

July 2003/36

Policy development

**Consultation**

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Comments should be sent to HEFCE  
by Friday 24 October 2003

This document invites higher education institutions to contribute to the development of proposals for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). It sets out our proposed approach to these centres and selection method, and prompts institutions to provide feedback. Information on CETL consultation seminars is provided. This document also invites nominations for membership of a panel to assess bids and selection of CETLs.

# Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

**Formal consultation**

## Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

### Formal consultation

To Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions  
Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges  
Heads of universities in Northern Ireland

Of interest to those responsible for Academic and strategic planning

Reference 2003/36

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### Executive summary

#### Purpose

1. This document invites higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs) to contribute to the development of proposals for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. It sets out our proposed approach to these centres and selection method, and prompts institutions to provide feedback on the proposals.

#### Key points

2. This consultation builds on proposals set out in our strategic plan and the Government's higher education (HE) White Paper 'The future of higher education'. The proposals focus on our twin aims for this initiative – to reward excellent teaching practice and to invest in that practice further so that the funding delivers substantial benefits to institutions, teachers and students.

3. We are proposing five main objectives for the funding:

- to reward practice that demonstrates excellent learning outcomes for students
- to identify 'beacons' of good teaching practice and encourage development of this practice so that the benefits are delivered more widely
- to enable institutions to develop approaches to teaching and learning that encourage a deeper understanding within the sector of methods of addressing student learning needs
- to encourage collaboration and sharing of good practice and so enhance the standard of teaching throughout the sector
- to contribute to the information available to inform student choice.

To emphasise the importance of the way in which we hope centres will develop overall understanding of excellent teaching, we are suggesting that they are called Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

4. We are suggesting that a CETL could be described in a number of ways, and invite institutions to identify and describe what is distinctive about their teaching practice that makes it excellent. In this way we hope that institutions will think flexibly and creatively about how they define their excellent practice beyond departmental or subject boundaries. We suggest that distinctive practice could be across a spectrum of activities; be based on sub-degree, degree and/or postgraduate provision and include teams of both academic and support staff.
5. Through the funding of this initiative we wish to encourage institutions to reward excellent teaching practitioners; develop existing excellent practice; develop innovative approaches to learning and teaching, and share and embed this learning. We think that CETLs will have different ideas about how they wish to do this, and will invite institutions to submit business plans to describe their plans. We are committed to building complementary roles for CETLs and the proposed HE Academy for quality enhancement, so that the Academy is able to effectively disseminate the work of the CETLs while they focus on delivery and development of teaching.
6. We have suggested an alternative approach to the funding levels and numbers of CETLs which gives institutions more flexibility to determine the size of the funding required. We propose that institutions could bid for between £200,000 and £500,000 per year in recurrent funding over the five years and up to £2 million in capital funding. We hope that this would result in more than 70 CETLs being established and at sizes that make sense for institutions.
7. We would welcome bids from individual institutions and collaborative bids from any institution directly funded by HEFCE, including further education colleges with over 500 full-time equivalent (FTE) directly funded HE students. Collaborative bids could include directly and indirectly funded partners, and include staff funded through the Teacher Training Agency and NHS. We plan to limit the number of bids an institution can make based on the size of the bidding institution.
8. The selection method we have outlined is in two stages. The first stage would focus on evidencing the identified excellent practice and would include an outline business case of how the CETL would develop and use the funding. The second stage requires institutions to develop a detailed business plan, and we would provide some funding towards the cost of this. We have reviewed the selection method to ensure we are not placing an undue administrative burden on institutions and have considered how institutions can use existing information in support of their bid.
9. The assessment of bids and selection of CETLs will be undertaken by a sub-group of the Quality Assessment, Learning and Teaching (QALT) Committee. We are inviting nominations for membership of this assessment panel: Annex D provides further details.

Action required

10. Respondents are asked to:
  - a. Return their responses to the consultation questions at Annex A by e-mail to [cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk) by **Friday 24 October 2003**.
  - b. Return their delegate booking form for the consultation seminars referred to in Annex B to [cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk) by **Tuesday 26 August 2003**.
  - c. Return their nominations for membership of the assessment panel referred to in Annex D to [p.hazell@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:p.hazell@hefce.ac.uk) by **Friday 24 October 2003**.
  
11. In the interests of openness and transparency, we will make responses publicly available unless respondents specifically ask us to keep them confidential.

## **Background**

12. We said in our draft strategic plan (HEFCE 2003/12) that we would consult on Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning as part of our quality enhancement strategy. Our strategic plan describes the role of CETLs as rewarding demonstrable excellence and as an investment in developing effective pedagogy that reflects new modes of teaching and learning and the growing diversity of learner needs. The initiative builds on previous HEFCE investments in learning and teaching through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (HEFCE 02/24) and represents substantial additional new funding for quality enhancement. It was first announced in the 2003 Government HE White Paper 'The future of higher education'.

13. We have received some initial feedback on the initiative directly from HE institutions and at the HEFCE annual conference held in April. We have attempted to address some of the strongest concerns from the sector in this consultation, and we welcome further feedback either in writing to the questions in Annex A or by participating at one of the consultation events to be held in September 2003. Details of these events are at Annex B.

