 5 Event 9].

The project benefited from discussion with high level stakeholders which in turn may benefit our institutions [Event 10].

Concept of individual epistemology, how it impacts on approaches to teaching is something I will share with colleagues [Event 10].

The enthusiasm of the students was clear to the senior management of the school [Event 10].

I hope to become even more involved with the HEA and wish to apply to be a student reviewer [Event 10].

I would like to start a journal for undergraduate researchers for the next academic year [Event 10].

Setting up an undergraduate essay database for the best essays [Event 10].

I will be more vigilant of the HEA website because having been to this HEA conference I am keen to go to more events [Event 10].

The 2014 Conference

The Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning (April 2014) provides the most recent snapshot of activity for strands and new sub-themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>submission title</th>
<th>submission type</th>
<th>work strand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing medical students’ employment prospects in rural and remote Wales</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging and transition: a post-graduate experience</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Belonging Cube</td>
<td>Nano-teach</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Mapping as a Teaching and Assessment Tool</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and Employability Mindset</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Decision-making</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Employability – Self-Regulated Learning and the development of a Graduate</td>
<td>Nano-teach</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability Indicator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who care and their learning journeys to HE.</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students as future workers or future citizens?</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of online formative exercises for the development of skills in writing a</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scientific literature review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining the dots: bringing together a variety of staff development strands in</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support of learning, teaching and assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Professionals Stand out from the crowd</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>LiE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in and for the workplace - technologies that deliver</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>LfE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student led curriculum for experiencing employability</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>LfE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Badges – New Opportunities</td>
<td>Nano-teach</td>
<td>LfE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing graduate attributes and skills across the institution</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>DG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting classroom engagement with all students – Communicubes</td>
<td>Nano-teach</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting the Gordian Knot: rethinking progression</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Lj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online asynchronous thinking reinforces student learning</td>
<td>Nano-teach</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Online Assessment in Post Graduate Level 7, Healthcare Education</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing Decay-A novel partnership between students and staff to maintain dental undergraduate practical skills over time</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>SaP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping staff perceptions of the impact that having international students has on teaching practices</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Lj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting communication skills in Pharmacy students – students inspiring teaching</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of Blog Assessments to Evaluate Learners’ Knowledge, Understanding and Application of the Biopsychosocial Model, in the Management of Chronic Pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing you’re there: analysing technological engagement to enhance retention and success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using Student Dialogue Sheets to Inspire Teaching</td>
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<td>Developing students’ employability skills – helping them stand out from the crowd</td>
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<tr>
<td>An empirical examination of the relationship between student motivation to study</td>
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and the perception that such efforts will enhance employment prospects

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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging Staff in Student Engagement</td>
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<td>Career Central – an online careers resource – Its creation, use and development</td>
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<td>From Concept at Delivery: The Highs and Lows of The Cardiff Award</td>
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<td>Learn-While-Doing and Do-While-Learning: Integrating Enterprise Skills within Education</td>
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<td>‘By students for students: Co-facilitating professional values in the classroom’</td>
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<td>Mindfulness in Higher Education: the work-based learning experience</td>
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<td>Distance learners are different, so what makes for successful distance learning?</td>
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<td>LfE / LfE / DG</td>
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<td>Flexible learning for the early childhood sector. Developing flexible learning higher education for those already in working with young children and families.</td>
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<td>The Student Researcher: Partnership in the journey of an undergraduate research journal</td>
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<td>SaP / DG / LfE / LJ</td>
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<td>Enabling Technology for effective learning engagement.</td>
<td>Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take It Easy Darling, It Is Games Not Mathematics</td>
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<td>Developing and Supporting a Flexible Curriculum: a participatory workshop</td>
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<td>Making a difference: the Higher Education Achievement Report: supporting employability and career development in Wales and beyond.</td>
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<td>The Journey from Research to Teaching.</td>
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<td>Dimensions of Excellence: exploring recognition of teaching and learning in Higher Education.</td>
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<td>Wise and working towards partnership</td>
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<td>Defining &amp; developing your approach to employability: a framework for higher education institutions</td>
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<td>Creating an Employer responsive curriculum</td>
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<td>Employability and Skills enhancement Student internship Project</td>
<td>Paper</td>
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<td>Student Engagement – A pilot Survey</td>
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<td>SaP / LJ</td>
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<td>Students and digital innovation: what can we learn from recent projects?</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>SaP / DG / LJ</td>
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<td>Epistemological journeys: discussion of an ‘ideal’ to promote inspiring teaching</td>
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<td>IT</td>
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<td>SPIN &amp; WoW: Swansea’s University’s new placement programmes</td>
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<td>Inclusive education: ensuring a positive learning experience for students from Welsh medium education</td>
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<td>Student Voice in Governance</td>
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<td>Using student-friendly electronic interfaces to enhance the learner journey: From application to graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Led Teaching Awards – what why how outcomes, future actions</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>SaP</td>
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<td>Student Stories</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>SaP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valuing Experiential Learning: Empowering the Learner Journey</td>
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</table>
Appendix F: The interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule explored a set of 10 questions about change and development for learning and teaching within the higher education sector, mapping key themes from the HEA Impact Assessment Framework:

