



Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Baselining for ESDGC – piloting an approach: ESDGC Development Framework (EDF)

Other

How to cite:

Claricoates, Jane; Glover, Alison; Jones, Yvonne; Morgan, Jan and Peters, Carl (2011). Baselining for ESDGC – piloting an approach: ESDGC Development Framework (EDF). HEFCW.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2011 HEFCW

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14026/1/Baselining%20for%20ESDGC%20EDF%20-%20final%20report%20to%20HEFCW%20310311.pdf>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

'BASELINING' FOR ESDGC – piloting an approach:

**Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)
Development Framework (EDF)**

Report to HEFCW

Project completed by:

Swansea University
University of Wales, Newport

March 2011

Executive Summary

The brief was to develop and demonstrate a methodology and approach that can be applied to the Welsh Higher Education (HE) sector that will:

- Present a comprehensive and concise picture of ESDGC within an institution;
- Identify ways in which progress in mainstreaming and embedding ESDGC can be measured
- Reveal potential difficulties and problems;
- Consider how / whether this approach can be effectively integrated within existing management reporting information.

In response, drawing on information in the STAUNCH and SQW Consulting ESDGC reports, and on desk studies, interviews and piloting exercises conducted within this study, an 'ESDGC Development Framework' (EDF) has been created. Its completion generates for each HEI a one-page summary of ESDGC that is structured to align directly with each of the five Common Institutional Areas established by the Welsh Assembly Government's ESDGC Strategic Action Plan (2006-9). The EDF is designed to be comprehensive, flexible and straightforward to complete, whilst allowing the nuances and complexity of ESDGC to be recorded. At the same time the EDF is sufficiently standardised to enable a national picture of ESDGC to be easily constructed.

The EDF adopts a 'traffic-light' system to represent the summary of an institution's evidence of ESDGC progress. This established visual method is here enhanced by carefully-formulated annotations, the combination of which facilitates more immediate and effective communication about an institution's ESDGC progress, and thereby encourages the (incremental) embedding and mainstreaming of ESDGC by providing a one-page snapshot of ESDGC across the institution, showing areas of existing good practice and areas where there are opportunities for further ESDGC development.

Two widely-recognised ESDGC challenges were confirmed by the pilot as being relevant to the HE sector. First, that capacity-building among HE management and staff, both in terms of understanding ESDGC and its delivery, remains critical to progressing the embedding, and especially the mainstreaming, of ESDGC in institutions. The framework therefore includes detailed guidance explaining its context and purpose, and provides further information about ESDGC *per se*. Clear instructions and a substantial body of exemplar material drawn from existing documents are also given, to guide individuals completing the EDF as to where to seek out evidence of ESDGC in their institution and how to recognise it. Thus the EDF supports institutions in taking forward ESDGC substantively and strategically.

The second key challenge identified by the pilot is the question of how to increase engagement with ESDGC at all levels within institutions. The importance of influential external drivers is signalled here, and the continuing need for a visible and sustained *requirement* for progress on ESDGC in the sector.

Existing management reporting information was found not to service the needs of ESDGC.

Two concrete outputs result from the work: the EDF Tool (Excel workbook format), to record ESDGC throughout an institution and generate the institutional summary; and the accompanying Guidance (PDF format) outlined above.

Recommendations:

Recommendations address the key challenges identified in the short and mid-term, and can be summarised as follows:

Organisation of a launch event to raise awareness about the EDF and to initiate training;

Attention to identifying mechanisms and means to

- gather feedback on the use and utility of the EDF to inform its periodic review and future development
- enable sustained ESDGC and EDF capacity-building
- encourage the embedding of the EDF (ESDGC) within sectoral and institutional strategic programmes.

