

**Consultation
Response Form**

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The Commission

Question 1:

Is the proposed governance framework appropriate given the remit of the new Commission?

UCU would like to add the statutory requirement of the audit and compliance committee to receive evidence from staff organisations about their concerns relating to corporate governance and/or compliance with ROAs. Should the evidence present concerns to committee –an obligation to meet with staff organisations.

We would like to see a committee with a statutory responsibility to deliver life-long learning, with widening participation and Welsh Language being a function of that committee. This would then allow strategic planning and oversight of the PCET sector in relation to delivering ‘post-compulsory learning bi-lingual opportunities for all.’

Question 2:

Do you think that the Welsh language and development of Welsh-medium provision should be supported through a statutory committee within the Commission’s statutory governance framework?

We are not sure whether creating a separate statutory committee with this responsibility would have a detrimental impact on the coherence of a Lifelong Learning Committee. We are yet to be persuaded that a statutory committee functioning in this way, would produce the required results. Would this committee not duplicate the work of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol?

Question 3:

Do you agree the Wales Employment Skills Board and the Apprenticeships Advisory Board should be brought within the Commission to strengthen links between the Commission and employers?

Yes, we believe that the functions of these boards should be brought within the remit of the new commission, it is crucial for Wales, in delivering ‘Prosperity for all,’ that constructive engagement on these matters informs strategic planning. Some thought would need to be given to structures to ensure that the dialogue involved employers and the profession in delivering a curriculum that is fit for purpose. More attention

needs to be given to pedagogy in developing new apprenticeship frameworks for the 21st century. We acknowledge that the Welsh Government is currently looking at this matter, but we need to ensure that this development is a statutory requirement to ensure it takes place going forward.

We would also want to ensure that the voice of small and medium size enterprises are heard and we are not convinced that the ESB, on its own, would provide that assurance.

The Relationship between the Welsh Government and the Commission

Question 4:

Is the proposed allocation of responsibilities for strategic planning between the Welsh Government and the Commission appropriate?

We have a concern about the stated overlap on strategic planning. In clause 36, you state that the Welsh Government would set “the overall direction for PCET” going on to state that “the Commission would be responsible for drawing up its own strategic plan”. Yet in the next clause you state that the WG would draw up a high-level, overarching policy, with a small number of strategic priorities.”

In our view, it would be foolish to allow this overlap to be drafted into legislation. The Welsh Government must set the overall direction for PCET and allow the Commission to work out how to articulate that within their strategic planning processes.

The fact that legislation will require sign off of the Commission’s strategic plan should suffice. We are concerned that giving effect to this proposal in legislation would undermine the arms’ length nature of the Commission, recommended by Hazelkorn.

“Relations between the Government and the Intermediary Organisation: A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Welsh Government and the TEA should be established to provide the formal framework of the government-to-intermediary agency relationship, and set out TEA responsibilities with respect to an agreed programme of work and expected outcomes, and accountability to the Minister.”

Question 5:

Are the proposals for dealing with funding appropriate, in the event of the Welsh Government withholding approval of the strategic plan? What safeguards or interim measures should be considered?

UCU would like the WG to retain the options within legislation, however we believe that proposals as laid down by section 44 would effectively mean Government were running the commission. Having flexibility will allow the Commission and the WG the space to ensure that the interests of learners are protected and remain at the forefront of the dialogue.

We are concerned that giving effect to this proposal in legislation would undermine the arms’ length nature of the Commission, recommended by Hazelkorn.

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should be established to provide the formal framework of the government-to-intermediary agency relationship, and set out TEA responsibilities with respect to an agreed programme of work and expected outcomes, and accountability to the Minister.”

Question 6:

Apart from withholding approval of the strategic plan, what intervention powers may be required by the Welsh Ministers to ensure that the Commission complies with its duties and fulfils the terms of its strategic plan?

UCU would like to see the contracts of all senior post holders of the Commission drafted in such a way as to ensure that they can be held accountable in the same way as other employees are by policies and procedures. We must ensure that legislation requires this of the Commission and lays down appropriate structures to ensure appraisal is a key part of the remuneration committee. We would also like to see the UCU and NUS have a place on that committee as of right.

There must be a trust relationship between the Government and the new Commission, one cannot establish a new body and decide before it is operational that it can't be trusted to do what is required of it in relation to the remit from Government.

Question 7:

Would a five-year cycle be an appropriate length of time for the Commission's strategic plan to cover or should flexibility be allowed?

The political election process which operates in Wales dictates, to a certain extent, the cycle which would provide for an effective relationship between WG and the Commission. UCU would support a five year cycle. It would allow an incoming WG time to review the current strategic plan and consult their party colleagues about changes they may wish to make within their first year in office.

The Relationship between the Commission and Learning Providers

Question 8:

In the regulation section of the ROA, are there other matters that should be included? If so, what are they? Should any be removed? If so, which ones?

In our response to the white paper, we concluded our comments by suggesting that “Whatever the basis, provider input will be needed to maintain an appropriate response to local or international needs as appropriate. Outcome agreements should not limit the initiative of individual institutions; they should allow institutions to develop their strengths, alongside relevant national objectives. Care needs to be taken that the pursuit of outcomes does not narrow opportunities. The sector would benefit from more stable funding cycle – annual funding does not support longer term planning. UCU would support a three year cycle”.

UCU is concerned with the current proposals to use ROAs as described by the consultation document. We understand that they are used in Scotland and the impact on Widening Access has been quite significant. We are also struggling to see

how these will work within a context of the details in relation to outcomes. In the funding process, it takes two to three years to achieve an outcome in relation to the student learning. In the current arrangement with Fee Plans there are two or in some cases three Fee Plans agreed before the outcomes of the students' education journey is known.

It may be that UCU misunderstands what is intended by the term outcomes- as much of what we read in the document refers to the ability of government to 'intervene' in process- that doesn't square with our understanding of an outcome agreement.

HEFCW in their response to the White Paper also caution about being too prescriptive in terms of legislation, they suggest that "any future legislative process should be specified at a much higher level of detail."

It is unfortunate that we haven't had access to or a discussion with Professor Weingarten to enlighten our response to this section of the consultation. We submitted our views on the remit he was given, but as yet have had no response.

Question 9:

While we recognise that, in light of their contractual obligations, work-based learning providers would not require charitable status to receive public funding, should other types of learning providers be required to have charitable status in order to receive such funding? What might be the advantages and disadvantages?