1. What happened within your work strand/project/sub-theme/institution or organisation - [Impact themes: output and outcomes].
2. What information was gathered along the way, and were any baselines used [Impact themes: evidence/data].
3. How did your colleagues and students respond to the programme – did they find it appealing, challenging, relevant [Impact themes: reach and satisfaction].
4. Looking back on the past 3 years what in your opinion were the main positive outcomes for your own work [Impact themes: awareness/understanding/change].
5. Sometimes outcomes can be more difficult to identify; were there any that in your opinion were more unexpected [Impact themes: Unintended/Indirect/Negative].
6. In what ways has this work influenced learning and teaching [Impact theme: inspired effective teaching and learning].
7. In what ways has it rewarded staff and students [Impact themes: recognised and rewarded effective teaching and learning].
8. In what ways has it led to changes to procedures and systems used within your institution or organisation [Impact theme: change to procedures and structures].
9. In what ways has it contributed to more widespread change in the sector [Impact themes of change in culture or policy].
10. And finally, what for you is around the corner with this work, what is happening next.

Eleven interviews involved face-to-face meetings with the remaining five completed via telephone, with all individuals receiving a question schedule in advance. All interviewees were assured that notes from the discussions would be confidential, with any direct quotations used within the final report being anonymised.

Interviews were completed between the 21st May – 17th July, and all individuals provided their kind permission for inclusion of their names within the final report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution or Organisation</th>
<th>Title and level of involvement with Future Directions</th>
<th>Telephone (T) or Face-to-face (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lizzie Badrick</td>
<td>HEA Wales</td>
<td>Policy and Partnerships Officer</td>
<td>F (group interview with Helena Lim and Cara Marcheselli)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haydn Blackey</td>
<td>University of South Wales</td>
<td>Director of CELT; FDSG and SaP</td>
<td>F (group interview with Karen Fitzgibbon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Howard Colley</td>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Academic Associate and FDSG</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Karen Fitzgibbon</td>
<td>University of South Wales</td>
<td>Faculty Head of Student Experience and LiE strand leader</td>
<td>F (group interview with Haydn Blackey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor John Grattan</td>
<td>Aberystwyth University</td>
<td>Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience and HEW PVC Learning and Teaching Advisory Group</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Ingram</td>
<td>Cardiff University</td>
<td>Senior Student Cases Officer, Cardiff University; QAA student engagement advisor; SaP strand leader</td>
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</table>

39 Interviewees have been randomly referenced through letters A-P for specific quotations
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graham Lewis</td>
<td>Aberystwyth University</td>
<td>Coordinator of the Centre for the Development of Staff and Academic Practice; Inspiring Teaching strand leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Helena Lim</td>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Wales and Northern Ireland Head of Partnerships</td>
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<td>Cara Marcheselli</td>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Policy and Events Intern (Wales)</td>
<td>F (group interview with Helena Lim and Lizzie Badrick)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Cliona O’Neil</td>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Head of Student Experience and FDSG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Colleen Connor</td>
<td>Cardiff Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Nick Potter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Jo Smedley</td>
<td>University of South Wales</td>
<td>Head of Flexible Development and Student Success; Learner Journey strand leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brigitte Stockton</td>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Peter Treadwell</td>
<td>Cardiff Met</td>
<td>Consultant, Centre for Work Based Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lloyd Williams</td>
<td>University of South Wales</td>
<td>Senior Careers Adviser and Distinctive Graduates strand leader</td>
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Appendix G: Attendance of Future Directions Steering and Working Group Meetings