## **Aims and objectives of the initiative**

14. Our vision is to build on the concepts described in the White Paper to create vibrant, dynamic centres for excellence that draw attention to effective methods of teaching and learning, celebrate good practice and encourage sharing with others. We believe that funding for CETLs should reward excellent learning and teaching practice that has produced demonstrably good learning outcomes for students. However, the fund should also represent a future investment to develop this good practice further for the benefit of students and for quality enhancement in the sector more generally. So CETLs should represent the very best in quality enhancement activity, acting as a focus to influence the design of teaching and learning within their institution and beyond through collaboration and development opportunities.

15. Over the five years of funding, we believe that collectively CETLs will have had a significant impact on learning and teaching within the sector. By 2010, we hope that some CETLs will have pioneered innovative learning approaches, extended the use of new technology and maybe even taken some calculated risks to break new ground in their areas of excellence. In partnership with the proposed HE Academy for quality enhancement, we hope that all CETLs will have raised the profile of effective teaching and had a positive effect on student outcomes. There are examples of excellent teaching practice throughout the sector, in all types of institutions, and in all regions. This initiative is an opportunity to highlight these achievements.

16. Our aim is that CETLs will both reward excellent existing practice, and invest in enhancing this practice further over the five years of funding. To meet these aims we think that there are five main objectives of the initiative:

- to reward practice that demonstrates excellent learning outcomes for students
- to identify beacons of good teaching practice and encourage development of this practice so that the benefits are delivered more widely

- to enable institutions to develop approaches to teaching and learning that encourage a deeper understanding within the sector of methods of addressing student learning needs
- to encourage collaboration and sharing of good practice and so enhance the standard of teaching throughout the sector
- to contribute to the information available to inform student choice.

17. In selecting CETLs we will not only look for existing excellent practice, but also at plans to develop this further. We think that this focus on development and enhancement is vital if we are to meet the broader quality enhancement objectives set out in our strategic plan. We would also not want to lose sight of the student learning experience as a key success factor in teaching. This is why we propose the title Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning as an accurate reflection of our proposals for such centres.

#### **Consultation question**

A. Do you agree with the proposed aims and objectives of the initiative?

#### **Characteristics of a CETL**

18. There are a diverse range of approaches to learning and teaching in the HE sector, which are appropriate to institutional missions and student needs. We want to celebrate and encourage that diversity, while identifying and rewarding instances where an institution and its staff have achieved something distinctive in their practice that has led to good learning outcomes. Hence we do not think we could and should devise an assessment system that ranks institutions on a simple scale of excellence. Instead we should invite institutions to define and describe a particular focus in their teaching and learning practice.

19. We therefore propose that institutions should be invited to define the focus of the CETL that they have put forward for funding both in terms of what it does and who does it. This focus (the 'what it does') would need to be defined in terms of a distinctive approach to learning and teaching, that has delivered excellent learning and that the institution wishes to identify as a model of excellent practice. We do not believe that the focus of a CETL need be a single department. Increasingly provision is flexible and modular, and hence courses may not have one-to-one mapping between a department and provision and practice. Also some institutions do not structure their teaching around departments. The CETL could be based in a department at subject level, or equally could cut across subject, department, faculty or institutional boundaries. It could include sub-degree, degree and/or postgraduate provision, part- or full-time students.

20. We think that an institution could define distinctive practice across a spectrum of learning and teaching activities, for example a CETL could focus on:

- a. A form of teaching (examples: lecturing, distance and online learning, research-led teaching, mentoring).

- b. A way of conceptualising, organising or supporting student learning (examples: small group discussions, laboratory, studio work, study skills support, student-centred learning, games and simulations, peer tutoring).
- c. A way of designing the curriculum, including its assessment (examples: problem-based learning, work placements, work-based learning, personal development plans, online assessment, formative assessment).
- d. A goal of higher education (examples: employability, creativity, critical thinking, widening access and/or participation, enterprise, social inclusion, autonomous learning).
- e. An identified issue or problem area in teaching HE (examples: addressing the needs of ethnic/cultural minorities, internationalising the curriculum, plagiarism, mental illness, student feedback).

21. The focus would also need to be defined in terms of the staff who contribute to teaching in relation to that particular approach. In addition to academic staff, this group could include subject librarians, technical and learning support staff or administrators that support delivery of teaching. As a CETL develops it could also draw in other staff to work with the core as required, but at its heart there would be a defined group of staff identified with the CETL. These staff would be the recipients of the reward element, in recognition of their contribution towards the distinctive practice of the CETL.

22. These proposals mean that it will be important for institutions to clearly define the focus of the CETL so that we can see how HEFCE funding will be used to both reward and to support and extend that defined approach. Annex C provides a range of examples of how we visualise the focus of CETLs. In addition, if institutions wish to publicise their CETL status to prospective students it will be important to make clear the basis on which the claim has been made in marketing or publicity material.

**Consultation question**

B. This proposal allows an institution flexibility to identify an area of excellence that is appropriate to its institutional mission and student needs and that can cut across departmental divides. Do you agree with this approach?

