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About HEPI

- UK's only specialist higher education think tank
- Non-partisan charity, based in Oxford
- Supported by 120 HEIs across the UK & trusted corporates with a long-term commitment to work with the sector
- Busy events programme – e.g. annual conference, roundtables, policy briefing days, parliamentary debates
- Lively blog – recent posts on wellbeing, grade inflation and tuition fees (write one for us and sign up! www.hepi.ac.uk)
- Published 18 research-led policy papers in 2017

Rebooting learning for the digital age: What next for technology-enhanced higher education?

Sarah Davies, Joel Mullan, Paul Feldman

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HEPI Report 93

Reforming BTECs: Applied General qualifications as a route to higher education

Scott Kelly

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HEPI Report 94

Return on investment? How universities communicate with the outside world

Richard Garner
With a Foreword from Alistair Jarvis

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Occasional Paper 16

Whither Teacher Education and Training?

John Cater

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Misunderstanding Technical and Professional Education: Six Category Mistakes

Mary Curnock Cook, former Chief Executive of UCAS

HEPI Policy Note 1 — June 2017

When the late Sir David Watson wrote about Category Mistakes in higher education he was providing a commentary on a high-stakes sector about which the public and policymakers care deeply for political, economic and societal reasons. In revisiting his approach, this time for Technical and Professional Education, we are touching on an area of education policy that has historically had such low stakes that it has been largely ignored and arguably underpowered and underfunded over many decades.

Now, however, a different approach to skills is widely regarded as central to a new industrial strategy, critical to the post-Brexit economy. For example, it featured as a key policy previewing the Budget in March 2017.

Back in 2016 and following the *Sainsbury Review of Skills*, the Government published the *Post-16 Skills Plan*. More recently the development of new post-16 technical qualifications, called T-Levels, has been announced. There are to be 15 technical routes covering a range of sectors which, according

prepare individuals for skilled
pations which require both a
echnical knowledge and a set
ed by industry.'

expectation that each route
prestigious, high-quality offer
itive informed choice.' If this
rovide a credible alternative
academic route of GCSEs and
o offer clear appeal to young
d foundering as quickly and

comprehensively as many earlier skills initiatives, it will need to confront the category mistakes of the past.

1. Parity of esteem

In his Budget speech, the Chancellor said:

there is still a lingering doubt about the parity of esteem attaching to technical education pursued through the Further Education route. Today we end that doubt for good, with the introduction of T-Levels.

However, the quest for parity of esteem between T-Levels and A-Levels may be a false promise and a self-defeating goal. It is as meaningless to compare A-Level Art with A-Level Physics as it is to compare precision welding with parsing Shakespeare, though both undoubtedly require high-level skills.

If these new technical routes are to have credibility among young people, parents and teachers, then the critical ingredient is currency for progression to employment or further learning. When they are routinely requested by employers and proudly stated on CVs, they will have achieved the status they need. This will happen if the
engender is valuable and the
regulated and rigorous. There shou
for them to be unhelpfully benchm
A-Levels which have a different
structure.

2. Public understanding

The enduring currency of GCSEs
has been underpinned by high le

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A crisis in the creative arts in the UK?

Professor John Last, Vice-Chancellor, Norwich University of the Arts

HEPI Policy Note 2 — September 2017

Recent higher education debates have focused on the direct economic returns of obtaining a degree – and certain degrees in particular. Taking one county as an example, this report reveals the knock-on effect for the options available in schools. In short, creative disciplines are under attack.

Many people believe new developments, such as better longitudinal data on graduate employment outcomes, will lead to an excessive focus on the monetary returns of different educational options. This risks a less diverse school system and a poorer match between pupils' attributes and their education.

Using the findings of new research among schools in Norfolk, the Vice-Chancellor of one of the UK's specialist institutions shows exactly why this would be such a big mistake. The nation's cultural life would suffer but so too, eventually, would the very economic success that everyone wants to boost.

Introduction

A flawed equation dominates thinking about the economic value of education in the UK. According to this equation, improving literacy and numeracy equals economic prosperity and individual prosperity. Creating art or appreciating artistic endeavour is seen as producing a nation with an enriched cultural and social life, and a possible route to personal fulfilment.

But there is a flaw in the logic that says *to count* is to be economically productive, but to *create* is not.

To ignore the economic value of the arts and creative industries is to ignore an £84 billion annual
he UK economy, 1.7 million British
er cent share of the UK's export

aken by Norwich University of the
the consequences of this flawed
laying out in school classrooms.
play out in studios, workshops
paces within universities. The
ill then be felt by industry, in the
in the wider economy.

