

## Foreword

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The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) was a HEFCE initiative designed primarily as a vehicle for positive and meaningful development enhancement and change in higher education learning and teaching in England. There were three core strands of activity with TQEF, each focusing on a particular level of operation: institutional, disciplinary and individual. The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) is the latter of the three strands and was established as a means of raising the profile of learning and teaching in higher education via individual recognition and reward.

Since its first cohort of fellows in 2000, the scheme has run as a competitive process annually, via institutional nomination. Initially, every HEFCE-funded higher education institution (HEI) was invited to nominate one member of academic staff—in any discipline area—to the fellowship scheme and a maximum of twenty fellowships were awarded per annum. Each National Teaching Fellow (NTF) is given a personal award of £50,000 which is used to support a particular funded activity in learning and teaching, usually intended to be of three years' duration. For the 2004 cohort of National Teaching Fellows, the scheme was expanded to fifty fellowships across three categories: learner support, rising stars and experienced staff.

Currently, there are 130 National Teaching Fellows in the UK—the remains with the individual beyond the period of funded activity—with the expanded 2004 cohort including new categories of staff in higher education and different perspectives on teaching and learning. Each NTFS funded activity is as different and unique as the individual award winners and represents a broad range of approaches and a dynamic variety of perspectives. Common to all NTFs is a powerful commitment to higher education teaching and learning and enhancement of the student learning experience. The seven NTFs who have contributed papers to this collection come from different discipline areas, different genres of institution (a feature to which some of them make reference), were awarded their fellowship in different years and are engaged in very different kinds of funded activities or NTFS 'projects.'

There are six themes discussed - arising from the original seven identified and developed by the multinational planning group<sup>1</sup> for the meeting of scholars—and a brief paper providing an overview of the six. All theme papers represent the views of the individual fellows and not necessarily those of the Higher Education Academy, the Higher Education Funding Council for England or the institutions in which they are based or were nominated. I am grateful to the seven participating National Teaching Fellows for their contributions, and to Margaret Johnson with whom I co-edited these papers. I look forward to learning from submissions from international colleagues and to the outcomes of multinational collaboration at the June event at PEI, Canada.

Rachel Segal, May 2005

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<sup>1</sup> This group consisted of colleagues working in or representing those engaged in national individual learning and teaching recognition and reward schemes in five (English-speaking) countries: Canada (3M Teaching Fellows), the US (Carnegie Scholars), the UK (NTFS), Australia (soon-to-be Carrick Institute Awards) and New Zealand.