Contents

	Page
1. Brief	1
2. Approach taken	1
3. Results and Key Issues Arising	4
4. Outputs	7
5. Recommendations	8

Baselining for ESDGC – piloting an approach:

ESDGC Development Framework (EDF)

Dr Jane Claricoates, Swansea University
Alison Glover, University of Wales, Newport
Yvonne Jones, Swansea University
Jan Morgan, Swansea University
Dr Carl Peters, University of Wales, Newport

J.Claricoates@swansea.ac.uk
Alison.Glover@newport.ac.uk
M.Y.Jones@swansea.ac.uk
J.W.Morgan@swansea.ac.uk
Carl.Peters@newport.ac.uk

1. Brief

1.1 The work builds on the foundations established by the SQW Consulting ‘ESDGC: [Analysis](#) of good practice in Welsh HEIs’¹ and the ‘[Review](#) of a Curriculum audit in Wales’.²

1.2 The overall aims of the work were to develop and demonstrate a methodology and approach that can be applied to the Welsh HE sector that will:

- i. Present a comprehensive and concise picture of ESDGC within an institution;
- ii. Identify ways in which progress in mainstreaming and embedding ESDGC can be measured in the areas identified below;
- iii. Reveal potential difficulties and problems;
- iv. Consider how / whether this approach can be effectively integrated within existing management reporting information.

1.3 The brief anticipated that at this pilot stage the investigations would be largely qualitative and would explore ways in which progress within an institution can be measured or evaluated.

1.4 The full specification lists the key operational areas to be considered and is provided at Appendix A.

1.5 A report outlining the results of the pilot and providing recommendations and guidance as to how this exercise could be applied to the HE sector in Wales to be submitted by 31 March 2011.

2. Approach taken

Guiding principles

2.1 From the outset, the project teams wished to ensure that this exercise and its outputs were understood to be offered as a supportive contribution to help HEIs take ESDGC forward substantively and strategically at institutional and sectoral levels. For this reason, we aimed to avoid any terminology which could be construed as judgemental or which might suggest a current or future aim to rank institutions. We also wished to find a description for the resulting methodology and its supporting tool which conveyed the *developmental* and *incremental* nature of such an institutional exercise. We therefore decided to abandon the term ‘baselining’, which could possibly be interpreted as a one-off exercise, and adopt instead ‘ESDGC Development Framework’ (EDF). It was felt that this term conveyed both the

¹

http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/about_he_in_wales/wag_priorities_and_policies/SQW%20ESDGC%20Final%20Report.pdf

² <http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/doc/resources/esdgc060609.pdf>

intention to support ongoing progress ('Development'), and also a sense of structured flexibility ('Framework'). We believe the term thus reflects the adaptability of the methodology to the needs of individual HEIs whilst at the same time indicating sufficient comparability between the exercise as implemented by individual HEIs to enable a Wales-wide picture to be constructed at any time, and sectoral progress to be more clearly identified over time.

2.2 The exercise (methodology) is referred to as the 'ESDGC Development Framework' (EDF), and the Excel template designed to assist in implementing it, the 'EDF Tool'.

2.3 Two contrasting Welsh HEIs undertook the work, representing a predominantly teaching institution (University of Wales, Newport) and a research-led institution (Swansea University), to ensure as far as possible that the methodology, approach and pilot could accommodate the diversity of HEIs in Wales. Both HEIs provided a team of ESDGC specialists to complete the work.

2.4 The teams worked within their own institutions and met at intervals throughout the project period to ensure that the work was proceeding according to plan and in a comparable and coherent manner. The project meetings also allowed the teams to compare emerging issues and to review and revise the research approach and the developing methodology as necessary, to ensure that the results would be equally appropriate for and applicable to all Welsh HEIs.

2.5 It was decided early in the project to design a methodology that was as consistent as possible with the organisation of the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic ESDGC documents in order to facilitate an understanding of the ongoing development of ESDGC within Welsh HEIs and across Wales at the national level. Because they have immediate significance for HEIs and have worked well to date, the same Common Institutional Areas as were adopted in the ESDGC Strategic Action Plan 2006 (i.e. Commitment and Leadership, Institutional Management, Learning and Teaching, Partnerships and Research & Monitoring) were used for the first-order structure of the EDF tool.

Practical approach

2.6 The teams began by agreeing a common research approach.

2.7 A desk study was completed using documents drawn from Wales, the UK and internationally, combined with interviews with key staff, to inform guidance about the choice of documents that are likely to yield the contributory evidence of institutional ESDGC engagement and activity.