1. Replicating the STEM approach

Supporting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) has been a priority of successive governments since the Roberts Report of 2002 warned of waning pupil interest and attainment in these subjects in Britain's schools.[2]

Fifteen years on, while concerns remain about the recruitment of sufficient specialist teachers, there have been laudable efforts in the public, private and non-profit sectors, and notable successes, in supporting STEM subjects. Attainment in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics in England, Wales and Northern Ireland has improved, with increasing numbers of
A* to C grades at GCSE. Similar
students who opt to study Mat
Biology or Chemistry at A-Level
same period.[3]

However, the introduction
Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010
to make EBacc subjects compu
meant the prioritisation of STEM
other subjects. The EBacc defines
that should be studied as Engl

The Comprehensive University: An Alternative to Social Stratification by Academic Selection

Tim Blackman

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Occasional Paper 17

The Positive and Mindful University

Anthony Seldon and Alan Martin

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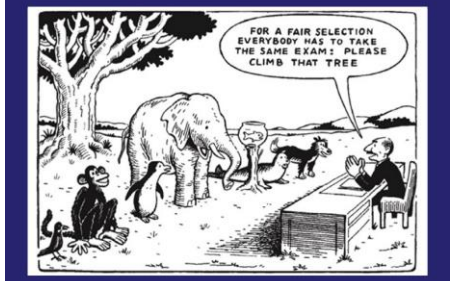
Occasional Paper 18

Where next for widening participation and fair access?

New insights from leading thinkers

With a Foreword from Professor Les Ebdon CBE DL



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Going for Gold: Lessons from the TEF provider submissions

Diana Beech

With a Foreword from Chris Husbands

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HEPI Report 99

How much is too much? Cross-subsidies from teaching to research in British universities

Vicky Olive

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HEPI Report 100

A Guide to UK League Tables in Higher Education

Sally Turnbull

HESPA

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HEPI Report 101

Major shifts in global higher education: A perspective from Asia

2017 HEPI Annual Lecture

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan

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HEPI Report 103

Differential tuition fees: Horses for courses?

Nick Hillman

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HEPI Report 104

Demand for Higher Education to 2030

Bahram Bekhradnia and Diana Beech

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Benchmarking widening participation: how should we measure and report progress?

Professor Iain Martin, Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University

HEPI Policy Note 6 — April 2018

Higher education participation

There is no doubt that access to quality higher education provides very real private benefits for students and a wider public good for the community. Widening participation to higher education has been a policy goal for much of the past 30 years in the UK and elsewhere, with policy changes having greatly increased participation. Young people's participation rates have grown from 10-15 per cent in the 1980s to over 45 per cent today.[1] This could be taken as an indication of 'job done'. But, despite this dramatic change, there are still enormous differences in participation rates in the UK, both across and within regional communities. For example, participation rates among school leavers vary by local authority, from between 23 per cent and 62 per cent.[2] There is continued political debate on achieving a more equitable balance.

POLAR

The best measure on equity of participation in the UK is the POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) system. Based on the higher education participation rates for individual areas, the POLAR system ranks wards according to their participation rates and then divides them into five groups (quintiles), each of which holds an equal proportion of the young cohort. The quintiles are numbered 1 to 5, with quintile 1 areas having the lowest participation rates and quintile 5 the highest.

For any one institution the current measure generates five numbers showing the proportion of their total intake from each quintile.

Gini

How should we report these five numbers? An approach that describes, reproducibly, how equitable a university's admission profile is would have value. There are lessons from other fields where reproducible measures of equitable access to resources are important.

One of the most commonly used such measures is the Gini index or Gini coefficient. This is a statistical measure of distribution developed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini in 1912. It is used to assess economic inequality, measuring income distribution across a population. The coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 representing complete equality and 1 representing perfect inequality. A country in which every resident had the same income would score 0 and a country in which one resident earned all the income would score 1.

Graphically, the Gini coefficient is usually represented on a Lorenz plot. The Gini coefficient is the ratio of the area between the line of perfect equality and the observed Lorenz curve to the area between the line of perfect equality and the line of perfect inequality.

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What affects how much students learn?

HEPI Policy Note 5 — January 2018

Tim Blackman, the Vice-Chancellor of Middlesex University, discusses his analysis of learning gain using data from the HEA/HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey

New analysis of survey data reveals students' self-reported learning gain is linked to:

- having access to high-quality teaching
- undertaking high levels of independent study (especially above 20 hours a week)
- providing support for students with low wellbeing
- avoiding high levels of paid work (above 17 hours a week)
- location of study, with extra challenges for London-based students
- studying at an institution with a Gold rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework

Introduction

The Student Academic Experience Survey conducted by the Higher Education Policy Institute and the Higher Education Academy has been running since 2006. The 2017 survey included a new question on self-reported learning gain: 'Since starting your course how much do you feel you have learnt?'

Respondents could answer that they had learned 'a lot', 'a little', 'not much' or 'nothing'. The sample size was 14,057 undergraduate students across the UK and the fieldwork was undertaken by YouthSight.