The anonymised rank order (for % attendance of the total number of 39 Future Directions meetings 2010-2014) of 15 stakeholder organisations, including all universities plus Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Further Education, HEFCW, JISC, NUS Wales and the QAA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>FDSG (max = 10)</th>
<th>LiE strand (max = 6)</th>
<th>LiE strand (max = 5)</th>
<th>SaP strand (max = 8)</th>
<th>LJs (max = 4)</th>
<th>IT sub theme (max = 4)</th>
<th>DG sub theme (max = 240)</th>
<th>Total (max = 39)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Two further meetings were convened but information about attendees was not available
### Appendix H: Examples of statements from sector bodies identifying specific Future Directions activities and themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector Body</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Quality Assessment and Enhancement Sub-Group of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee 19 March 2012</td>
<td>7.2 Members queried why the QAA project proposal for a strategic approach to supporting enhancement in the Welsh HE sector was not being led by the HE Academy. The QAA confirmed that this was because the proposal was based on the emerging Quality Code for Higher Education, would focus on the quality enhancement dimension of the QAA’s activities, and would not duplicate HE Academy activity. They confirmed that the FDSG had been supportive of this approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee: 30/05/12</td>
<td>7.3 Members noted that the future directions quality enhancement theme considered part-time learners, in particular the strand on Learning in Employment.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| HEFCW       | Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Quality Assessment and Enhancement Sub-Group of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) 17 September 2012                                           | The HE Academy provided an update of their quality enhancement activities since the last meeting:  
- The ‘Future Directions’ conference was held on 26 April 2012. All aspects of the academic programme were rated positively and this was re-iterated by members;  
- The Steering Group had met in June 2012 to discuss the next steps. It was agreed that the theme and three work strands would remain for another year but with more cross working between the three strands where possible;  
- A student-focused event was planned for November 2012, in South Wales, to showcase work across the three strands.  
- NUS Wales reported they were happy with the HE Academy’s progress in quality enhancement in the sector.  
The HE Academy were looking to engage in joint events moving forward and had events planned for 2013 with bodies including the QAA and The Open University.  
The QAA and HE Academy were working collaboratively to produce a follow-on study of quality enhancement activities, based on contributions and outcomes from the 2012 Future Directions conference, with a focus on Learning in employment and Learning for employment. An event was planned in Spring 2013 to discuss the project outcomes. |
| HEFCW       | Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Quality Assessment and Enhancement Subgroup of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee, 21 March 2013.                                                      | 5.11 Members noted the proposal to brand the joint QAA/HEA event in May with Future Directions and WISE.                                                                                               |
| HEFCW       | Minutes of the 7th meeting of the Quality Assessment and Enhancement Subgroup (QAESG) of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC), 20 September 2013.                                        | 4.3 A joint QAA-HEA Future Directions event had been arranged for 27 November at the University of South Wales to share good practice in the delivery of Foundation Degrees and reflect on what was learned from the process. All agreed that within the outcomes report, institutions with areas of good practice would be identified for ease of dissemination. Barbara Edwards would launch the report and FEIs should receive the reports through their HEI franchise partner. It was important that concerns raised in reports regarding sustainability of provision were covered at the event. |
| HEFCW       | Minutes of the 8th meeting                                                                                                                                                                                 | 7.1 The group was updated on quality enhancement activities in the sector including the                                                                                            |

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41 With grateful thanks to HEFCW and QAA officers for advice where appropriate
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reference/Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14: Initial Guidance</td>
<td>1 December 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Mechanisms for Supporting the Enhancement of Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>19 January 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Guidance on the development of student charters</td>
<td>21 September 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Higher Education Review: Wales - A handbook for providers</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Government</td>
<td>Policy statement on higher education</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
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</table>

Page 9: Right across the sector, HE institutions are making great strides towards enhancing graduate employability, and enhancing learning in the workplace. Since 2010, the pan-Wales quality-enhancement programme Future Directions has co-ordinated by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) has collected and shared good practice across the sector.

Page 8: Initial Guidance to 2013/14: A handbook for providers

The 2009/10 grant letter from HEFCW also requested that the Academy prepare a quality enhancement action plan for Wales, in collaboration with Higher Education Wales, identifying short term and longer term enhancement activities. Through the proposals set out in this circular we propose to take a more focused approach to the identification of priorities. The aim of this is to encourage a more co-ordinated response and identification of development activities throughout Wales.

Up to 2013/14: A handbook for providers

Page 24 - We encourage institutions to work together on quality enhancement including through the ‘Future Directions’ quality enhancement themes. We will work with higher education providers to ensure that they engage effectively with the UK Professional Standards Framework and the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Page 23 - The Higher Education Academy is able to provide support to institutions in their development of Student Charters on request.

Page 22. The provider prepares a specific self-evaluation document for the review. The review team will also look at the effectiveness of the provider’s ongoing internal self-evaluations, and to their engagement with Future Directions, the national quality enhancement themes in Wales.

Section 6: Enhancement of students’ learning opportunities:

Reference the evidence that your organisation uses to assure itself that this expectation is being met and that it is managing enhancement effectively. Also reference any relevant benchmarked datasets. Particular reference should be made here to the institution’s engagement with Future Directions.