2.8 A framework was designed by an iterative process using the information gathered from the desk study and pilot interviews to discover whether the headings suggested were appropriate and sufficiently easy to use. Amendments to the design were made accordingly.

2.9 The five Common Institutional Areas from the Assembly Government's ESDGC Strategic Action Plan (2006) were used for the first-order organisational structure of the framework tool.

2.10 The operational areas listed in the brief were considered from a practical perspective in terms of where they would occur in the *procedures and processes* of an HEI. This exercise revealed a degree of repetition and overlap, so the operational areas were disassembled, reconfigured and reintroduced in the EDF tool as 'Delivery Areas' and associated with the most appropriate Common Institutional Area. The Delivery Areas thus represent the second-order organisational level of the EDF tool.

2.11 Interviews indicated that the 'Delivery Areas' were rather broad and potentially indistinct for staff unfamiliar with ESDGC, and so more specific guidance was included within the tool in the form of 'Functional Areas'. These represent the tool's third-order organisational

level and equate to specific governance and other organs of the HEI, where institutional *procedures and processes* will be manifest.

2.12 Finally in terms of locating *where* appropriate evidence might be found, examples of material sources of evidence (document types, staff positions) were provided within the tool ('Possible Sources of Evidence').

2.13 Having constructed a framework linked to the strategic ESDGC Common Institutional Areas and incorporating all of the key operational areas listed in the brief, and having guided users to appropriate locations in which evidence might be found, interviews suggested there was a need to provide help in identifying *what* to look for from these sources. Hence, in the interests of support for those individuals completing the EDF exercise, and of comparability, since ESDGC is not yet well understood or commonly interpreted between all institutions or individual staff, it was decided that the EDF tool should also incorporate qualitative guidance to assist in the identification and recognition of the most appropriate (relevant and meaningful) evidence within each Delivery Area.

2.14 Given the qualitative and discursive nature of ESDGC, a key challenge was to determine some form of metric which would enable progress in the embedding and mainstreaming of ESDGC in an HEI to be identified and described. The difficulty was compounded by the range of evidence that is relevant to such an exercise. It was considered that the 'Delivery Areas' of the framework, having been derived from the listed key operational areas in the brief, would provide the appropriate level of information for meaningful reporting.

2.15 A further desk study was completed based on documents drawn from Wales, the UK and internationally, to examine existing frameworks and tools to inform the choice of relevant and sufficiently meaningful and adaptable ESDGC indicators. Considerable effort was given to formulating and evaluating guidance in the form of questions and prompts. After investigating the efficacy of versions of both, it was decided to use a mix of open and closed questions to guide the identification of the most informative evidence. Sets of 'Descriptors' were formulated to describe different levels of embedding and mainstreaming ESDGC, as relevant to each Delivery Area. Their formulation was perhaps the single most significant and challenging aspect of developing the framework.

2.16 Four levels of Descriptors were agreed to be sufficient to distinguish between significant differences in the level of embedding and mainstreaming of ESDGC-relevant activity, without becoming too detailed and burdensome to use.

2.17 The four Descriptors formulated for each Delivery Area were each assigned a colour and a number, to assist in processing the array of evidence collected and in subsequently generating the final institutional Summary.

2.18 It is critical to the effectiveness of the framework that the range of evidence collected can be interpreted in terms of the Descriptors provided and that the *single* most fitting Descriptor is assigned to the *complete evidence set* for each Delivery Area. This *interpretation* of the evidence-sets in terms of the respective contributions to ESDGC that they reflect is, arguably, the most challenging aspect of implementing the framework. It was clear from the teams' own experience and from interviews that practical guidance would assist with this step, and would help to achieve a reasonable degree of comparability between repeat exercises within any one HEI, and between contemporaneous institutional summaries. To this end, a significant amount of time was spent identifying a comprehensive range of exemplar material which could be used to help assign the most appropriate descriptor to each evidence-set. Exemplar material for each descriptor in each Delivery Area was organised according to the same structure as the EDF Tool and has been provided within the 'EDF Guidance' document.