This is a great question. When I was a student, if I had been asked how much I had learnt since starting the course I think my answer would have been pretty accurate. Even if the answers do not exactly mirror more objective measures of learning gain, how much students feel they have learned is surely important in its own right.

When I analysed answers to this question for relationships with answers to other questions in the survey, some interesting patterns become apparent. Particularly striking is the strength of the relationship with the quality of teaching, even when controlling for the effects of other variables.

Methodology

I used logistic regression to explore these relationships, a statistical technique for analysing the independent contributions of 'causal' variables to a binary outcome (known as a 'dichotomous outcome variable'). My dichotomous outcome variable was 'learnt a lot' compared to 'a little', 'not much' or 'nothing'. In total, 65 per cent of students in the sample reported that they had 'learnt a lot', but this varies significantly depending on responses to other variables.

I explored various combinations of variables to find the combination that was a 'best fit' with the outcome variable. The final model has an 'R-square' value of 0.24, which means that it explains 24 per cent of the variation in the outcome, the rest being unexplained because it is either not captured by the variables in the dataset or is essentially random. This R-square value is not to be sneezed at though. It means the model has low predictive power at the individual student level but we can still make statistical inferences about the patterns or 'signal' in the data (although these are based on association and are not direct evidence of causation).

Individual variables were added or removed from the regression model depending on whether they strengthened or weakened the R-square value. Some surprising variables fell out of the final model, including whether respondents lived in the family home or with others, ethnic group and timetabled taught hours. This is because other variables were better predictors.

I also added some institution-level variables to the HEA/HEPI dataset. Two made it to the final model because they had significant independent

Reaching the parts of society universities have missed: A manifesto for the new Director of Fair Access and Participation

Edited by Paul Clarke and Dr Diana Beech

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HEPI Report 106

With a Foreword by David Palfreyman

How different is Oxbridge?

Charlotte Freitag and Nick Hillman

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HEPI Report 107

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Change is coming: how universities can navigate through turbulent political times

Dr Diana Beech
HEPI Director of Policy and Advocacy
in conjunction with PwC

HEPI Policy Note 7 — June 2018

HEPI has worked with PwC on a series of roundtable dinners with senior higher education leaders. These provided a platform to discuss the main strategic challenges in the current political climate:

- the first roundtable, which was held in Leeds, focused on the challenges around internationalisation;
- the second, held in Birmingham, centred on the disruption caused by new technologies; and
- the third, held in London, discussed the need for robust strategies and roadmaps.

Although each event was unique – involving different participants and a different topic – there was a clear thread at the three discussions: **change is coming** and higher education institutions must prepare and adapt to stand the best chance at future success.

But what exactly should they be preparing for and what does it take to adapt successfully? This Policy Note summarises the discussions at each of the roundtable events and explains how three of the biggest emerging policy challenges could affect higher education, as well as the approaches that will help navigate them.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is a core component of UK higher education:

- many UK universities rely on income from international ventures as well as the diversity that overseas students bring to their campuses;
- most wish to attract and retain overseas talent;
- many collaborate with institutions elsewhere in the world;
- some engage internationally as part of a wider institutional commitment to social responsibility; and
- others have, or seek to establish, branch campuses overseas.

How much is too much? Cross-subsidies from teaching to research in British universities

HEPI report 100 exposes the scale of cross-subsidies in UK universities and finds each international student contributes (on average) £8,000 to research from their university fees.[1]

Operating internationally nevertheless requires considerable investment and can expose higher education institutions to financial, legal and reputational risks. Some potential threats include:

- different global tax, immigration or security systems;
- changing student demand;
- ethical challenges (such as different business practices); and
- increasing competition.

The extent to which UK universities will be able to embrace internationalisation is also dependent on domestic political developments, including Brexit.

The costs and benefits of international students by parliamentary constituency

As shown by HEPI report 102 (published in conjunction with Kaplan International and London Economics), international students bring in £20.3 billion in net benefits to the UK economy. These benefits are felt right across the country, with Sheffield Central seeing the highest net gains (£226 million). Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland also benefit significantly, with international students generating £151 million in Cardiff Central, £135 million in Glasgow Central and £29 million in Belfast South.[2]

Another risk for universities is concentrating on internationalisation at the expense of local links. The UK's decision to leave the European Union highlighted the importance of universities reconnecting with their local communities. Since then, universities have been under greater scrutiny than even before. If the majority of higher education institutions are going to convincingly embrace internationalisation, then it is imperative they regain the support and the buy-in of those in their towns and regions.

Strategies for success

Given the various risks inherent to internationalisation, there is a need for universities to devise and implement effective strategies, governance structures and risk management techniques that will ensure internationalisation continues to thrive as a core component of UK higher education. In times of political flux, it is important not to let uncertainty and negative press stories derail the sector's efforts to make a real difference to the outside world.