It would be perverse if the legislation which creates the Commission did not protect the public purse of Wales. We believe that Commission has a duty to ensure that the monies from the WG, which they are responsible for allocating, are spent on supporting learning not creating a profit for a private provider.

We are not persuaded by the disadvantages listed in section 72. If the Commission functions properly, then innovation should be a key component of their operational plan across all their functions.

Question 10:

Should RTOs be eligible for funding from the Commission under Regulation and Outcome Agreements? If so, how might the regulation element of ROAs need to be modified to reflect the fact that RTOs do not provide learning?

Given our response in question 8 we are struggling to understand how these agreements would work.

We believe that all funding should be subject to the same list of criteria, accepting that in the case of RTOs some of the criteria would not apply because they are not teaching providers. UCU would find it difficult to suggest that research organisations do not deliver learning.

Question 11:

If they should not be funded under ROAs, in what circumstances and by what mechanisms should they be funded? What mechanism(s) could be put in place to ensure the appropriate use of any public funding that RTOs might receive?

See answer to question 10 above.

Question 12:

If learning providers that did not have charitable status could enter a regulation agreement, how might that differ from the regulation element of the ROA entered into with other learning providers?

If their services are required because they cannot be provided elsewhere, then UCU believes that they should be subject to the same high standard of compliance as other recipients of funding. A cap should be placed on the percentage of spend that must be used to support the delivery of the service and those figures should be subject to audit. Current legislation allows local authorities to withhold 3% from sixth form funding to meet the needs of administration, we believe a similar system should be used with private providers, limiting the profit a provider could make.

Question 13:

Is the ROA the best way forward? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Our understanding is that they do not work well in Scotland as they don't provide an effective mechanism to ensure that the Government's remit is delivered and they do appear to impact on the widening access agenda. Perhaps the best way forward would be to keep the regulation and outcomes separate.

Question 14:

What powers may the Commission need to ensure that learning providers and local authorities carry out their responsibilities under the ROA?

Any new powers must be flexible and be able to be used early on in a process. We know that HEFCW believe the powers within the 2015 Act operate too slowly and are in effect potentially terminal, in terms of their impact,

Question 15:

Is there another model that we should consider? If so, what is it and what would be the benefits?

We believe that it is important to consider separating regulation with outcomes and that more thought needs to be given to a model which would allow these separate processes.

Question 16:

What information about learning providers and research and innovation communities with approved ROAs should the Commission make publicly available?

Sufficient information to allow appropriate oversight of activity by interested groups, such as the teaching profession within the PCET sector, whatever the methodology.

We'd also like to see our idea about a 'cap on profit' being reported so that potential learners know how much of the government funding is being spent on the delivery of learning. We would also request better data on employment practices (e.g. proportion of teaching delivered by staff on insecure contracts) – in our view

casualisation has clear quality implications.

Question 17:

Once approved, should the regulatory section of the ROA be ongoing, or should it be reconsidered from time to time? If so, how often should it be reconsidered? How often should the outcome agreement element be re-negotiated?

See response to question 15

Our submission to the review can be found here: [UCU Wales submission to Weingarten Review of post compulsory education in Wales Feb 2018](#)

Question 18:

Please let us have your views on the issues listed in the 'Additional Matters' section of this paper.

UCU considers that whatever the methodology, the duty to report covering the bullets at section 87 should be clearly laid down in the statutory requirements. Penalties could then be used for providers who fail in their statutory duty to report under the headings in section 87. We believe that the onus should be placed on the provider to report, rather than the detailed work of TECR getting bogged down in compliance monitoring.

The problem with our current system of governance is that we do not place sufficient emphasis on the need for integrity within the functioning of institutional governance. We stripped out the legislation because the sectors argued that it was too cumbersome- we do not agree.

The focus needs to be on statutory compliance with the penalty for non-compliance in relation to reporting at an appropriate time to TERC- not when it's too late to retrieve the situation as has happened and is continuing to happen time and again in Wales.

Strengthening the link between planning and funding

Question 19:

Do you agree that the Welsh Minister should cease to have their functions (i.e. duties and powers) under sections 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and that the Commission should have those functions or functions very similar to those instead?

UCU Cymru does not have the resources to comment on this proposal in any detail, but we suspect that the commission should have these functions.

Question 20:

Do you consider that the Welsh Ministers should retain a role in respect of the planning, provision and funding of 16 to 19 and post 19 education and training? If so what should that role be?

No, we believe these functions should sit within the commission.

Question 21:

Do you agree that the powers in section 65 and 66 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, along with powers in sections 86 and 87 of the Education Act 2005, should be replicated largely unchanged for the new Commission?

We are not aware of any reason to change these powers and yes they should be replicated, largely unchanged to the new commission.

Question 22:

Do you agree that section 68 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 should be replaced with a new power that allows Welsh Ministers to allocate funding to the Commission for all post-16 provision? Are there any specific inclusions or exclusions that should be considered as part of this new power?

We would wish to see a broadly similar legal framework as the post 92 Act being introduced, allowing the commission the flexibility it needs to be able to deliver its remit.

Question 23:

Do you agree that the Welsh Ministers should hypothecate between elements of the total grant available to the Commission on the basis of type of provision to be funded?

UCU believes it is important that hypothecation between FE and HE funding occurs. We would like to see the government take the opportunity to create a level playing field in regards to legislation when it comes to post-16 funding. The differentiation between 16-19 and post-19 funding in terms of the requirements in law has, in our view, unintentionally perpetuated the problems we have with poverty. We must level the playing field so that we can find the money to fund adult education properly and try to address the historic failings of the school system for many young parents. If we find effective ways to help young parents back into education and training that will de facto have an impact on their child's education.

Question 24:

Do you agree that the hypothecation should be split at a FE/HE level to give the Commission as much flexibility as possible, but to acknowledge the fact that we propose specific statutory responsibilities in relation to the funding of further education, which should pass to the new Commission? These do not have a current counterpart in relation to higher education.

Yes, noting our comments in question 23 above.

Question 25:

Do you agree that there should be a power available to the Welsh Ministers to directly fund PCET provision (including higher education), having first shared any such proposals with the Commission, and where there is a strong public interest in doing so?