**Purpose of CETL funding**

23. We envisage a number of ways in which CETL funding could be used by institutions. In terms of our objectives for the funding, it could be used to:

- a. **Reward excellent practitioners.** One of the aims of this initiative is to reward core CETL staff for their excellent practice. We think that a CETL can interpret 'reward' broadly – financial rewards such as bonus or promotions or non-financial rewards like time and funding for visits, more time to teach, reduced staff:student ratios and better facilities. We would expect any reward strategy for CETL staff to be an integral and coherent part of the institution's overall human resources (HR) strategy, which all HEIs submitted to HEFCE in 2001-02 to release funding under our Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education initiative. We recognise that the current CETL

proposal is a fixed term initiative and that there potentially would be an ongoing commitment placed on institutions at the end of the CETL funding. We would therefore encourage institutions to consider their exit strategy, particularly for financial rewards, at the end of five years.

b. **Develop existing excellent practice.** CETLs would do more of the identified excellent practice to extend its benefit to their students, consistent with the institution's priorities and mission. For example, CETLs could improve facilities through capital expenditure; design new courses or redesign existing ones; act as a hub for innovation; work with other parts of the institution at extending the type of teaching to other students; extend the use of learning materials or develop new ones, perhaps in collaboration with other CETLs or the HE Academy and Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Subject Centres so that the benefits are delivered more widely.

c. **Develop innovative approaches to learning and teaching.** We would expect CETLs to have a scholarly approach to the design and development of teaching within the centre and to consider how this can be transferred more widely. CETLs could undertake action research into their pedagogy; buy-in expertise to develop the approach further; use capital to upgrade IT or other technologies; act as a hub for innovation/experimentation, or work with others to extend the pedagogic approach within the institution or more broadly.

d. **Share this learning and embed change.** Our vision of CETLs is that they will be outward focused with a clear dissemination strategy that will effect real change within their institution and/or partner institutions. For example, CETLs could provide opportunities for inward or outward secondments; undertake staff development within their institution; collaborate on activities with other parts of the institution or other institutions; contribute to the dissemination activities undertaken by the proposed HE Academy, including the LTSN Subject Centres.

24. We think that the balance of how funding is used against these four areas will differ between CETLs because we would expect it to reflect institutions' strategic objectives. As part of the bidding process we will ask institutions to provide us with business plans that describe how they would use the funding. We would expect at least 80 per cent of the funding to be used within the CETL to reward, enhance and develop practice. However, some funding could be used to spread practice within the institution or more widely.

25. We think that the focal point for CETLs would be teaching and the development and enhancement of that teaching. We do not envisage CETLs duplicating the role of the HE Academy or LTSN Subject Centres by primarily focusing on dissemination activity. However, we believe that enhancing the standard of teaching by sharing good practice is a key objective of CETLs and that they could use available networks, like the HE Academy, to do this. We would suggest that CETLs should be committed to engaging with the broader community and sharing their learning through a dissemination strategy, but working with the HE Academy to do this rather than undertaking dissemination activity in isolation.

26. We will be considering the relationship between the proposed HE Academy and the CETLs as proposals for the HE Academy develop. The HE Academy was suggested as part of the final report of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee (on the HEFCE web-site, [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Learning and teaching/TQEC) to bring together quality enhancement (QE) activity into a single agency. Rather than duplication, we see the CETLs complementing and adding value to existing QE activity – whether internal educational development units or Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund projects, or external QE organisations such as the HE Academy, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), and the Association for Learning Technology (ALT). Again, business plans will give institutions the opportunity to describe how they would strike this balance and work with QE organisations.

#### **Consultation questions**

C. Do you agree with how we have defined the purpose of CETL funding?

D. We have proposed complementary roles for CETLs and the HE Academy (including LTSN Subject Centres), so that CETLs focus on development, delivery and dissemination strategies, and the HE Academy on dissemination practice but with the expectation of strong links between them. Do you agree with this approach?

#### **Funding levels**

27. We have expanded our thinking about the level of funding and the number of centres from the original proposals in our strategic plan to fund 70 CETLs at £500,000 per year for five years. We were concerned about the impact of the proposed level of funding on smaller institutions' strategic direction and the creation of artificial collaborations to achieve threshold sizes. This has been mirrored by sector feedback that has suggested that we would be better able to meet the initiative's objectives by funding more centres at a lower level.

28. Our preference is to use a funding allocation model that allows institutions to bid at an appropriate level for their size and planned level of activity. The level of funding should have a significant impact on the institution and beyond, but should not unbalance an institution's strategic direction. A possible alternative is to allow institutions to submit bids at a level at which they believe most appropriate – for recurrent funding we suggest this could be from £200,000 per year, up to a maximum of £500,000 per year, for the five years of funding. For the accompanying capital funding we suggest that requirements are integrated into the business plan, so that institutions could bid for a capital allocation from £800,000 up to a maximum of £2 million to reflect activity set out in their plans. We are committed to awarding a minimum of 70 CETLs, but we would expect to fund more than this, depending on bids received.

29. We recognise that this approach has implications on how institutions define CETLs. We believe that there would need to be a clear correlation between the level of funding sought and the defined focus of the CETL so that it demonstrated value for money. We also think that the focus of CETL funding should not be so broad that it incorporates the whole institution (except perhaps for smaller institutions) because this does not meet our objectives of

providing clear beacons of excellence. Nor should the focus of the funding be so narrow that it dilutes the impact of the CETL within the institution.