One way to do this would be to create a climate of shared practice. Most higher education institutions will have encountered one or more of the above challenges in their day-to-day operations. Yet, it is still not customary for universities to share experiences equally. This not only prevents learning from one other about what works and what does not. It also hampers the sector in putting up a united front against reputational threats.

UK higher education institutions remain inherently different from one another – as enshrined in their individual histories, local origins and mission statements. Embracing these differences will provide impetus to share information and to base future strategies on 'lived' experiences.

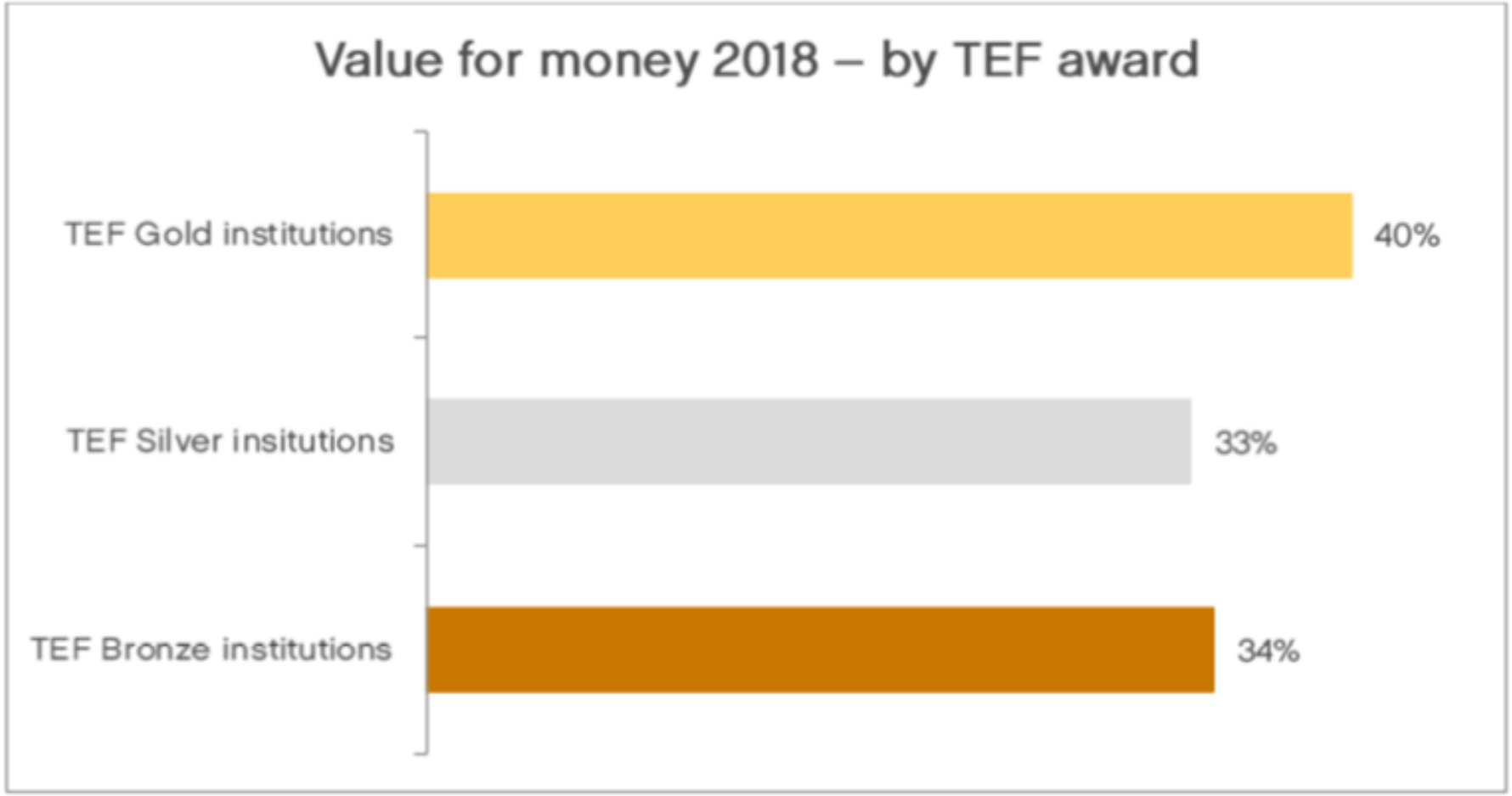
Technology

Disruptive technologies and changes to education delivery are altering the way universities are operating. The '4th' education revolution', as it has come to be known, has the power not only to change the way we teach and learn, but also how we manage information and collect data. The advantages of embracing technological change are widely accepted. The benefits include:

