

Terms of reference

Task Force to support UK higher education in maintaining and extending its position as a world leader in online learning

Established July 2009

The task force will make recommendations to the Higher Education Funding Council for England and other relevant agencies and institutions regarding the development of excellence in online learning, to support UK higher education (HE) in exploiting fully its pedagogical and commercial opportunities¹, with the aim of the UK HE sector sustaining its excellence and growing its market share in such provision by 2015

To achieve this, the task force will:

- Identify opportunities for investment leading to further innovation within and between universities and colleges in the development of online learning, to include informal and flexible entry pathways and the building of critical mass.
- Identify ways in which collaboration between universities and colleges, and other organisations in the public and private sectors, can be further enhanced.
- Identify ways in which universities and colleges can do more to encourage new students (and new types of students), both in the UK and internationally, to engage with UK HE.
- Identify what further steps might be necessary to help UK HE to take advantage of new and expanding international markets, by, among other work, collecting evidence of the current position, competition, and barriers.
- Identify ways in which staff with teaching responsibilities can best adapt and expand their capabilities in order to support a new generation of online and blended-provision learners, and continue to meet these needs as technology develops further.
- Make recommendations to HEFCE and other agencies, especially the JISC and Higher Education Academy in order to stimulate the identification and growth of good practice and innovation in online learning.
- Encourage co-operation between UK funding bodies, universities and colleges to support this strategy.

¹ Online learning in higher education, Professor Sir Ron Cooke, October 2008, http://www.dius.gov.uk/higher_education/shape_and_structure/he_debate/~media/publications/O/online_innovation_in_he_131008

Membership

Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor, Open University
Steve Beswick, UK Director of Education, Microsoft
Dame Lynne Brindley (Chair), Chief Executive, British Library
Professor Philip Garrahan, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University
Professor Caroline Gipps, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
Richard Halkett, Director of Strategy and Research, Cisco
Sharon Huttly, Professor and Dean of Studies,
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive, HEFCE
Sobroto Mozumdar, President of Higher and Professional Education, Pearson
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Mike Munn, Director for Higher Education for UK and Ireland, Apple
Don Olcott, Chief Executive, The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
Professor Tim O'Shea, Principal, Edinburgh University and Chair of JISC
Aaron Porter, Vice President (Higher Education), National Union of Students
Professor Gilly Salmon, University of Leicester
Professor Rick Trainor, Principal, Kings College London
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John Widdowson, Principal, New College Durham
Martin Williams, Director of Higher Education, Department for Business,
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