Page 21 – The Higher Education Academy has collected and shared good practice across the sector.

Page 21 – Universities in Wales have also made great progress in enhancing the student learning experience for those learning in employment. Future Directions has also

Page 21 – It was reported that the work strands of the new quality enhancement theme, Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning, had met several times in the lead up to the Future Direction conference in April. The conference would officially launch the new work strands and bring an end to the previous work strands. A Future Directions newsletter would promote the work strands to a wider audience across Wales and the rest of the UK.

Question 16: Members agreed that good practice arising from institutional reviews should be fed into the Future Directions biennial conference and ongoing Future Directions work. The QAA and HEA should liaise on the best methods to achieve this.
focused on the accreditation of part, or all, of a student’s learning programme through formal recognition of experience in the workplace. Innovative practice already in evidence in Wales includes efforts to develop a formal academic qualification for learning support assistants in local schools, giving students a taste of real 'live' research, and enabling students to access an employer-focused modular curriculum through flexible learning approaches.

Page 25 : Higher Education Academy (HEA): The HEA has been developing quality enhancement in Wales through the Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales, working closely with HEIs, students and sector agencies. The enhancement theme ‘Graduates For Our Future’ was developed to support the sector in addressing the Welsh Government’s twin priorities of delivering social justice and supporting a buoyant economy. There are three strands: Students as Partners; Learning in Employment; and Learning for Employment, celebrated and showcased at the Inaugural Future Directions conference in Spring 2012.

The Future Directions programme has also been delivered through a range of sector events including ‘Future Directions: Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology’ in April 2011, and ‘Future Directions: Foundation Degrees – where policy meets practice’ in February 2012. All Welsh HEIs, students’ unions and key sector agencies are involved in the work, in a variety of ways, for example through membership of the FDSG, membership of the three work strand groups, submitting case studies, disseminating the work through networks, and participating in the Future Directions events.
Appendix I: Case studies authored by lead university

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An additional four case studies came from colleges within the further education sector.
Appendix J: Source references

A. HEA Future Directions meetings:


Learning for Employment Meeting Notes: 9 September 2011; 26 July 2011; 14 October 2011; 27 January 2012; 23 October 2012.


B. HEA Future Directions reports for the Steering Group and work strands:


Listening to the heart (Porter A 2011).


Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales – Next Steps (2012).

Towards a communications plan for Future Directions (2012).

The inaugural conference – a discussion paper (2012).

Enhancement timeline (2012).

Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales – the next steps (2012).

Student Stories: shaping the future of higher education in Wales (Horrocks S 2012).

The institutional team enhancement projects: review and impact assessment (Colley H 2014).

Students as Partners Network – HEA information leaflet (2014).
3. HEA Future Directions publications


Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching (2014) Future Directions enhancement project – Authentic Assessment Swansea University and HEA: Swansea.

4. HEA Future Directions Online resources (accessed 15 August 2014)

Future Directions Animation (HEA 2014) http://vimeo.com/69740318

Future Directions Students as Partners Animation (HEA 2014) http://vimeo.com/82088442

Future Directions Learning in Employment Animation (HEA 2014) http://vimeo.com/82088440

Future Directions Learning for employment Animation (HEA 2014) http://vimeo.com/82088435

Future Directions main webpage (HEA 2014) http://wales.heacademy.ac.uk/wales/future-directions

HEA (2011a) Future directions for higher education in Wales

Future Directions Conference Materials (HEA 2014)

Future Directions: Designing for Diversity and Flexibility (HEA 2010)
http://wales.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2010/academyevents/15_October_2010_Future_Directions_for_Higher_Education_in_Wales

Future Directions: Foundation Degrees, University of Glamorgan (HEA 2012)
http://wales.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2012/academyevents/29_Feb_2012_Future_directions_event

Event Notes for Future Directions: Foundation Degrees – where policy meets practice (2012)

Future Directions Graduates for Our Future (HEA 2012) Programme
http://wales.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/events/academyevents/2012/Graduates_For_Our_Future_conference_programme_4.pdf

5. Other Sources


The Higher Education Academy (HEA) is the national body for learning and teaching in higher education. We work with universities and other higher education providers to bring about change in learning and teaching. We do this to improve the experience that students have while they are studying, and to support and develop those who teach them. Our activities focus on rewarding and recognising excellence in teaching, bringing together people and resources to research and share best practice, and by helping to influence, shape and implement policy – locally, nationally, and internationally.

The HEA has knowledge, experience and expertise in higher education. Our service and product range is broader than any other competitor.