#### **Consultation question**

E. Do you agree with the proposed approach to funding levels?

#### **Selection process**

30. In considering the selection process, we have thought about how we can keep the administrative burden on institutions to a minimum while still achieving the objectives of the initiative. We concluded that a previous track record in excellent teaching would be a core criterion in deciding how to award funds. A simple method of allocating funding might therefore be to use existing measures, such as Teaching Quality Assurance (TQA) scores. However, we decided that these data would not be sufficiently up-to-date or consistent for all institutions to be suitable. Nor would it be appropriate to set up separate mechanisms for inspection of provision as this would create unnecessary burden on institutions.

31. We have therefore considered ways in which institutions are able to use evidence they should have already, or will be assembling as part of the information on quality and standards in HE, as proposed in the report of the Task Group (HEFCE 02/15). In addition, and to reflect the investment element of the initiative, we propose making judgements based on future plans as well as previous record.

32. To reduce the risk of wasted effort in preparing bids, we are proposing a selection process with two parts. The first part focuses on demonstrating existing excellent teaching outcomes and practice plus an outline business case. From those successful at stage one, we would invite a shortlist of institutions to prepare more detailed business plans for stage two. To inform our proposals, we assessed this process through our internal accountability scorecard to look at focus, relevance, value and burden and believe that this approach is appropriate to the level of funding and value of securing a CETL. We would welcome comments as part of the consultation as to whether we have gauged this correctly.

33. We are proposing to select CETLs using a peer assessment process and suggest that this would be carried out by a sub-group of the Quality Assurance Learning & Teaching (QALT) Committee and chaired by a member of QALT. Other members of the group would be drawn from teaching practitioners from within the sector – Annex D invites nominations for the assessment panel with details of the selection criteria. We would also ask the HE Academy for nominations and take its advice on the final selection of panel members. In the case of subject-specific bids, the panel could choose to take specialist advice from LTSN Subject Centres if appropriate.

34. We believe that we will need to limit the number of bids to ensure a cost-effective competition. We therefore suggest that the number of bids that can be submitted is capped based on size of institution:

- institutions with fewer than 5,000 FTE students = 1 individual bid
- institutions with between 5,000 and 15,000 FTE students = 2 individual bids

- institutions with over 15,000 FTE students = 3 individual bids
- in addition, each institution would be able to participate in one collaborative bid with other institutions.

35. We would welcome both single-institution and collaborative bids. We suggest that any institution directly funded by HEFCE, including further education colleges with over 500 FTE directly funded HE students, could submit a single institution bid, while collaborative bids could include directly and indirectly funded partners. Collaborative bids could link areas of excellence between institutions with for example, common learning and teaching (L&T) approaches, mission or geography, or be based on existing partnerships that deliver excellent teaching. Identified teaching teams within CETLs could also include staff funded through the Teacher Training Agency and NHS.

36. Despite capping the number of bids per institution, if all eligible institutions were to submit the maximum number of bids suggested in paragraph 34 above, we could receive in excess of 350 bids, towards an estimated 70 successful CETLs. We would therefore urge institutions to think carefully about whether to submit bids given the amount of resource required to assemble the submission and the strong competition for the funding.

#### **Consultation questions**

F. In thinking about this initiative and the selection method, we have been mindful of the need to minimise the burden we impose on institutions. Given the size of funding, have we gauged this correctly or are there areas where we are imposing a disproportionate burden on institutions that we have not considered?

G. Do you think this selection method is robust and transparent?

#### **First stage bids**

37. At stage one we thought that a template set of questions would be the most appropriate way to structure bids for funding. These questions would prompt institutions to consider:

- a. The definition of the CETL, its focus, and its aims and objectives.
- b. The fit of the CETL with the institution's strategic objectives and L&T strategy, and how teaching excellence is currently recognised.
- c. The track record of delivering excellent learning outcomes for students within the proposed CETL.
- d. A rationale of why the practice of the proposed CETL is excellent, including design and method of delivery.
- e. The track record in the development and enhancement of provision by the proposed CETL (based on programmes of study currently running).
- f. An outline business case for the CETL that briefly describes the kinds of activity the proposed centre might undertake and the impact of funding, given the required funding level.

38. We would ask institutions to submit evidence in support of the bids. Annex E provides our initial thoughts on the kinds of evidence that we think an institution might provide. We believe that much of the suggested evidence should already be available in institutions as they form part of the requirements suggested by the final report of the Task Group on information for quality and standards in HE (HEFCE 02/15).

39. We propose assessing first stage bids primarily against the track record of the proposed CETL at delivering excellent outcomes for students through its teaching practice. We want to ensure that we identify CETLs that have inspired their students and enabled them to maximise their achievements and learning outcomes from HE.

40. We think that it will be important for CETLs to be fully supported by their institution, and that the institution is committed to investing in learning and teaching activity. We are therefore proposing to use fit with institutional strategies (corporate, L&T and HR) as a measure of institutional commitment and will look at the extent to which the CETL proposals fit with these documents.

41. In claiming excellence we also think that the proposed CETL should demonstrate that its teaching is fit for purpose with a scholarly approach to its design and delivery. We would like CETLs to embed pedagogy into their teaching methods so that these methods or approaches can be developed and transferred more widely. We are therefore proposing to also assess bids on the extent to which content, design and delivery of teaching are approached in a methodical and scholarly way. We would regard external awards as a way in which quality of provision has been recognised, for example awards from professional bodies or HEFCE awards like the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) or Fund for Development of Teaching & Learning (FDTL).

