

Lots happening this week, in particular the next steps on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

- Perhaps in anticipation of the TEF response, and also in response to Stern's proposal to include impact on teaching in its review of the REF "[What does research-informed teaching \(RIT\) look like?](#)" was published by the University Alliance and the Higher Education Academy. This issue has generated a lot of literature but this gives five case studies of what it looks like in practice
- Sadly the TEF specification has made it clear that case studies cannot help in the TEF – where evidence must show impact at an institutional level.

Here are the links to the [TEF response](#) and [specification for the TEF process](#). Some highlights:

- ratings are Bronze, Silver and Gold
- from Year Three awards will lead to differentiated fees depending on the rating (a provider can re-enter TEF in future years to obtain a new award), So an institution that receives a Bronze award in year 2 will be able to increase their fees by inflation in 2018/19 but in 2019/20 will be allowed to apply 50% of the inflation increase – unless they reapply and receive a higher rating in year 3.
- there will be subject level pilots in year 3 - PGT will only be included from year 4
- the highly-skilled employment metric will be included in learning outcomes – using DLHE not a different metric
- helpful guidance (ahead of the detailed guidance) on the written submission:
  - “The emphasis in the provider submission should be on demonstrating the **impact and effectiveness of teaching on the student experience and outcomes they achieve**. The submission should therefore avoid focusing on descriptions of strategies or approach but instead should focus on impact.”
  - “Assessors will be looking for evidence of how far a provider demonstrates teaching and learning excellence **across its entire provision**. The submission should therefore avoid focusing on successful but highly localised practices that affect a relatively small number of students studying on particular courses or in particular departments.”

We are mentioned in the commendations section of the response. There has been a lot of coverage, but an [interesting Wonkhe article](#) sums up the general feeling.

Earlier in the week, the [new NSS questions came out](#). Some of these questions are likely to feed directly into the TEF from year 3– e.g. the new learning opportunities section which fits into the learning environment section of the TEF “aspects of quality”. A number of questions have been amended and there are some new questions:

- “My course has challenged me to achieve my best work”
- A new section in learning opportunities
- A new section on learning community
- A new section on student voice

This is in response to the consultation and should mean that the NSS results are more useful and perhaps more reflective of experiences – watch this space. There will be a further consultation in autumn 2017 on optional questions including redeveloped questions

on personal development, on employability, entrepreneurship and careers, as well on support for specific student learning needs and on wellbeing.

Hays have issued their 2016 Global Skills Index [reported in the FT this week](#) highlighting that the skills shortage has worsened for the fifth year in a row.

- ““What was previously a skills gap is fast becoming a skills chasm,” said Alistair Cox, chief executive of Hays, the recruitment company that produced the report with consultancy Oxford Economics. “There is an acute lack of graduates and trained professionals with the right skills to fill open posts and too little is being done to incentivise courses and training in subject areas that are notoriously short on skills. Equally, not enough is being done by the government to make it easier for businesses to access talent in the specific areas they need to recruit.” Shortages are most pronounced in technical engineering, specialist technology and professional finance roles.”

A German academic exchange service (DAAD) has warned in [an article in the Guardian](#) that 15% of EU staff based at UK universities may leave and highlights that some are already leaving/

- “More than 5,200 Germans are among the 32,000 non-British EU academics that make up 17% of UK university teaching and research posts. At higher-ranking institutions, the figure tops 20%. They include some of the leading researchers in the country: more than half the European research council’s prestigious mid-career grants in the UK are held by EU researchers.
- “The pro-remain campaign group [Scientists for EU](#), which has been collecting evidence on the impact of the Brexit vote, said it has received more than 430 responses, including nearly 30 cases of EU nationals turning down UK jobs or withdrawing applications, and eight of EU academics who were working in Britain and have left.
- “The group also received 40 reports from British members of international research projects, who were being asked by their EU partners to scale down their role or withdraw from the consortium altogether, and nearly 50 reports citing xenophobia as a concern. Several people said they had personally experienced abuse, such as being told to go home.”

Sir Ian Diamond published his independent review of higher education [funding and student finance arrangements in Wales](#). The proposals include removing the tuition fee bursary so that Welsh students pay £9000 tuition fees funded by student loans as in England, but increasing the availability of support for maintenance – and has raised questions about why the same can’t be done in England, as well as questions of affordability. Wonkhe has lots of analysis including a useful [summary](#).

Current calls for evidence are listed [here](#) and include:

- The role and priorities of UK Research and Innovation
- Disability and the built environment
- Forestry in England
- UK’s relations with Turkey
- Corporate Governance
- Impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism and the digital single market