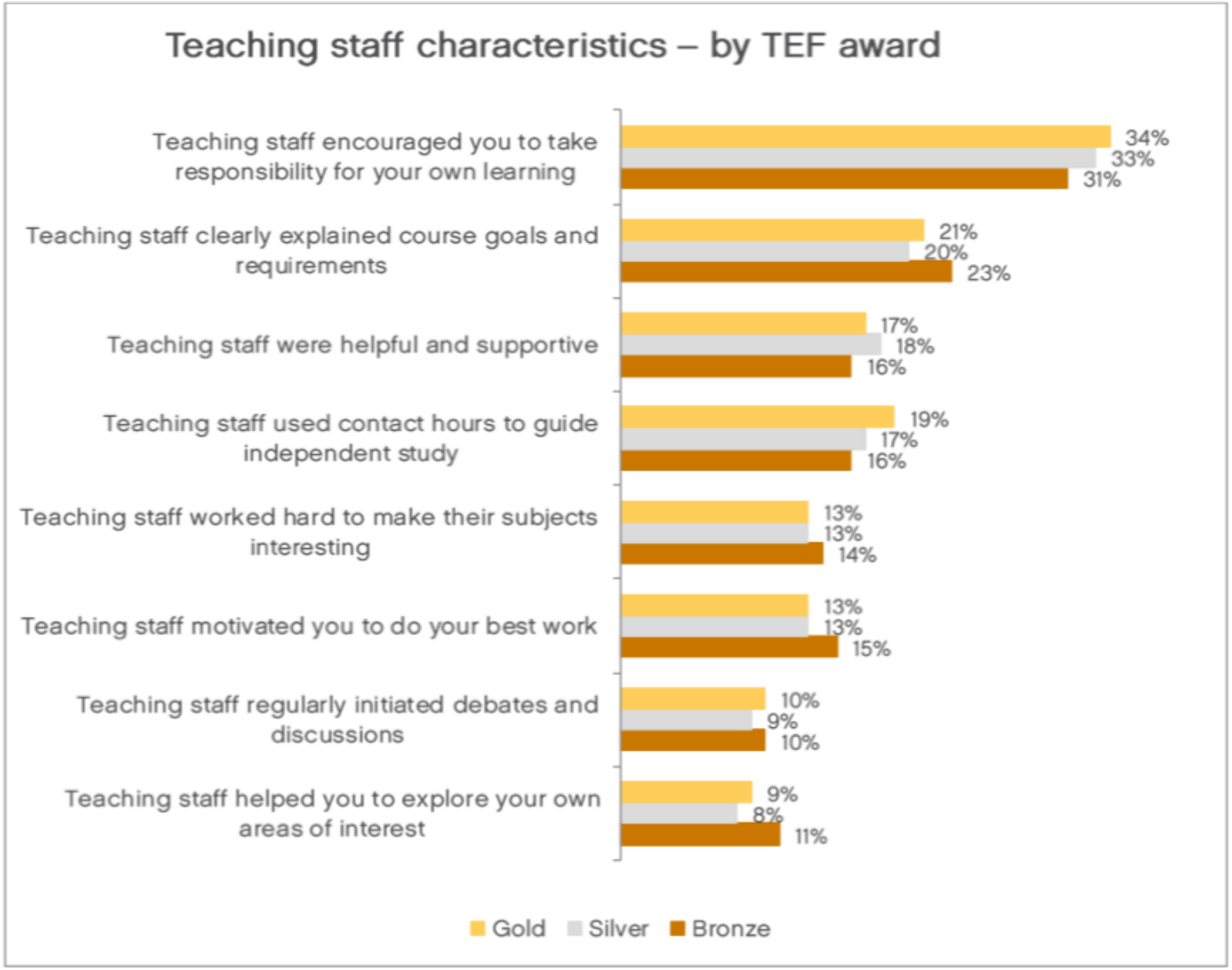
- greater agility;
- more collaborative learning;
- maximising new opportunities, for example on transnational education (TNE); and
- enhancing the student experience.

- Established in 2006, so now in its 12th year
- Surveys over 14,000 full-time undergraduate students in all years of study (not just final year students like the NSS)
- Available to download for free at www.hepi.ac.uk (Publications tab)

TEF and value for money



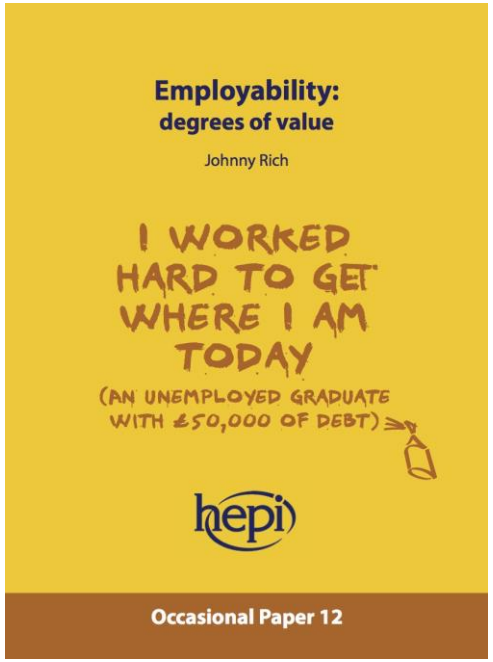
Base: Students from TEF Gold institutions (4,828); TEF Silver (6,377); TEF Bronze (1,496). Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined.