UCU supports the proposal for 'in year' funding on the basis laid out in paragraph 113. The Commission should have sufficient flexibility within its funding to be able to respond to a strong public interest 'in year.' In circumstances where it couldn't meet that need, there should be arrangements in place for the government to increase their funding in year to cover such an eventuality. The commission should fund, not the Welsh Government.

Question 26:

We know there are additional funding streams, outside core funding. If you receive such funding can you indicate whether you think responsibility for the funding you receive should rest with the Commission?

UCU is not a recipient of this funding, but we do believe that funding of post 16 provision should rest with the Commission, not Government.

Question 27:

Do you agree that the Commission should have the flexibility during a short transition period to operate different planning and funding models across each type of post-16 provider, whilst driving forward alignment and consolidation as the Commission matures in its operation?

The term 'short' concerns us. There certainly needs to be flexibility during the early stages of the Commission, however we would expect work on aligning and consolidating systems to start soon - we don't believe that should wait until the new Commission is operational. HEFCW and the Welsh Government should prioritise those discussions and start them now.

UCU does not believe that the re-configuration agenda has served its purpose, we believe that the tensions in the sector, resulting from the austerity programme of Westminster and the future impact of Brexit, will have the effect on prolonging the re-configuration agenda. Any changes to funding methodology will have winners and losers, there must be a safety net in place whilst those changes are being made over a period of years- not just in the short term.

Question 28:

Should there be transition arrangements in place to ensure that core funding to any institution is initially protected? What would constitute a reasonable protection?

UCU believes that once the implications of the changes are calculated then a decision must be made on the time needed to factor in those financial implications in a way that does not impact adversely on the provision for learners. UCU is only too aware of what happens when funding is cut and the staffing levels change to reflect those funding changes. Sufficient time needs to be given to individual institutions to make those changes over time- if that is not available to some FE institutions in Wales, we believe it will impact on the quality of provision for learners. We think 3-5 years of a reducing safety net should be written into the legislation.

Question 29:

Do you agree that the Commission should be expected to keep under review intelligence around the apprenticeship levy and consider new ways of allocating

funding across the system if the Levy is not seen to be meeting the needs of employers in Wales?

The difference in the economies of England and Wales dictates that this must happen. Wales needs to find a way to encourage the uptake of apprentices from the small and medium enterprises, by sharing apprentices. We also need to pay much more attention to the gender stereotyping that appears to be prevalent in apprenticeships in Wales. [EISC Apprenticeships in Wales Feb 2018](#)

Question 30:

Do you agree that the Commission should continue to work collaboratively with the RSPs to inform provision delivered by learning providers?

Yes definitely, but the Commission also needs to weigh the needs of skills partnership with the needs of individual member of society, especially when it comes to a new adult education curriculum, which must deliver and properly fund provision at levels one and two, to re-engage those hard to reach and living in poverty.

We do have a concern about the increasing reliance on the Skills partnerships in determining the provision of the curriculum. We would strongly urge the Government to look carefully at ensuring that the needs of the learners are not lost in their desire to address the skills deficit in Wales.

This is the very reason why we believe that the Operational aspects of the new Commission need to be at arms' length from Government as it will have the capacity to balance the needs of the learners from an education perspective, and the needs of the economy in Wales from an employers' perspective.

Question 31:

Do you agree that the Commission should be able to withhold some of the core budget for each sector to be allocated based on the recommendations set out in the annual skills plans?

Yes, providing it is not at the expense of the other budgets, especially the adult education budget. Businesses are in business to make profit, many of the businesses in Wales do not pay the apprenticeship levy because of the size of their turnover- government must not put the needs of business before the needs of the adult education budget if they are serious about addressing the poverty agenda in Wales.

Question 32:

Do you consider that the proposals above for monitoring performance and achieving accountability across the PCET system are sufficient and appropriate?

UCU is very clear that governance and statutory regulation are needed to ensure integrity within the post 16 sector. So in answer to this question, no we do not believe the current proposals are sufficient and appropriate.

Question 33:

What more might need to be done to secure the sustainable operation of the PCET system in Wales over the longer term?

We have addressed what we believe needs to happen in our responses to the questions posed thus far.

Protecting the Interests of Learners

Question 34:

Do you agree that learner protection arrangements should align with a common set of principles to ensure consistency for learners across the PCET sector?

Yes, it is essential for all students who are investing their time, money and effort in lifelong learning.

Question 35:

Do you agree with the principles suggested? Are there any that should be omitted or additional principles which should be included?

Thought needs to be given to the term 'practically' possible- in law it provides the employer with a multitude of reasons why they don't find it practically possible to consult early in the process of change, we are concerned that the use of the term practically will have a similar effect on students.

Question 36:

Do you agree with the suggested content for inclusion in a Learner Protection and Progression Plan? Is there anything that should be added or omitted?

We agree that transfers within and between schools through CTF are appropriate. But we must have in place a statutory requirement on schools for pupils who transfer to other PCET providers to have their data transfer with them in a timely manner.

A significant amount of time is spent by staff in FE doing assessments on students coming from schools. The establishment of the Commission allows us to take the opportunity to require schools to provide adequate and appropriate information about the ability of their pupils. If it is right and proper in law for that information to be available for school transfers, then it must be right and proper for that information to be available to other PCET providers.

The introduction of the Donaldson curriculum and the assessment and monitoring of added value must transfer within PCET with the learner. This must happen. For Wales as a nation, keen to improve its standing in PISA, to produce a fundamentally flawed framework which does not ensure that learner's data about their educational progress is not a central feature of that regulatory framework, would in our view be a significant own goal.

If the pupil is transferring with appropriate qualifications then we could accept the exclusions listed in section 127. However where they have not yet sat or achieved any qualifications then a statutory requirement is essential in our view.

Question 37:

What sanctions, if any, should the Commission have in relation to Learner Protection and Progression Plans?

UCU believe that the Commission should have the ultimate sanction of withdrawing funding if the PCET provider does not recognise the value these plans have to the ability of the learners to progress their learning.

Question 38:

Do you agree that the current complaint resolution arrangements should remain in place for school sixth forms?

Yes, for the time being.

Strengthening the Learner Voice and Representation

Question 39:

Do you agree that consistent principles and values should be developed for learner voice and representation and that learning providers should be required to adhere to these?

Yes and the principles must apply across all post 16, no exceptions.