2.19 Excel was adopted for the EDF Tool as the simplest and most appropriate electronic application for the purposes of capturing, manipulating and processing collected evidence.

2.20 The final step in designing the framework was to derive a concise picture of ESDGC within an institution from the extensive and diverse array of evidence-sets collected. This was achieved by applying conditional formatting to the descriptors assigned for each Delivery Area. Thus, electronic completion of the framework will generate a one-page institutional summary of the level of ESDGC embedding and mainstreaming within each Delivery Area and across the institution. The rich detail of evidence captured from institutional documents and interviews is retained and remains accessible. Both the detail and the summary institutional snapshot can be directly compared each time the exercise, or a section of it, is repeated, and areas in which the institution has improved or has lost ground, can immediately be seen.

2.21 Having designed the EDF Tool, it was piloted and amended in response to the experience and staff comments arising. Electronic versions of the framework were distributed, with outline guidance, to staff selected to represent a range of functions and levels of responsibility, in order to gauge the level of interest, comprehension and engagement from different areas of an HEI. The response rate and follow-up contact with staff provided feedback on the potential difficulties and problems likely to arise in conducting the exercise, including navigation of the spreadsheet and interpretation of the terminology used.

2.22 Guidance notes were prepared to facilitate an understanding of ESDGC, the context for the EDF and to help with the practical completion of the EDF tool. The notes were amended in light of the pilot.

3. Results and Key Issues Arising

General comments

3.1 Although the two HEIs participating in this work were chosen in part because of their contrasting characteristics, no significant practical difference was revealed between the two institutions as the work progressed in terms of either the approach taken or the key issues arising, leading us to anticipate that the EDF will be equally appropriate and applicable for all HEIs in Wales.

3.2 The EDF tool provides a structured, flexible approach that guides individuals in HEIs to locate, identify and gather the ESDGC evidence most relevant to their situation and interests, and to generate a comprehensive and concise picture of ESDGC in their institution. Whilst having this adaptability, the methodology is sufficiently standardised to enable a full picture of the situation across Wales by subjecting a full complement of individual-HEI results to the same methodology.

3.3 The EDF uses a system of 'Descriptors', each (set of four) of which has been carefully formulated to reflect different levels of embedding and mainstreaming of ESDGC within each of the specific 'Delivery Areas' of an HEI. This careful formulation of descriptors is the key which enables ESDGC contributions to be 'measured' by the EDF, by incorporating an interpretation of 'levels of embedding and mainstreaming' within each. The effectiveness of the EDF relies on users assigning the most appropriate descriptor to their collected evidence. To assist in this, the EDF includes substantial exemplar material for all descriptors within all Delivery Areas. The comprehensive set of descriptors and exemplar materials are presented within the EDF Guidance document; the descriptors also form an integral part of the EDF Tool.

3.4 We believe the EDF encompasses all key operational areas in an HEI relevant to ESDGC embedding and mainstreaming, and that its design is clearly structured and signposted, and that it is therefore realistic in terms of its practicability. Nevertheless, ESDGC proves to be a complex notion and HEIs are themselves complex. It was not surprising, therefore, that project-staff discussions arising from the desk studies, the interviews and pilot exercises revealed some important challenges for the take-up and implementation of the

EDF. These have informed the recommendations coming from this work (Section 5). Key challenges and issues arising are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Relating to Strategy

3.5 The challenges revealed during the course of this study, and particularly during interactions with staff, are not new; they confirm what has been previously reported in the findings from the STAUNCH and SQW Consulting studies. Since the conclusion of those studies there has been some significant progress in terms of raised awareness and patchy development of greater understanding, but embedding and mainstreaming requires a more systemic approach which we found relatively little evidence of in Wales during the current study. The *general* lack of understanding of ESDGC as a complex, dynamic and transformative social process (responsive education-system design), rather than, more straightforwardly, as a reconfigured curriculum, is a fundamental challenge yet to be overcome.