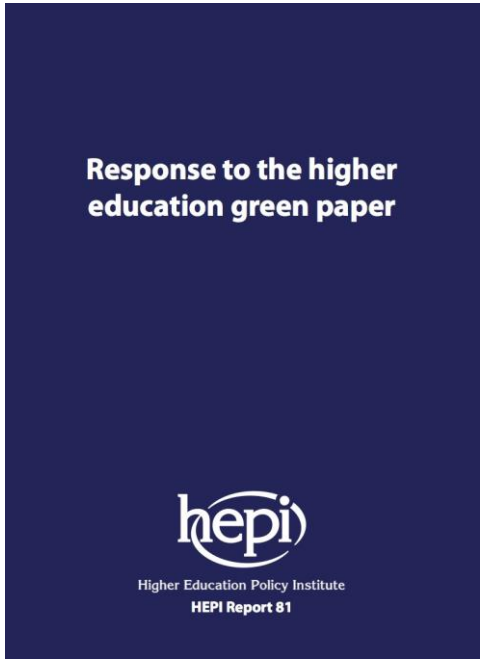
Base: All respondents excluding not applicable. Gold (4,716); Silver (6,279); Bronze (1,478). Chart displays % who say all their teaching staff demonstrate the above characteristics.

TEF awards and staff traits

Previous HEPI research on the TEF



Dec 2015



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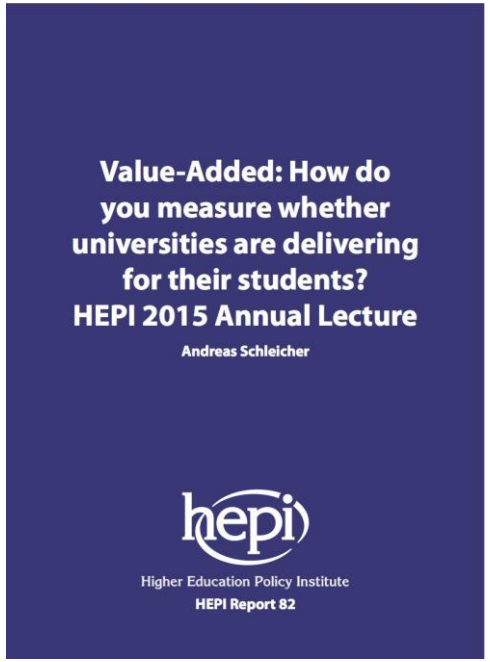

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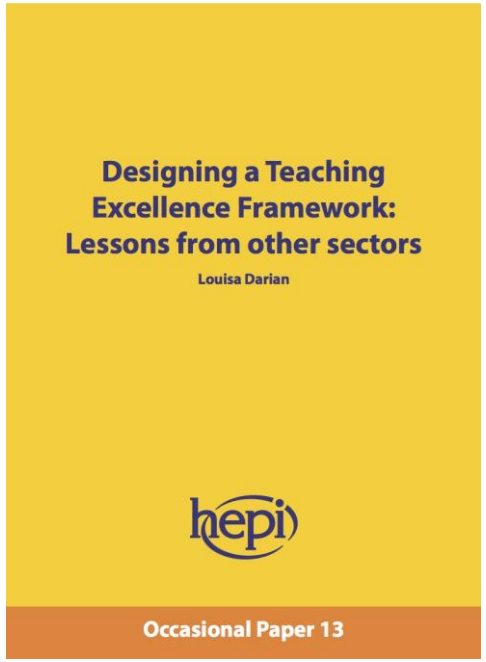