42. Given our objective to develop good teaching practice, we would consider the extent to which a proposed CETL could demonstrate a strong track record in undertaking enhancement and development activities, both internally and in partnership with other institutions or agencies. We would also assess the impact and feasibility of the business case against the funding level requested and the extent to which this represented good value for money.

43. From an assessment of these criteria, the selection panel would invite a shortlist of proposals to submit bids at the second stage. As all the bids selected would have demonstrated that they are delivering excellent outcomes through excellent teaching practice we think that they could therefore badge the identified provision as 'commended for excellence' whether or not they were successful at the second stage. This could be used in marketing and publicity material to help identify excellent provision for potential students when making choices on future study.

#### **Consultation questions**

H. Do you agree with the proposals for evidencing excellent teaching outcomes and practice? Do the examples of evidence in Annex E help to clarify our expectations?

I. Are there further criteria that we should consider including?

J. Do you agree think that the proposals for 'commended for excellence' are a useful way of identifying excellent provision for students?

## Second stage bids

44. At stage two, we propose asking institutions for detailed business plans and would like to provide development funding as a contribution towards the cost of these. We think that the plans would include what the CETL would do with the funding in the four areas of activity set out in paragraph 23, and in addition:

- a reward strategy that is integrated with the institutional HR strategy
- a capital funding plan, including a value-for-money assessment and fit with estates strategies, and project capital allocations where appropriate
- where appropriate we would expect key stakeholders like professional bodies and employers to be integrated into the plans
- a capacity study, including identified ways of managing the financial, risk and change/project management elements of running the CETL. In collaborative bids this would include details of partnership arrangements.

45. To help institutions with these plans, we propose running a joint 'development day' with the proposed HE Academy, inviting all the institutions that were successful at stage one. We think this day could have two purposes, firstly to initiate and encourage the interaction with the HE Academy so that they develop a 'critical friend' role in the development of CETLs. Secondly for us to answer detailed questions on stage two submissions, for example definitions of capital, format of plans.

46. We think that the assessment criteria at the second stage would focus on feasibility, value for money and fit with broader institutional strategies. We would also consider regional and subject/thematic spread of CETLs in making final decisions so that there was an appropriate spread of CETLs. At each stage recommendations would be submitted to the QALT and then to the HEFCE Board.

47. For this first phase of CETL bids, the proposed timetable for the selection process is shown in the following table.

**Table 1 Proposed timetable for selecting CETLs**

Activity	Output	Duration
Pre-consultation and drafting of consultation on the basis of agreed approach	Agreement from June HEFCE Board Publication of <b>consultation document</b>	Early August 2003
Consultation period	Input into invitation to bid	12 weeks to 24 October 2003
Drafting of invitation to bid	Publication of <b>Invitation to bid</b>	10 weeks to January 2004
First stage applications	Submission of applications by institutions	14 weeks to mid-April 2004
First stage assessment	Recommendation to HEFCE Board on institutions to go forward to stage two	10 weeks to end June 2004
Second stage	Submission of development plans by	17 weeks

applications	institutions	to end October 2004
Second stage assessment	Recommendation to HEFCE Board on successful CETLs	12 weeks to January 2005
Contracting	Signed contracts, funding commences First CETLs operating	8 weeks to March 2005

#### **Consultation questions**

- K. Do you agree with the proposals for second stage bids?  
L. Is the timetable feasible?

#### **Ongoing support, monitoring and review**

48. We believe that we should work closely with the proposed HE Academy to identify appropriate support and dissemination mechanisms for CETLs. As discussed in paragraph 25, we think that the focal point for CETLs is delivery and development of teaching. However, we also think that there could be great opportunities for CETLs working with the HE Academy and LTSN Subject Centres, to leverage greater benefit for the sector from this investment in learning and teaching. We envisage that the HE Academy would have a lead role in ongoing support and monitoring activities, including co-ordinating and brokering collaboration, disseminating good practice and identifying and describing impacts and outcomes.

49. To assure us that funds are being used in accordance with the business plan, we will ask CETLs for monitoring data on an annual basis. We will also require an audit certificate for capital expenditure.

50. We have committed in our strategic plan to evaluate CETLs by 2008. We think that CETLs' impact could be determined through various measures including student satisfaction data, advances in pedagogic approach including new use of technology, increased emphasis on teaching within institutions and the breadth of dissemination of teaching materials and approaches.

#### **Consultation question**

- M. Have you any comments on the proposed mechanisms and/or measures for support and evaluation?

#### **Responses**

51. We have posed a number of consultation questions throughout this text, on which we would welcome your comments. These are listed at Annex A. There will be consultation events held in September to which institutions are invited; details are at Annex B.

52. To respond to the consultation questions, either e-mail your response to [ce1lconsultation@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:ce1lconsultation@hefce.ac.uk) or send written responses to:

Paul Hazell  
Higher Education Funding Council for England  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD

The deadline for responses is midday on **Friday 24 October 2003**.