3.6 Whilst *awareness* of an 'HESDGC agenda' has been successfully and significantly raised over the past several years, and has been given impetus by the introduction of the Welsh Assembly Government's dedicated ESDGC Strategic Action Plan, the overall level of *understanding* about the fundamental nature of ESDGC, its scope, processes and institutional implications, remains patchy and limited when looked at from an *institutional* level. Amongst ESDGC champions (formal and informal), there are pockets of much deeper understanding, and there is a noticeable increase in interest amongst a wider representation of management and staff than has previously been the case. However, when considered in terms of the needs of an institution-wide embedding and mainstreaming, for which a critical mass and key-staff engagement is needed, the continuing general poor level of understanding amongst staff, including senior and key staff, continues to be a significant challenge to greater and more meaningful progress, and has implications for the uptake of the EDF.

3.7 The issues arising (including practical challenges) stem primarily from

- poor understanding of and about ESDGC - its relevance, scope and benefits for HEIs;
- a related insufficient level of engagement with ESDGC - across all levels from strategic to all levels of practice (with notable and increasing exceptions);
- weak internal and external drivers – still necessary to encourage further engagement and development.

3.8 The inherent complexity of embedding and mainstreaming ESDGC may be less of a barrier *per se* than the absence of an agreed common purpose towards which to strive, and around which to cohere, any such cross-cutting and complex programme of work for change. Without such a shared vision, or coherent shared visions – plural – the embedding and mainstreaming of ESDGC across HEIs will necessarily be limited in extent and impact; disparate efforts run the risk of working in opposition, causing confusion and wasting resources. Attention to the process of achieving shared visions would give very significant benefits for progressing ESDGC in HEIs.

3.9 When HE staff have the opportunity to participate in a facilitated discussion about the specific relevance of ESDGC to their own areas of responsibility, there is a much higher level of interest and enthusiasm, and a tangible increase in their wish to participate further. This finding confirms what was learned also from the curriculum self-assessment study. This is relatively intensive work, but if it can be achieved it will positively and significantly improve the uptake of the EDF and the quality of its outputs and, more importantly, improve its impact in terms of increasing engagement, embedding and mainstreaming.

3.10 ESDGC is not included, or is not explicit and is therefore invisible to the majority of readers, within most strategic policies and plans. It has been routinely overlooked at this level in terms of the inclusion of its substantive content. Where it is included, a relatively poor level of understanding is often revealed in its treatment. More fundamentally, in relation to the mainstreaming of ESDGC, there has been only sporadic and irregular attention, if any, given

to date to the introduction or reconfiguration of institutional *procedures* and *processes* which are needed to facilitate the embedding and mainstreaming of such a cross-cutting endeavour, and to effect a necessary shift in institutional visions in order to achieve common purpose with regard to ESDGC. The reticence to accept ESDGC as amongst the priorities for HEIs appears to stem from a misunderstanding about its focus, from a lack of understanding about the gravitas attaching to it, and about its multifarious, multi-level benefits for HE, rather than to any conspiracy against the ESDGC 'project' *per se*. In the absence of high-level internal drivers to achieve a critical mass of engaged staff, any deeper understanding of ESDGC and its relevance, and the necessary increase in motivated staff, will be hampered, and progress on mainstreaming significantly retarded.

3.11 In the absence of influential and strategic external steers, it is difficult to see how the necessary speed of change can be achieved that will reap the benefits of the several current and synergistic HEI agendas, including For our Future (social justice and a buoyant economy), widening participation, employability and internationalisation, for example. Whether institutional programmes of change are comprehensive or incremental in approach, the EDF can be applied to good effect in support of the change programme.

3.12 Our piloting activities and staff interactions reinforced the belief that without influential external drivers it is likely that embedding ESDGC in HEIs will proceed at best in piecemeal fashion, and will fall short of conferring the full range of benefits for individual institutions and the sector which mainstreaming would achieve. Furthermore, if it is accepted that mainstreaming of ESDGC requires a greater degree of transformation to be successful than does embedding, then the need for a supportive strategic framework would seem to be of still greater importance and urgency.