Question 40:

Do you agree that learner representatives should be involved with developing the outcome agreement element of the ROAs?

Yes they should be involved in developing the methodology, we're just not convinced that the ROA is the way to do it. As research on the TEF has shown, the learner voice can be quite different to the views of others when it comes to what constitutes quality teaching. If we are to continue to put the learners' voice front and centre in terms of the role of the PCET sector, then we must listen to it.

Question 41:

Do you agree with the proposal to develop a national framework for learner voice and representation? Do you think this would work for all learning providers?

Yes we agree with this proposal and it must be made to work.

Question 42:

If so, do you think responsibility for establishing the proposed national framework should sit with the Commission?

Yes it should sit within the new commission. The methodology must refer to it and must also be a part of the regulatory framework, allowing the commission to act if these requirements are not met by providers of PCET.

Question 43:

Should the Commission work with all educational providers in Wales to ensure the establishment of learner-led representative bodies are adequately resourced and supported?

Yes, but we are concerned that you fail to use the term training. UCU Cymru believe that education and training are in fact a part of the integral process of learning and should not be differentiated in a narrative. However, that is not a part of the government narrative, which suggests to us, that the Government intend to exclude training providers- this must not happen.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Question 44:

Do you agree with the proposed overall principles for the quality framework? Should anything be added, removed or changed?

UCU is very pleased to see the decision to have one body responsible for quality assurance across the post 16 sector, with the exception of sixth forms. However there are some key preparatory stages that must happen to give effect to this proposal.

From now until the Commission is established, the Government needs to place in the HEFCW remit the requirement to start work on a Common Quality Assurance framework for Wales, to be signed off and ready to operate when the new body is established. There will also need to be a transition period built into the remit, not legislation, which allows for a smooth transition to the new single body. This cannot happen overnight - it will take in our view at least two years to ensure the sector is not adversely affected by the new arrangements.

Question 45:

With the exception of school sixth forms, should a single body be designated to undertake external quality assessment of all PCET provision? Please explain the reasons for your response, and any particular positive or negative impacts that you anticipate.

UCU believe it is essential to ensure the cohesion of the sector that one body undertakes quality assessment of the PCET sector. With the development of higher level apprenticeships, degree apprenticeships and we hope the development of new curriculum and qualifications at level 4 and 5 targeted at the part time learner, we believe that it is inevitable that the binary line which has existed between FE and HE at level three will no longer serve any useful purpose. In fact we would argue that to maintain such division would undermine Government policy and as a consequence we see FE institutions developing their HE portfolio of provision to enable adult learners to study at a time that suits the learner and in an accessible location, to accommodate their need to continue to earn or look after their families.

Question 46:

Do you agree with the proposed definition of quality enhancement? If not, what would you change?

Before defining what it is that constitutes quality enhancement, there needs to be an agreed definition of what it is that constitutes quality in education; otherwise it will not be possible to either enhance or assure it.

It is our experience that currently, quality in education is measured by the achievement of a specified percentage of grades. From our point of view, this is not an accurate measure of quality education. We need to be vigilant regarding the use of inappropriate metrics to measure quality. Feedback from teaching professionals and employers indicate that simply achieving a particular grade of qualification, does not address the quality of the softer skills wanted by employers or of the skills needed for learning. In other words, current measures focus on the achievement of outcomes to the detriment of the quality of the process used to get there. Likewise, measuring the achievement of changing government priorities and targets, does not provide a measure of the quality of education.

Therefore, before proceeding with a definition of quality enhancement, there must be a clear and agreed definition of 'quality in education', reached in partnership with teaching professionals, including practitioners and their trade unions, which is common to all PCET sectors.

The definition of quality enhancement proposed in the consultation paper suggests that it can be defined as the processes and activities used to enhance the quality of learning; but this raises several questions:

- 1. What is the 'quality' that we want to enhance?*
- 2. How will we know that it needs to be enhanced?*
- 3. What will enhancement look like?*
- 4. Who will decide which processes and activities are appropriate and who will design them?*

UCU Wales agree that providing the commission with a statutory role to ensure quality and excellence, will provide a focus for the responsibility of developing and providing quality in education. However, we disagree that by simply placing this on a statutory footing, it will ensure that 'quality' is at the heart of planning and delivery.

To genuinely address the quality of provision, there must be genuine partnership working with education professionals, including practitioners and their trade unions, in the development of a working definition of quality and excellence in education.

This definition should then form the basis of any quality strategy adopted by the commission, which in turn should inform the overall vision and direction of quality across the whole PCET sector. Individual providers could then identify their own needs for improvement and in partnership with their teaching staff, develop strategies to meet with the Commission's definition as appropriate.

At programme level this will require different methods of delivery and will also be dependent on the type of learning environment and level of learning. The people best placed to make such judgement are those with the expertise in delivering learning.

From our perspective as an education trade union and professional association, quality in education is not about the number of students achieving top level qualifications; it is about the quality of the process that gets them there. It is also more than just the learner experience of the process, it is about the expertise of the professionals that guide them through the process. Therefore when designing processes and activities to strengthen and enhance the quality of learning, there must be consideration of how practitioners are supported in their role, to develop their own professional skills.

Quality enhancement must place emphasis on the importance of practitioner feedback and their expertise in the field of education; it should not be defined simply by student feedback on one side and employer feedback on the other.

The role of the teaching profession must be given wider consideration of its contribution to quality development than it currently is. There has been a tendency in recent years to overlook the expertise of teaching professionals. This has been particularly noticeable in the way that, despite concerns raised about workload, increasing bureaucracy and de-professionalisation, the teaching staff have been expected to deliver more qualifications, at higher grades, to more students, with fewer staff, in less time and with reduced funding; but still at a globally acceptable level of quality.

The combined effect of such factors has hugely undermined the role of pedagogy, to the detriment of the quality of education. Pedagogy, the method and practice of teaching¹ is fundamental. It deals with the theory and practice of teaching and how these influence learning. It includes the study of theories of learning, which inform the strategies and judgements taken to understand learner's needs.

If we are serious in Wales about improving the quality of teaching and learning, we must invest time and money into encouraging and promoting the development of this basic building block in our education system. No amount of tinkering with different initiatives, will improve the quality of education, if they are not based on sound pedagogic foundations. The formation of the Commission provides the perfect opportunity to rethink the way we view the role of the teaching professional and focus on their core functions.