## **Annex A**

### **Consultation questions**

- A. Do you agree with the proposed aims and objectives of the initiative?
- B. This proposal allows an institution flexibility to identify an area of excellence that is appropriate to its institutional mission and student needs and that can cut across departmental divides. Do you agree with this approach?
- C. Do you agree with how we have defined the purpose of CETL funding?
- D. We have proposed complementary roles for CETLs and the HE Academy (including LTSN Subject Centres), so that CETLs focus on development, delivery and dissemination strategies, and the HE Academy on dissemination practice, but with the expectation of strong links between them. Do you agree with this approach?
- E. Do you agree with the proposed approach to funding levels?
- F. In thinking about this initiative and the selection method, we have been mindful of the need to minimise the burden we impose on institutions. Given the size of funding, have we gauged this correctly or are there areas where we are imposing a disproportionate burden on institutions that we have not considered?
- G. Do you think this selection method is robust and transparent?
- H. Do you agree with the proposals for evidencing excellent teaching outcomes and practice? Do the examples of evidence in Annex E help to clarify our expectations?
- I. Are there further criteria that we should consider including?
- J. Do you think that the proposals for 'commended for excellence' are a useful way of identifying excellent provision for students?
- K. Do you agree with the proposals for second stage bids?
- L. Is the timetable feasible?
- M. Have you any comments on the proposed mechanisms and/or measures for support and evaluation?

## Annex B

### Consultation seminars

We will be running seminars in September 2003 in which practitioners and HE managers are able to feed back directly on the proposals set out in this consultation.

#### Seminar dates and venues

10 September 2003	10.00 – 12.30	Leeds: Marriott Hotel
10 September 2003	14.00 – 16.30	Leeds: Marriott Hotel
17 September 2003	10.00 – 12.30	London: CBI Conference Centre
17 September 2003	14.00 – 16.30	London: CBI Conference Centre

Each seminar will start with an introductory speech by Dr Liz Beaty, Director of Learning and Teaching at HEFCE, followed by facilitated workshops focusing on questions about the proposals for this initiative.

We would encourage attendance from both managers and practitioners. However places will be limited to two per institution, and we would ask you to co-ordinate your responses.

You are invited to stay for lunch if you are attending the morning seminar, or to join us for lunch from 12.30 if you are attending in the afternoon.

#### To reserve a place

Please complete the delegate information on the following page and either:

- fax to: 0117 931 7479 for the attention of Louise Bending
- post the completed form to: Louise Bending, CETL Consultation Seminars, HEFCE, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, BRISTOL BS16 1QD
- e-mail details to: [cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:cetlconsultation@hefce.ac.uk)

Please return the booking form by **Tuesday 26 August 2003**. We will confirm your choice of seminar and the venue by 1 September 2003.

**CETL Consultation seminars: delegate booking form**

Name			
Position			
Name to appear on badge (block capitals)			
Institution/Organisation			
Address			
Postcode		E-mail	
Tel		Fax	
I will be staying for lunch (please tick)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Dietary requirements			
<p><u>Accessibility</u> The conference venue is fully accessible to wheelchair users. Please advise us of any individual needs by giving details below. Every effort will be made to meet these.</p>			

**Seminar selection**

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please indicate your first and second choice of seminar below.

10 September 2003	10.00 – 12.30	Leeds: Marriott Hotel	
10 September 2003	14.00 – 16.30	Leeds: Marriott Hotel	
17 September 2003	10.00 – 12.30	London: CBI Conference Centre	
17 September 2003	14.00 – 16.30	London: CBI Conference Centre	

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex C**

### **Example models of CETLs**

In paragraphs 18 to 22 of the main text we describe what the key characteristics of a CETL might be. We have tried to allow as much flexibility in this description as possible, but recognise that the downside of this can be a lack of clarity. We have therefore tried to illustrate what a CETL could look like by using theoretical examples in this annex. These are not designed to be prescriptive, but rather to prompt institutions into thinking broadly and creatively about the opportunities that this proposal creates to define excellence that is truly mission-driven.

#### **Example 1: Problem-based learning**

Institution X wishes to bid for a CETL in problem-based learning (PBL) to include courses taught through this approach across two faculties. The CETL would then bring together a network of teaching and support staff working on specified PBL programmes within the Medical and Engineering Schools. The CETL would be created to become a focus for further development of this teaching approach, and capital funds would enable the creation of more appropriate learning spaces for the student group work involved.

#### **Example 2: Fieldwork in science and environment**

Here the CETL demonstrates excellence in integrating fieldwork with class-based teaching. The capital funding would be used to buy mobile equipment for use in the field. Students undertaking these programmes are assured of relevance of their studies to employment-related practice. The CETL would involve people from outside the university who participate in supporting the fieldwork aspects of the programmes. Collaborative arrangements with another university ensure that different fieldwork environments are used and fieldwork supported by different types of expertise.

#### **Example 3: Work-based learning**

This CETL involves programmes in business studies, social work and nursing, and is a collaborative bid between an HEI, an FE college and employers. The CETL demonstrates effective partnership working between the institutions and with practice-based tutors in client organisations. The important administrative systems involved in making this partnership function effectively for all parties are acknowledged as part of the claim for excellence, and administrative staff are included in the CETL's core staff team. The clear and effective processes for team working across the academic practice divide are part of the evidence in the bid for CETL status.