3.13 We found minimal relevance for, or evidence of, ESDGC in existing management reporting information which reflects, in part, the choice of the terms of reference for such documents, and for the reporting-personnel responsible. ESDGC continues to be omitted or only referred to superficially. Neither do revisions appear to reflect or seek any shift in visibility or status regarding the reporting of ESDGC-relevant activity, for example in response to relevant wider policy and strategic contexts to which it can directly contribute. It is no more visible in terms of reference than previously, which indicates missed opportunities for systemic change, for example in relation to reporting and to the business of committees. Whilst not strongly in evidence currently, strategic plans and programmes of study; validation, assessment and staff-recruitment processes; student feedback mechanisms and aspects of estates management could each be addressed without crossing too many established operational boundaries. Such a reformist approach is unlikely to realise the mainstreaming sought, but represents moves in a positive direction. And, although using resources to less ultimate effect, such activity does achieve both individual, and a limited amount of institutional, learning which is, in any case, a prerequisite for any meaningful ESDGC change process.

Relating to Practice

3.14 Our own experience of inputting evidence highlighted the inaccessibility of some relevant documents (information) to certain staff, with practical implications for deciding who will be the most appropriate staff to complete the EDF in an institution, and how a sufficiently comprehensive and accurate institutional summary is to be arrived at, which can be relied upon as a basis for planning and directing resources. Hence, there remain outstanding questions about how the completion of the EDF might best be approached within each institution. There was discussion amongst some staff as to whether or not they might find an interview approach simpler; this would require further time of the institutional ESDGC specialists, who would then be better able to guide and interpret the interview and input the evidence into the tool.

3.15 As reported above, the staff interviews and the pilot highlighted a poor general level of understanding about ESDGC. This alerted us to the level of support that is likely to be needed to ensure maximum benefit from an initial EDF exercise. This situation arises both

from the poor level of understanding of ESDGC and a surprising lack of familiarity with Excel software amongst some likely key contributory personnel. To mitigate this situation, the EDF incorporates a detailed section on how to navigate the EDF tool and complete the EDF exercise, and includes further guidance to help users become more familiar with the concepts of ESDGC. Nevertheless, we foresee the need for some specific support and training to build understanding and confidence, and to improve uptake and the quality of the outcomes.

3.16 It is difficult to see how a sufficiently comprehensive completion of the EDF is likely to be other than a time-consuming process initially, reflecting as it does the diverse and ubiquitous nature of (potential) ESDGC activity. It is anticipated that the exercise will become less time-consuming once ESDGC is more familiar to the key staff concerned and the most useful sources of ESDGC evidence have been identified and located within each HEI. Nevertheless, sufficient staff time will be required – and will need to be authorised – if the outcomes are to be reliable and useful for the institution.

3.17 The current HE strategic context and set of priorities amongst which ESDGC is trying to make its way is not immediately conducive to the wider or deeper engagement of staff, who feel more than fully occupied with the demands of their more established, immediate and more highly-prioritised responsibilities. A partial solution to this requires senior-level support: time is needed for both formal and informal staff development, including time for the CPD mentioned above and for the preparation and application of more accessible and effective advocacy tools for ESDGC, for use at all levels.

3.18 Any engagement with ESDGC and the EDF will increase individual and institutional capacity in this area and will contribute to the critically important need to gain common purpose and build capacity. This could be viewed as similar in nature to the need to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable about, and compliant with, the legal requirements of employment, duty of care, equality, disability, the management of hazardous waste, and so on, in order that the institution is operating most appropriately. If a similar approach were to be taken in relation to ESDGC, in time, with the support of perhaps induction and CPD programmes, responsibility for completing the EDF exercise could be spread more widely through the institution than with, as currently, a few individual champions, thus raising staff awareness and achieving engagement more widely to the point of normalisation such that all staff could complete those parts of the EDF most relevant to their own areas of work.