The OCED, in their report 'What does innovation in pedagogy look like'², argue that '...to call for a pedagogical framework is to recognise the key role of pedagogy, not to ask policies to dictate the best teaching methods.' Further, the report advocates that 'Such a framework needs to start with the argument that teachers are high-level professionals whose professionalism revolves around collaborative pedagogical expertise.' A serious amount of funding must be provided for the development of pedagogy in order to focus on the role of the teacher as a creative professional. Without this, regardless of how we define it, we will thwart any attempt to truly improve the quality of the learner experience in Wales.

UCU Wales wholeheartedly endorse peer to peer support, peer review and collaboration as ways of developing professionalism to enhance learner experience and quality in education. However, there needs to be consideration of the time needed to develop knowledge and skills. As professionals, most teachers are fully aware of the need to continually develop their own skills and knowledge, but in order to do this successfully they need opportunities to engage with other professionals; to have time to research and update their subject area and pedagogic knowledge, and put this into practice; and to feel safe to experiment with new ideas and evaluate their success.

Evidence gathered from a partnership project, conducted by Louise Taylor, Merthyr College, Welsh Government and UCU Wales [link to report](#), has highlighted the success of peer observation and support, in developing confidence in professional

¹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

² https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/what-does-innovation-in-pedagogy-look-like_cca19081-en

dialogue and skills amongst the teaching staff at the college, which is reflected in feedback from learners.

Only when we have a clear definition of quality and mechanisms in place to support the development of learning processes, will we be in a position to carry out meaningful quality assurance.

We are also very clear that quality enhancement is distinctly different from quality assurance. Emphasis should be on quality enhancement, followed by quality assurance. Quality assurance alone, does not enhance quality. Quality assurance is the final 'tick in the box' that indicates that a standard has been achieved, or not; it does not support or inform the improvement of the process. Quality enhancement on the other hand, is the provision of support mechanisms, to allow professionals to develop expertise in their field.

We agree that provision should evolve and improve over time, and in response to new priorities and innovations; however there must be trust in the teaching profession to develop and practice ways of achieving targets, through providing quality educational experiences. Quality enhancement must be led by the needs of the teaching profession, if they are to achieve Welsh Government targets with an acceptable level of quality. Simply accepting that a target has been reached is not evidence of the quality of the process.

We strongly urge that quality assurance processes across the PCET sector evaluate the support mechanisms employed by the provider, to promote quality enhancement through appropriate professional development.

Therefore we would agree with the Welsh Government definition of quality enhancement, if it was clarified by stating that the processes and activities designed to improve, strengthen and enhance the quality of learning, must be developed in partnership with practitioners and their trade unions and must be designed to support and enhance professional learning, through collegiate support and activity.

For further information please see our [response to the Weingarten Review](#).

Question 47:

Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Commission's role in relation to quality enhancement? If not, what would you change?

UCU would wish to see quality enhancement as an integral part of quality assurance cycle, with the profession centre stage. Government must recognise the 'professional status' of academic staff working in the PCET sector and allow the profession to deliver the vision for PCET, assuming of course that the Government produce a document, or series of documents, which articulate their policy and their view of the roles and remits of the differing sectors within PCET.

To assume that a new Commission will succeed without a clear policy from Government on the roles and remit of the various parts of PCET would be to set the Commission up to fail in our view. The fact that we do not have access to an evaluation of why ELW failed and are able to learn the lessons of that failure, is a worrying feature of this consultation.

How is the Commission different, and why are Government persuaded that these proposals will work? What is the different vision for the Commission which will ensure that it doesn't make the same mistakes as ELWA? The absence of any reference to the lessons learned from ELWA is a worrying omission from the narrative in this consultation.

Question 48:

How could the Commission's role in workforce development be tailored to reflect the needs of different sectors and providers?

The Commission needs to engage with HEA and EWC and any other relevant bodies to ensure that their work reflects the needs of the profession in Wales and is able to deliver for the profession in Wales. We must not assume that this will happen, especially with UK bodies.

Sixth Forms

Question 49:

Should the Commission have any other powers to instigate a regulated alteration in terms of a sixth form such as closure, or is this better achieved via the negotiation of Part II of the ROAs?

UCU believe that the Commission should have a role in advising the Local Authorities and Welsh Government in relation to school closures, we do not believe they should have the final say. The politics of school closures is difficult and is a matter we believe for the politicians, as they are directly accountable to their constituents.

If the advice about the quality of the provision is given to the local authority and the Welsh Government and they choose not to make that information available to the public via their communications networks, then we as stakeholders should hold the politicians to account publically for their failure to protect the learners in a particular sixth form.

Question 50:

What reporting should be required of the local authority to show effective use of funding given for sixth form provision?

UCU is not familiar with the current reporting and therefore would not wish to comment on the detail. However on the principle we would argue strongly that the accountability must be comparable across the PCET sector.

Question 51:

Is the role of the Commission when a sixth form is judged as causing concern appropriate, or should it be different in some way?

We support the proposals in relation to funding, providing there is an alternative provision available and within easy access for the learner. If that is not the case then

an intervention must focus on maintaining the provision but ensuring that it is improved and oversight of the provision must happen to ensure the improvement.

Question 52:

Are there any other powers the Commission should have as regards sixth form provision?

UCU would like to see the regulation include a clause which would allow the commission to request additional powers, if it was able to produce an evidence base which suggested that an additional power was in the best interests of the learner.

Supporting and Developing Apprenticeships in Wales

Question 53:

Do you agree that the Commission should play a central role in delivering Welsh Apprenticeships? In particular, should the Commission have the power to issue Apprenticeship Pathways, as well as Apprenticeship Certificates?

The attempt to coordinate post-16 learning and education in Wales by the creation of a new coordinating body, the Commission is very welcome. Equally commendable is the powerful ambition to value both 'vocational' and 'academic' routes equally (although we do not accept this stark delineation between them). However, key to success in this area is the need to revisit the definition of an Apprenticeship.

In our submission to the White paper, UCU asked Professor Bill Lucas to draft our responses to the policy on Apprenticeship because we believed and still do, that we must have an academic evidence base for what works and that can deliver the Welsh Government's agenda.