#### **Example 4: Performance arts**

This CETL gains excellence status due to its high reputation with students and alumni and strong connections in the employment areas of theatre and dance. The CETL already has a National Teaching Fellow, and has over the past few years engaged in a number of pedagogic research projects which have involved collaborations with other performing arts colleges nationally. The focus of the approach to teaching is on integrating physical skills and cognitive skills through one-to-one instruction and team performance.

**Example 5: Independent learning in the humanities**

This CETL in a research intensive university has gained an excellent reputation for its structured support for independent research-based learning. The enabling framework of tutorials and reflective journals creates a framework within which there is a clear balance between individual autonomy and student choice on the one hand, and guidance and support on the other. External examiners have commended the programme, which stretches broadly across the Faculty of Humanities, for its development of resources to support the independent learner, the production of resource materials including guided introductions to theoretical areas, and the effective way in which library staff are integrated into the course team.

**Example 6: Online language learning**

This CETL focuses on specified programmes of study in modern languages, including those that feed through modular provision into degree programmes in law and business. Here the CETL gains excellence status for its approach to using online learning interactively with students so that students contribute to the production of online learning materials. The CETL's staff would include language teachers, computing support staff and educational developers. The capital funding is used to upgrade student computing equipment and language laboratories.

**Example 7: Collaborative skills training**

This CETL brings local institutions and high tech employers together to deliver a collaborative programme of skills development to postgraduate students. The focus is on nurturing a cohort of highly skilled students who are likely to stay in the region after graduation and bolster the growth of local research intensive industry. Excellence is indicated by high rates of recruitment to participating employers, leading to the increased involvement of employers in the design and delivery of syllabuses and their direct sponsorship of students. Capital funding is used to secure a dedicated venue and administrative, computing and other resources for the programme within the graduate school of one of the participating institutions. The staff involved include academic supervisors and careers advisors, as well as trainers and mentors from outside the institutions concerned.

## **Annex D**

### **Invitation for nominations to the assessment panel and criteria for selection**

1. The assessment panel for CETLs will be a sub-group of the Quality Assessment, Learning and Teaching (QALT) strategic committee, and will be chaired by a member of this committee. In addition to QALT members, we are looking for 10-12 experienced teaching practitioners or managers from all areas of the community to join the panel that will provide the HEFCE Board with recommendations for successful CETLs.
2. The panel will have a minimum of three meetings between January and December 2004, with intensive periods of activity in April/May and November/December.
3. The terms of reference for the panel will be agreed by the QALT committee in November; however, the draft terms of reference are as follows:
  - a. To advise QALT on the selection of Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. In pursuing this aim the panel will:
    - i. Develop a selection process.
    - ii. Advise on the selection of successful CETLs.
    - iii. Advise on the resourcing levels for CETLs.
    - iv. Advise on the overall distribution of CETLs in terms of geographic, subject and thematic spread.
  - b. To manage all aspects of the allocation of funding to CETLs and to provide regular progress reports to QALT and other interested parties.
4. Although we are not able to pay panel members, we will meet all travel and subsistence costs at our normal rate.

### **Person specification**

5. We would expect members of the assessment panel to have the following experience:
  - a. Successful senior experience of both management and teaching in higher education.
  - b. Experience of, or responsibility for, quality assurance, examinations or quality enhancement processes.
  - c. Experience of learning and teaching project work.
6. In addition, we would expect members to have the following abilities and experience:
  - a. Interest in and an understanding of the issues facing higher education in England and the priorities set out in our strategic plan.
  - b. Ability to assimilate information, evaluate and make judgements on it.
  - c. Understanding of issues relating to higher education pedagogy and educational research.

### **Nomination process**

7. If you are interested in joining the panel, please e-mail Paul Hazell at the HEFCE (p.hazell@hefce.ac.uk) for an information pack. We will ask you to provide a one-page summary of how you meet the above criteria, together with a statement of support from your institution. The Director of Learning and Teaching and the chair of the assessment panel will short-list nominations on the basis of the above person specification. We may also take advice from the HE Academy on the final selection.
  
8. Nominations should be sent by **Friday 24 October 2003** to Paul Hazell, HEFCE, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, BRISTOL BS16 1QD or e-mail p.hazell@hefce.ac.uk.

## **Annex E**

### **First stage bids – examples of suitable evidence to demonstrate excellence**

1. We are proposing that the assessment of bids at stage one will focus on evidence of excellent teaching. As described in paragraphs 18 to 22 of the main text, we believe that the definition of the excellent teaching must be flexible to reflect the diversity of teaching and student learning needs within the HE sector. However, in identifying CETLs we believe that institutions should be clear about what it is that they are claiming is excellent and provide evidence to demonstrate these claims.
2. There have been numerous studies discussing the nature of excellent teaching, including evaluations of previous HEFCE initiatives. Although the definition of excellence is hotly debated, we think that a common theme is that excellent teaching requires underpinning by a scholarly approach to the design and delivery of the provision. We think that the scholarship of teaching is an important factor in delivering excellent outcomes for students, and are committed to developing transferable pedagogies that will enhance teaching sector-wide. These ideas are integral to our thinking on first stage bids and the criteria on which these will be assessed.
3. We have considered the burden on institutions in constructing bids, and believe that evidence might already be available within institutions to support first stage submissions.