3.19 Irrespective of the institutional arrangements made to complete the EDF, by collecting appropriate evidence from all Delivery Areas of the University and assigning the most appropriate descriptor to each, an HEI will be able to generate a one-page institutional summary which is colour-coded (traffic-light system) to facilitate immediate recognition of those areas of their institution's operations where ESDGC activity is well advanced and those where more attention could reap benefits. By repeating at a later date the exercise for any particular Delivery Area, or across the whole institution, the traffic-light system enables progress, or opportunities for further development in a particular area, to be quickly identified. The full complement of contributory evidence for each such snapshot is retained for more detailed scrutiny and informed forward planning. The more frequent and the more detailed the completion of the EDF, the more informed an institution will become about its progress and its opportunities for further improvement regarding ESDGC.

4. Outputs

4.1 *ESDGC Development Framework (EDF)*. The work reported here has resulted in the creation of an ESDGC Development Framework (EDF) designed to be applicable for use in all Welsh HEIs. The EDF has two components: an EDF Guidance (Word) document and the EDF Tool itself (Excel workbook).

4.2 *EDF Guidance*. The EDF Guidance comprises three sections (Essential Reading, Explanatory Notes and Resources) which provide context for the EDF and an explanation of its aims; detailed practical guidance to enable users to navigate and complete the EDF Tool

and to assist an understanding of ESDGC; exemplar materials to guide users to identify the most informative evidence and to assign the best-fit descriptor. The resources comprise an interview pro-forma and a printable descriptor sheet for more convenient reference when using the EDF Tool.

4.3 *EDF Tool.* The EDF Tool comprises an Excel workbook which contains an example of a completed evidence and descriptor sheet; templates of each evidence and descriptor sheet needed to complete an EDF exercise, and an empty EDF summary sheet which will automatically fill as the user completes the descriptor sheets.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The present study designed and piloted a practical framework (the EDF) which can be used to support and guide the development of ESDGC in institutions for Higher Education in Wales. It is anticipated that the EDF resulting from this pilot should continue to evolve and be refined, informed by feedback arising from its implementation, in order that it remains fit-for-purpose.

Some key points arise from the work:

5.2 There is minimal, if any, reference to ESDGC in forward-planning documentation. Current management reports are not aligned to the needs of ESDGC reporting.

5.3 Multiple perspectives naturally exist within any HEI, but agreement of a common purpose across each HEI in relation to ESDGC would contribute greatly to more coherent and effective ESDGC outcomes for each institution.

5.4 A shared understanding takes significant time to develop, as does a fundamental understanding of the complex and broadly-based nature of ESDGC in HEIs. The success of ESDGC in HEIs will be significantly aided by sustained, visible, external strategic support, in order that institutions can be sufficiently confident to take the necessary longer-term view, and dedicate the time needed to ensure the appropriate design and effective implementation of essential and complex change.

5.5 The ultimate aim for mainstreaming ESDGC is that ESDGC should become normalised within HEI procedures (indeed, arguably, that Higher-ESDGC be transformed into our future HE). This suggests that we should be seeking ways forward to encourage institutional approaches which increasingly integrate the requirements of ESDGC into their planning and reporting mechanisms and outputs.

These lead us to make the following recommendations for priority and immediate attention:

Recommendation 1: Circulate EDF to WAG, HESDGC Champions and HEA Wales ESDGC Institutional Group members
(HEFCW)

Recommendation 2: Introduce the EDF to key HE staff via a roadshow or launch seminar, with an associated initial-training workshop
(HEFCW with EDF developers)

Recommendation 3: Consider possible mechanisms and means to enable the necessary level of ongoing staff training for EDF completion
(HEFCW, with WAG; EDF developers)

Recommendation 4: Consider relevant management-planning cycles at HEFCW and in HEIs, and possible mechanisms, to encourage the adoption and embedding of the EDF within HEI strategic programmes.
(HEFCW with PVC network)

Recommendation 5: Consider mechanisms and means to gather feedback on the use and utility of the EDF to inform its periodic review and future development (HEFCW, HEA Wales ESDGC Institutional Group)

Recommendation 6: Provide support to HEIs to enable more detailed study and guidance as to how ESDGC can be integrated into existing management-reporting information.