We therefore respectfully suggest that a key question is missing from this consultation i.e. What definition of an 'apprenticeship' should be used by the Welsh Government? Our view, which was provided by Professor Bill Lucas in his submission to the White paper on our behalf, is as follows:

"An apprenticeship is a mutually beneficial relationship between a learner and an employer in which an individual, through a blend of on- and off-the-job methods and by working with other more skilled people, becomes competent in a chosen occupation. By competence we include both routine and non-routine expertise. Apprenticeship, in addition, equips potential employees with the habits of mind of someone who has a deep pride in the vocational activity for which they are being formed, while at the same time developing the wider skills they will need for a lifetime of working and learning. While the learning will focus on the demands of contemporary workplaces, it will also unambiguously seek to prepare the apprentice morally and socially for active citizenship."

UCU strongly urges the Welsh Government to heed the advice from experts in this field. He further argues that:

“Despite the many different kinds and levels of apprenticeships our research has suggested that there are three key features of apprenticeship learning:

- 1. The fact that they require both on and off-the-job learning.*
- 2. Their social context – that they require learning from and with others within a community of practice.*
- 3. The requirement for visibility of learning processes – as an integral aspect of the first two and as an increasingly acknowledged feature of effective learning wherever it takes place.”*

Question 54:

Which elements of the current apprenticeships system work well and should be retained and where can delivery be improved by removing complexity and onerous statutory requirements?

UCU contends that the Welsh Government need to undertake a root and branch review of apprenticeships in Wales if they are to form a part of the policy to deliver for a Prosperous Wales. Tinkering with the current system will not deliver what is needed for the economy, social well-being and the employers. A significant section of the economy is made up of small and medium size enterprises and it is this fact that should persuade the Government to seriously consider a Welsh framework that will meet the needs of the Welsh Economy, its citizens and the workforce.

Question 55:

Do you foresee any issues with the Welsh Ministers being able to determine the high level requirements for the operation of the apprenticeship system in the manner currently being proposed via the WAS?

We believe the WAS would be an appropriate vehicle to deliver for Wales, providing it incorporates our comments about how we should define an apprenticeship and takes on board our key concerns about pedagogy.

Question 56:

Do you foresee any issues, or have any comments about the reformed apprenticeship system we have proposed?

As stated previously, UCU believe that the work done by Lucas on the issue of pedagogy and apprenticeships should be a starting point to develop a Welsh approach to pedagogy within apprenticeship curriculum.

We are concerned that the Government are still viewing ‘apprentices’ as learners. Apprentices differ from school, college and university students in that they are primarily employees who are engaged in learning as a part of their employment contract.

If we ignore the employment choices of apprentices, we will be ignoring significant information which could inform the development of pedagogy.

Research and Innovation

Question 57:

Do you agree with the general proposal and detailed construction of RIW within the Commission? Please explain why.

Overall, we agree with the proposal to establish RIW as a cross-sectoral statutory committee within the Commission. However, we believe that this enhanced remit will require RIW to be more than simply a committee within the commission. Instead, we envisage a broader role for RIW as a department within the commission and as the expert body for developing and disseminating research and innovation in Wales.

Question 58:

Do you agree that RIW should have such a wide funding scope to be able to fund the activities described even if its scope is much more restricted in its final implementation and operation, i.e. should it have such flexibility? Please explain why.

We welcome the wider funding remit envisaged in the consultation. For example, we believe that the inclusion of FE colleges as collaborative partners in a new R&I framework could play a key role in ensuring applied research and innovation activities are further embedded within local communities. At the same time, the creation of new un-hypothecated funding streams should be additional forms of investment and not come at the expense of traditional Quality-Related funding (via the Research Excellence Framework).

We also note that the document talks about additional factors that may be brought into the distribution mechanism for QR funding (e.g. the reference to an 'incentive and reward system'). Given the importance of the REF as a driver of academic recognition and reward, any proposals must be subject to proper consultation with stakeholders, including trade unions.

Question 59:

Do you agree with the proposals for the relationships between the Welsh Government, the Commission and RIW and the relationships with funding recipients and R&I community? Please explain why.

We agree that the Welsh government should continue to set the overarching vision and policy in relation to research and innovation and that the Commission should be responsible for taking forward any overarching priorities on research and innovation. Within that framework, it is important for RIW to have sufficient autonomy and freedom on a day-to-day basis to carry out its functions on behalf of the commission. In addition to the proposed governance structures, this will require RIW to be fully-engaged with independent representative bodies, such as UCU Wales, NUS Wales etc., in developing its policies.

Financial and Governance Assurance

Question 60:

Do you agree that the new Commission should be given express statutory powers in relation to the assurance of financial management, financial health and governance arrangements for PCET providers?

Yes, the public purse must be protected.

Question 61:

Do you agree that all PCET providers should be subject to similar financial and governance assurance principles? Should the Commission be enabled to apply different arrangements and requirements to different types or categories of PCET providers?

Yes, and there must be a process to ensure that differing arrangements do actually articulate the general principles, a matter for council review in the appropriate sub group.

Question 62:

Do you agree with the proposal to enable the proposed Commission to publish a formal set of requirements and conditions as well as to issue guidance to providers and to advise them of good practice?

Yes, and there must be known consequences of ignoring the advice on good practice.

Question 63:

Do you agree with the proposal to provide the Commission with enabling functions and that legislation should set out a broad framework for financial and governance assurance with the Commission given discretion to develop its requirements within that framework?

Yes.

Question 64:

Do you agree that:

a) the Commission should be placed under a duty to consult with PCET providers and any other persons it considers appropriate in the development of its financial and governance assurance arrangements?

Yes, this should be a statutory requirement and it must involve staff representatives.

b) the Welsh Ministers should be able to issue guidance to the Commission with regard to financial and governance arrangements and that the Commission be required to take such guidance into account?

Yes, Welsh Ministers must be able to look after the public purse, they after all are accountable to the electorate.

c) the above requirements would provide sufficient safeguard in respect of the scope and reach of the Commission's financial and governance assurance arrangements? Are there any other safeguards you consider to be necessary?

n/a

Question 65:

Do you have any comments or concerns about the proposal for the Commission to request information from PCET providers, undertake periodic assurance reviews, enter premises and inspect documents or materials in support of its financial and governance assurance functions?

Our concern is that it happens, especially in the private companies who will be contracted to deliver PCET.

Question 66:

Do you agree that the Commission should have a range of intervention powers at its disposal to deal with failure to comply with financial and governance assurance requirements?