#### **Definition of the CETL, its focus, aims and objectives**

4. We would expect institutions to have a clear idea of the identity and purpose of the CETL, including named staff members, their areas of expertise and how they work together to deliver excellent teaching.

#### **Fit of the CETL with the institution's strategic objectives and L&T strategy, and how teaching excellence is currently recognised**

5. One aim of the CETL initiative is investment in enhanced teaching practice, and we think that a track record of this type of investment will be an important indication of institutional commitment to learning and teaching. To demonstrate this commitment we will look at the extent to which CETL proposals are drawn from and fit with an institution's strategic priorities and L&T strategy as submitted to HEFCE. We would also like to see the processes by which institutions identify excellent teachers, for example through promotions or rewards strategies.

#### **A track record of delivering excellent learning outcomes for students within the proposed CETL**

6. We think that submissions would demonstrate that students are achieving the intended outcomes to a high standard and that programmes perform well in terms of retention, completion, achievement, first destination, employment and so on as appropriate.

7. Evidence in this area could include:
  - a. External examiner reports.
  - b. External agency evidence:
    - i. QAA subject review outcomes on 'Student Progression and Achievement'.
    - ii. Relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSB) reports.
  - c. Statistics on entry qualifications, retention, progression, achievement and first destinations.
  - d. Student feedback.
  - e. Outcomes of internal monitoring of non-completers.
  - f. National or international prizes awarded to students.
  - g. Relevant statements of support from employers relating to student outcomes.

**A rationale of why this practice is excellent, including its design and method of delivery**

8. We think that submissions would include evidence on how courses are designed so that the intended learning outcomes are set at a high standard and are appropriate to the needs of students and other stakeholders. Submissions would also demonstrate that the range of learning, teaching and assessment (LT&A) methods chosen have a clear educational rationale and are well designed to deliver the intended outcomes.
9. Evidence of this could include:
  - a. Programme specifications that define the intended learning outcomes and range of LT&A methods.
  - b. A scholarly approach to consideration of appropriate LT&A methods, including an understanding of the relevant pedagogic literature and research.
  - c. Internal programme validation or course approval documents.
  - d. A statement of the roles of different bodies involved in programme approval and review.
  - e. A description of the mechanisms for, and results of, engaging employers/other stakeholders in programme design. This could include formal endorsement or letters of support from employers/other bodies.
  - f. Statistics relating to the student population (social and educational profiles).
  - g. A description of programme monitoring and review processes, the outcomes of monitoring and reviews, and the actions taken in response (these processes could include use of student feedback).
  - h. Analysis of the findings of external examiner reports, and description of the actions taken in response.
  - i. Evidence from external agencies:
    - i. Previous QAA subject review outcomes relating to 'Curriculum design, Content and Organisation' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement'.
    - ii. Relevant outcomes of accreditation and monitoring reports by PSB.
10. Delivery is equally as important as design in excellent teaching. We would expect the proposed focus of the CETL to have appropriate staffing, with relevant expertise and

a proven high standard of teaching. We would also expect that the student experience is well integrated beyond the immediate curriculum with appropriate learning materials and learning resources.

11. Evidence could include:

- a. Details of the core staff of the proposed CETL and their relevant qualifications and experience (for example, ILT membership, National Teaching Fellow(s) and relevant staff development and training).
- b. Details of student and staff access to learning resources and facilities (including information and IT services, and any specialist resources and facilities); access to student services, careers services and so on; and description of team-working arrangements to ensure coherent student experience.
- c. Details of provision of personal development planning or other processes to support coherent student experience.
- d. External agency evidence:
  - i. QAA subject review outcomes on: 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment', 'Student Support and Guidance' and 'Learning Resources'.
  - ii. Relevant PSB reports.
- e. Outcomes of internal monitoring and reviews, including results of student feedback surveys.

**A track record of the development and enhancement of provision by the proposed CETL**

12. We think that CETLs would be exemplars in developing provision and practice to meet the requirements of changing technologies or student needs. We would therefore expect the CETL to have a strong commitment to investing in development and enhancement of the provision it delivers.

13. Evidence could include:

- a. Previous programme specifications with a rationale for changes.
- b. Awards from the Fund for Development of Teaching & Learning or other similar awards.
- c. Participation in dissemination and enhancement events, whether run by the institution or by external QE agencies, like the Learning and Teaching Support Network.
- d. Previous publication of results, presentations at learning and teaching conferences or internal events.

**An outline business case that briefly describes the kinds of activity the proposed centre might undertake and the impact of funding, given the required funding level**

14. The business case should set out the level of funding required and provide details of what the CETL will do, both in terms of reward and investment. We would refer institutions to the four core areas of activity set out in paragraph 23 of the main text and the models in Annex E in considering possible activities. We will provide more guidance on the business case in the invitation to bid.

### **List of abbreviations**

<b>CETL</b>	Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
<b>FE</b>	Further education
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HR</b>	Human resources
<b>ILT</b>	Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
<b>L&amp;T</b>	Learning and teaching
<b>LTSN</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Network
<b>PSB</b>	Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
<b>QALT</b>	Quality Assessment, Learning and Teaching
<b>QE</b>	Quality enhancement