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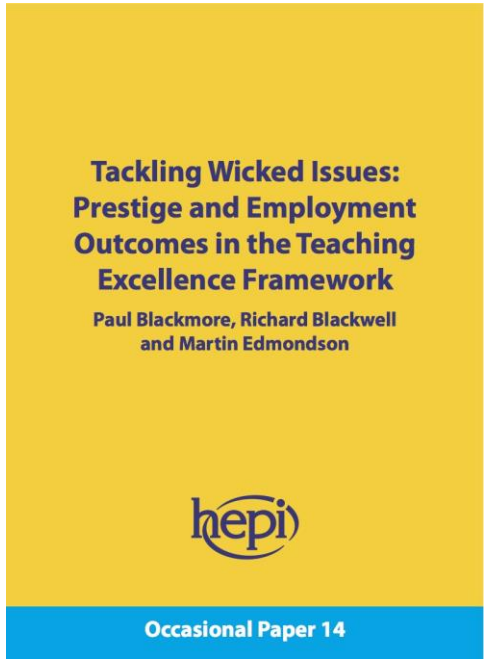
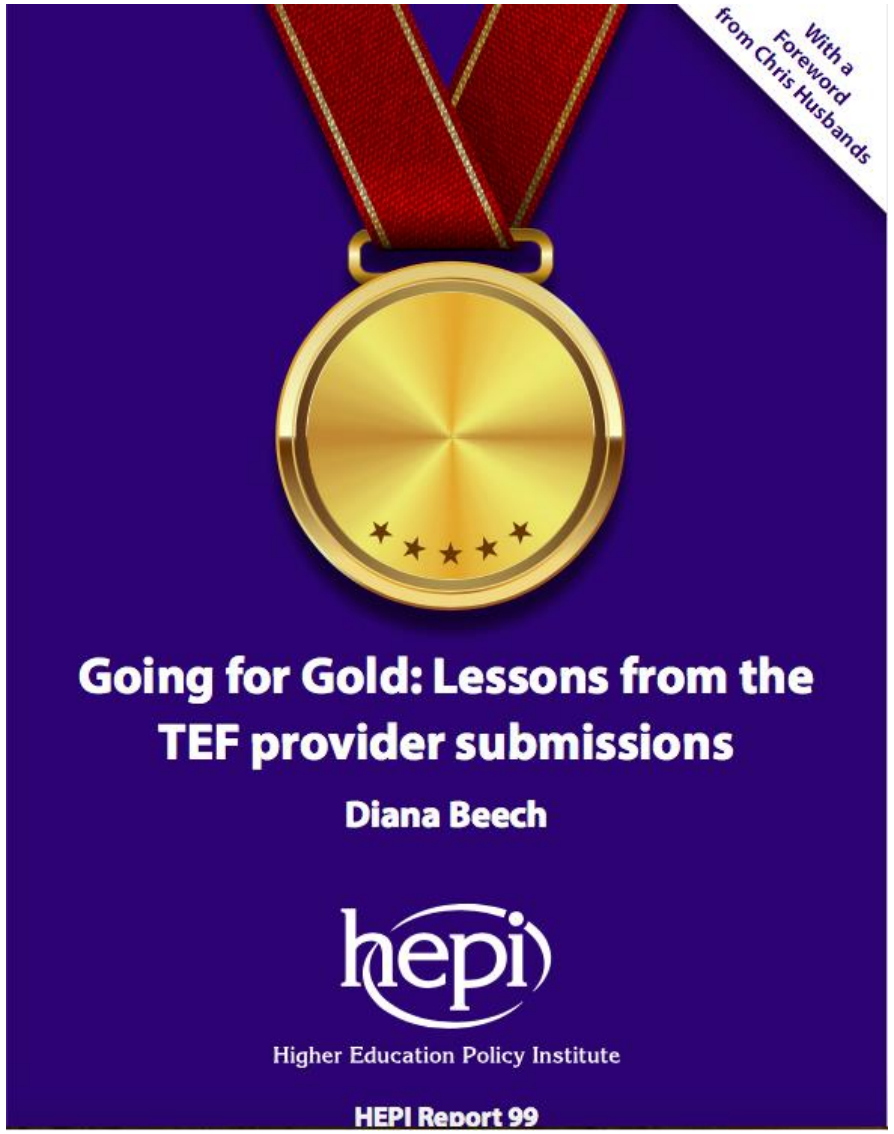


Sept 2016

‘Going for Gold’ Report (Oct 2017)



- The first detailed analysis of the ‘provider submissions’ submitted by institutions as part of the TEF (Year 2) assessment process.
- Reveals the key themes, types of evidence and presentation styles used in the most ‘successful’ submissions.
- Cracks the code to TEF success!

The role of the provider submissions

Speech

Teaching at the heart of the system

From:	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Jo Johnson MP
Part of:	Higher education participation
Published:	1 July 2015
Delivered on:	1 July 2015 (Original script, may differ from delivered version)

Universities minister sets out plans to widen participation and drive up teaching quality through a Teaching Excellence Framework.

Thank you to Universities UK (UUK) for hosting us today.

In my first speech on universities a month ago, I addressed the subject of international education.

I am proud of the sector's international standing and reputation around the world.

Today, I want to reflect further on what underpins this excellence, and what more we can do to enhance it.

At the root of that success is the autonomy and academic freedom that enables us to attract brilliant people to work in and run our universities and lead our sectoral bodies.

More bureaucracy please?