Yes, our view is that a mechanism must be found to intervene at the earliest possible stage and not wait until the curriculum and the jobs of staff are put at risk by inadequate governance. UCU continues to be concerned about the calibre of governors at some institutions in Wales and we must find a way to address this issue.

As a member of the panel UCU argued strongly that the recent FE guidance should have training for the role front and centre in the guidance- yet again our views were ignored.

Question 67:

Do you agree with the proposal that the Welsh Ministers should retain their powers of intervention under section 57 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and that the Commission should be enabled to make recommendations to the Welsh Ministers as to the exercise of those powers?

Yes. We see no reason to change these arrangements.

Question 68:

Do you agree with the proposal that the Welsh Government should explore the possibility of transferring the Principal Charity Regulator role for FE institutions to the proposed Commission? What are your views on the proposal to retain the current requirement for HE institutions in Wales to register with the Charity Commission?

UCU would want to see both FE and HE institutions register with the charity commission and the regulator role lie with the commission.

HE Governance

Question 69:

Do you agree that those amendments to HEIs governing documents considered to be in the public interest should continue to be subject to oversight and the approval of the Privy Council?

Yes. We have seen recent attempts by institutions such as the University of Leeds to undermine employment rights by altering their statutes; ensuring that the Privy Council has final approval on changes ensures additional scrutiny where such attempts are made.

Question 70:

Do you consider the proposed extension of the 2006 reallocation approach for the amendment of HEIs governing documents to be appropriate? If not, why?

UCU strongly advocate that this should be considered by the commission, once it has had time to establish itself, this should not be a priority. We would like to see a operational period of at least 3 years for the new commission before this issue is addressed.

Question 71:

Do you agree that existing statutory requirements that apply to HECs governing documents should be removed so that the proposed approach can be extended to all higher education institutions?

We are extremely wary of this proposal, but would wish to give further consideration to this proposal at an appropriate time. Now is not an appropriate time.

Question 72:

Do you agree with the Commission's proposed role in relation to the consideration of amendments to HEIs governing documents?

Yes at an appropriate time, assuming we have a role in developing the guidance. Our concerns in relation to the efficacy of governance in Wales' institutions are still very real and recent events at HE institutions evidence what happens to our members' jobs, when effective governance is absent.

Question 73:

To support the proposed approach, do you agree that:

- a) the Welsh Government should issue guidance on the procedure for amending governing documents?

Yes, in consultation with stakeholders at an appropriate time

- b) the Commission should review the 2006 list of public interest matters in consultation with stakeholders and issue guidance on those matters that will continue to be subject to Privy Council oversight and approval?

Yes, in consultation with stakeholders at an appropriate time

- c) the Welsh Government be enabled to issue guidance to the Commission in relation to the public interest matters that should continue to be subject to oversight and approval?

Yes at an appropriate time.

Question 74:

Do you consider that the proposed approach would safeguard the public interest in the governance arrangements of HEIs in Wales?

Yes, but again at an appropriate time- not at the same time as establishing the commission

Question 75:

We would welcome views on whether this arrangement should continue to operate in future so that the Welsh Ministers would be required to consult with the Commission and the HEC in question or whether provision should be made for these powers to be exercisable only upon recommendation by the Commission.

Due care would need to be taken if this was enacted as it would leave the commission open to a challenge through judicial review, as has been seen in previous merger discussions in South East Wales.

Question 76:

Which option do you consider to be the most appropriate and why? Are there other options that should be considered?

We believe that there probably should be some powers to dissolve institutions

Question 77:

Under what conditions or circumstances do you consider it appropriate for dissolution powers to be exercised?

As an absolute last resort, when all other options have failed

Question 78:

Should dissolution powers only be exercisable on recommendation of the Commission? If so, should this also be extended to the existing arrangements for FE institutions?

We support the statement in clause 398 of the consultation exercise- that we need to maintain some powers of dissolution. But thought will need to be given on how to protect the commission from legal challenges

Question 79:

Do you agree with the proposed approach, i.e. that no significant changes should be made to the current procedures and criteria for granting DAPs and UT in Wales for the present time?

Yes, we need time for the new Commission to establish itself and look at the long term needs of Wales and the international reputation of the sector in Wales- we do not want to open up to the private sector as they have done in England as we are concerned that this approach poses a significant risk to quality and the international reputation of HE.

Question 80:

Do you agree with the Commission's proposed role in relation to the consideration of DAPs and UT applications in Wales?

Yes, we agree. It is essential that we develop a system that protects the international reputation of Welsh HE, but recognises the future needs of FE in relation to FDAPS.

Question 81:

Do you agree that the Commission should consider the effectiveness of existing arrangements for the delivery of HE in FE as part of its wider strategic remit for PCET provision?

Absolutely, it must look in detail at the impact of franchising across Wales and its potential to hinder the developments within the PCET sector, which we believe the Welsh Government need to support.

Supporting the Welsh Language**Question 82:**

Do you agree that the Commission should be placed under a specific duty to have regard to the Welsh language in the exercise of its functions?

Yes, UCU Cymru believe that the Welsh Language is an import part of the distinct culture of Wales and the PCET sector.

Question 83:

In having regard to the Welsh language, do you agree the Commission should be expected to consider matters such as:

- the Welsh Government's vision for a million Welsh speakers by 2050;
- the adequacy of existing provision of education through the medium of Welsh;
- how it can support existing provision through the medium of Welsh;
- how current provision through the medium of Welsh can be developed;
- promoting the Welsh language throughout the PCET sector?

Yes, but we are concerned about the absence of the term 'bi-lingual.' Is it the case that we will no longer be delivering bi-lingual provision, if so we believe this will have an impact on the willingness of staff to develop their language skills? The ability to deliver bi-lingual education does provide a safety net for those starting to use the Welsh language to deliver the curriculum.

Question 84:

What are your views regarding the future relationship between the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Commission? Please include comments on the relationship regarding funding of the Coleg and its operational activities as well as the accountability of the Coleg to the Commission.

UCU support the suggestion that the Coleg should broaden its remit to include the whole of the PCET sector.

Question 85:

What are your views regarding the future relationship between the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Commission? Please include comments on the relationship regarding funding and operational activities of the National Centre and accountability of it to the Commission.

We have nothing to contribute to this question.

Data, Statistics and Research**Question 86:**

What are your views on the new body taking ownership of datasets currently owned by the Welsh Government and other agencies?

Clearly that will be a requirement to ensure they can effectively monitor the PCET sector. However, we await the Weingarten review with anticipation, we are hopeful that he will recommend a very strict regime in line with the new GDPR regulations and that data will only be collected if it can be evidenced that it enhances learning.

Collecting data for any other purpose in the PCET sector detracts from the job in hand. The slavish attachment to data to evidence value for money must be seriously challenged, as we believe more effective measures are learner outcomes and added value.

All this though is predicated on the fact that we know what it is the Government are expecting of the PCET sector in terms of its mission- and we don't. This omission must be rectified soon as the government need to be clear about the role and function of the PCET sector if the new body and indeed its precursors are going to be able to start to develop ideas in relation to strategic planning and the operational structures needed to deliver the strategic plan. Assuming for example as the proposals do that the Commission needs so many statutory committee, before it is clear what the Commission is being tasked to deliver is in our view putting the cart before the horse. Clearly some of the committees will be fundamental given the size and budget of the new Commission, but setting up all the committees up via statute seems to us to be trying, yet again, to control the operation of the Commission and we believe that will undermine its ability to operate effectively.

Surely the Government must trust the new body to deliver on its vision for Post-16 and to make the decisions about which committees it needs to ensure that it can deliver on its remit.

Question 87:

Do you consider that a duty should be placed upon secondary schools and other learning providers and examining bodies to share data about learners' characteristics and attainment, with a new learning provider with which a learner is enrolling?

Absolutely, much of the time of FE staff in the first few weeks of term are spent assessing learners who have just arrived from the school sector. It is shameful that the information about their characteristics and attainment isn't able to be used reliably- they have to sit the WEST tests to evaluate their ability. UCU believe that WEST testing should be rolled out across schools in Wales so that the assessment can help the school teachers differentiate their delivery in the classroom.

Question 88:

Are there any further powers, duties or other matters that should be considered in developing proposals for these functions of the new body?

No

Student Finance Issues**Question 89:**

Could an increase in the availability of accelerated degrees better meet the needs of employers and learners in Wales?

UCU supports flexible provision which meets learner needs, but has raised a number of serious concerns about accelerated degrees, including their potential to:

- make it harder for students to combine study with periods of reflection, critical thinking and a 'deep approach' to learning, therefore undermining the student experience*
- reduce opportunities for students to engage in part-time employment over the course of their studies, which has implications for equality*
- disadvantage student parents; those with caring responsibilities; and students whose disabilities mean that they might benefit from low-intensity study*
- encroach upon academics' time for other scholarly activity and CPD, and increase the divide between HE teaching and research*
- drive negative working conditions for staff since they encourage employers to offer casualised terms and conditions on summer 'semesters' through short-term and precarious contracts.*

UCU is further concerned that the agenda around accelerated degrees is being driven forward with very limited evidence of demand, and on the basis of economic rather than educational benefit.

Question 90:

Do the current legislative arrangements, in particular the absence of distinct fee limit for accelerated courses restrict the development and delivery of accelerated degrees in Wales?

No. UCU does not believe that fee limits are the issue with accelerated degrees, rather the various practical and educational down-sides listed above.

Question 91:

How might accelerated degrees be defined?

If we decide to amend current legislative arrangements to facilitate the development of accelerated degrees then we must use the HEFCE definition. It makes no sense for Wales to have a separate system, it would cause confusion and be compared against England and cause problems for large employers, especially those that operate in England and Wales.

Question 92:

What are your views about the potential costs associated with delivery of two-year accelerated degrees? In particular what are the potential implications for tuition fees chargeable for such courses and for maintenance support for eligible students?

Where accelerated degrees do occur, maintenance should be provided on the same basis as the maintenance package for the traditional 3 year undergraduate degree. UCU would expect the costs of the degree to be similar as arguably the inputs are the same and there are no additional costs associated with the delivery. However, we reject the rationale for it being "better value for students" for the reasons listed above - instead we assume that they actually mean a 'cheaper option.'

Question 93:

Are there any other matters relating to accelerated degrees that you consider should be taken into account?

No.

Question 94:

Do you agree with the proposal that the Commission should have regulatory oversight of all HE providers in Wales seeking designation of their HE courses for the purpose of student support?

Yes, it makes sense for Wales to have one body that is responsible for maintaining the quality and delivery of PCET

Question 95:

Do you agree with the proposal that there should continue to be two categories of course designation for providers of HE in Wales for the purpose of student support?

Yes, providing sufficient oversight is a statutory requirement for category 2 designation.

Question 96:

Which of the three options do you consider to be most appropriate and why?
Do you think that HE providers outside Wales should also be required to satisfy one of the three options?

UCU support option (a) providers seeking course designation in either category would be required to be charities. We do not believe that the monies from the public purse should become profits for the private sector. Wales has a proud record of investing in education for its population, we should strongly resist any attempt to undermine that culture. A large Commission should be able to plan appropriately so that no learner is disadvantaged by this requirement. The principle surely must be that they can access education to meet their needs.

Question 97:

Are there any other matters which you consider should be taken into account in respect of the proposed arrangements for the designation of HE courses for the purpose of student support?

No

Question 98:

To help inform our assessment of the possible impact of these proposals, can you foresee any particular impact on those with protected characteristics (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) and how they might be particularly affected by these proposals?

No, but the Commission will be required to equality impact assess its policy and actions under the Specific duties, so we are content that issues about implementation will be picked up during the transition period as the proposals are discussed and implemented. Each of the changes/proposals would need to be equality impact assessed and that information should be available from the start of the process and be amended as proposals are refined or changed.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Nothing further to add

Question 99:

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have :

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

As stated above, providing the operational plans are equality impact assessed properly, we believe the issues which arise could be dealt with during the transition.

Question 100: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

UCU would propose that you consider the name of the new commission. The use of the term 'tertiary' has a very specific meaning in Wales and we believe that that term should be dropped. We also believe that tagging it with Wales will undermine one of the key proposals within Reid in terms of having a presence in London and changing the perception of Welsh research. The government seriously consider calling it 'The Education and Research Council.'

We were struck by the absence of any mention of careers advice within the proposals. This is an issue which must be addressed and we were expecting it to be acknowledged and some thought given to it in the narrative, even if no specific proposals were made.