This guest blog has been kindly contributed by Professor Graham Galbraith, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth. It is a timely reminder that higher education reform is likely to continue, despite the upheavals in the wider political landscape, and recommends some specific changes to the new Teaching Excellence Framework to reduce bureaucracy.

Like businesses, universities often complain about the bureaucracy imposed upon them. Soon there will be an extra layer: the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF). The TEF will have metrics, benchmarks, contextual information and up to 15 pages of 'provider submission'. From 2019/20 there is also expected to be a discipline-level TEF, adding at least a further two or three pages submission per discipline.

While the sector should welcome the TEF – and the opportunity it offers to demonstrate our high-quality teaching – its bureaucratic implications should give pause for thought. Fortunately, through the ongoing TEF consultation, the sector can express its views. But, worryingly, many seem to be arguing for 'more bureaucracy please'.

What to do with a blank canvas?

- The TEF was especially challenging last year because institutions were not able to learn from earlier rounds.

- Institutions only had a set font, set margin sizes and a maximum limit of 15 pages.

Some key TEF (Year 2) facts

- In total, 299 HE & FE colleges took part in the TEF.
- Of these 134 were HE institutions.
- Among HEIs, 46 got Gold, 67 secured Silver and 25 took Bronze.

- Roughly one-quarter (34) of HEIs moved up or down a TEF award on the basis of their provider submissions:
  - 33 moved up one award place (either from Bronze to Silver, or from Silver to Gold)
  - 1 moved up two award places (from Bronze to Gold)
  - 1 moved down one award place (from Silver to Bronze)

Institutions in the study

University of the Arts London
University of Bedfordshire
Bournemouth University
University of Bristol
Leeds Beckett University
University College London

University of Birmingham
University of Derby
Edge Hill University
Imperial College London
Newcastle University
Royal Veterinary College

What I looked for…

1. Key themes
2. Types of evidence
3. Presentation styles

1. Key themes

Teaching, of course!

Demonstrations of good quality teaching included:

1. **Research-led teaching (but not necessarily high REF scores)**
2. **Examples of co-creation**
3. **A focus on teaching employment contracts**

Digital technologies

Institutions were praised for their 'strategic investment in infrastructure' and 'innovative learning technologies' including:

1. **Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)**
2. **Video Platforms**
3. **iPad connectivity**
4. **Mobile apps**

Student-led investment/development

Teaching/study spaces designed with student input helped to demonstrate an 'embedded culture of student engagement' and ensure usability.

Some institutions:

1. **Use students to conduct market research**
2. **Have a student communication team**

Student support

Highlighting dedicated student support initiatives helped to illustrate an inclusive learning environment and a culture that facilitates personalised learning. Examples:

1. **Peer mentoring / Peer-assisted learning**
2. **Personal academic tutors**
3. **Disability support schemes**
4. **Dedicated support for LGTB+ / BME students**

Employability

Careers services were key to demonstrating employability initiatives, including:

- **Mentoring schemes with employers to give students an insight into professions (e.g. Law)**
- **Work experience/Paid internships**
- **Community engagement (e.g. with social enterprises, charities and community groups)**
- **Readiness for work/entrepreneurial schemes**
- **Enterprise boot camps/Start-up schemes**
- **Support for students long after graduation**

2. Types of evidence

The usual suspects?

Institutions drew on data from other sector bodies to support their claims of excellence. These included:

- **QAA endorsement**
- **DHLE data / LEO data**
- **HEA UK Student Engagement Survey**
- **HESA UK Performance Indicators**
- **NSS data**
- **UCAS data**
- **SCONUL data**
- **…even HEPI data (Student Academic Experience Survey)!**

Costs and expenditure

Libraries, in particular, were looked on to provide precise costings for investment in resources. For example we know:

Leeds Beckett spent

- **£945,379 on e-books**
- **£82,837 on student-led purchasing**

…while UCL spent

- **£9,907,992 on information resources**

Data analytics

Some of the data used to demonstrate services are being used by students included:

- **Download rates**
- **Library usage figures**
- **Library service requests**
- **Viewings ratings**
- **Website visits/page views**
- **Participation rates**

Quotes and statements

Some of the most powerful evidence comes from the people you work with…

Praise can come from:

- **Notable alumni**
- **Current students**
- **Students' unions**

3. Presentation styles

Some features

There is no winning formula when it comes to a provider submission. However my advice would be:

- **Have a vision and explain it**
- **Take ownership of achievements as well as areas for improvement**
- **Don’t be afraid to acknowledge shortcomings**
- **Show pride in your work**
- **Above all, express your individuality**

Some final thoughts

- The TEF provider submission assessment is a very human process – it is written by humans and read by humans.
- Emotion is key.
- Perhaps when writing them it is helpful to think less about the Gold, Silver and Bronze awards on offer and more about how we want people to feel about our institutions…

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