

# Higher Education Training Needs Analysis

October 2004

## Introduction to the HETNA Online Work

### **Introduction**

The HETNA online work involved the development of several web-based questionnaires which collected and processed responses from thousands of individuals across all of Scotland's HE institutions. The survey work, and subsequent analysis and interpretation of the online data, has been coordinated by the Scottish JISC Regional Support Centres. This first chapter of the online section sets the context and methodology for the online work that took place. The five chapters following this one contain detailed analyses of the responses of each of the five cohorts. The sixth chapter makes overall comparisons and provides summary interpretations. The seventh chapter of this online section draws parallels with a comparable survey which took place with staff in Scotland's 46 Further Education Colleges during 2003 (ETNA<sup>1</sup>).

### **Context**

HETNA has been able to build partly upon the work done by the Scottish Regional Support Centres in 2003, when they conducted a national online survey of all Further Education Colleges. This work, which was made available throughout Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, became known as the ETNA Report. Another key influence within Scottish Higher Education was the TALiSMAN<sup>2</sup> Training Needs Analysis, conducted by Heriot-Watt University in the Spring of 1997.

In the seven years between the TALiSMAN survey and HETNA, the pace of change in universities, particularly in areas connected with ICT, has been marked. Already by 1997, considerable investment in Scotland's networking infrastructure had taken place, and interest in online learning was growing (encouraged in part by SHEFC-funded programmes, such as the Use of the MANs Initiative). Within universities too, much investment in hardware had taken place: back in 1997, TALiSMAN remarked upon the high number of staff who had exclusive access to a networked computer (70%). In 2004, the HETNA team, asking a similar question, found that the figure had leapt to 95%.

However, TALiSMAN, ETNA and now HETNA have not just been concerned with hardware and networks. What people used the hardware and networks *for* has been a major focus of interest for all three studies. HETNA, like its predecessors, has sought to identify the gap between what its respondents already can do, and what they would like to do in the context of learning and teaching.

A time of rapid technological change has produced a range of institutional responses in Higher Education. But there is a personal as well as an institutional perspective to change.. The thousands of individual responses upon which this analysis is based will help university management teams to appreciate the solid strengths of recent developments and to devise appropriate staff training where there appear to be weaknesses. This analysis is also designed to assist funding bodies, and HE support agencies to plan effective staff development and procurement to ensure staff are adequately equipped and prepared for the further challenges which lie ahead.

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<sup>1</sup> The ETNA Report is available through the website of the RSC Scotland North & East at [www.rsc-northeast-scotland.ac.uk](http://www.rsc-northeast-scotland.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Teaching and Learning in Scottish Metropolitan Area Networks

## **Data Collection**

The HETNA online survey was carried out during the month of May 2004 by the Scottish Regional Support Centres and hosted at [www.hetna.org.uk](http://www.hetna.org.uk). The survey ran completely online, with no paper-based option. This method of collection was a departure from the data collection method used by TALiSMAN, which took place via paper forms only. ETNA, 2003, offered both online and paper-based, but encountered less than 4 percent of respondents wishing to send in their returns on paper. Underpinning the HETNA web-based survey was a php-based data processing system, using MySQL on a Unix server.

## **The Questionnaires**

HETNA contained 5 versions of the survey for the following categories of staff:

- Academic, Research, Academic-Related
- Library and Information Services
- Senior Management
- IT & Networking
- Administrative and all other support staff

With the inclusion of administrative and all other support staff, the intention was to provide a holistic picture of IT use and potential development across the *whole* university.

Although there are common elements in all 5 versions of the survey, and a few questions which resemble those asked earlier in ETNA and TALiSMAN, every attempt was made to make the versions relevant to the role of the respondents and to reflect recent changes in the technological environment. To this end, advice was sought at the design stage of the questionnaires from the larger HETNA project team (including the individuals working on the non-online components of HETNA) and from other professionals and observers within the sector. The survey was also supported by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and Universities Scotland who wrote to all Principals immediately before the survey went 'live' to encourage maximum response rates within their institutions.

## **Data Analysis and Reporting**

The questionnaire contained a mixture of multiple choice and free text supplementary questions to allow for less controlled expression of respondents' opinions. While the free comments allow for a more qualitative interpretation of the data, they can make for difficulties in both analysis and reporting, especially given the scale of the survey. This has been treated in the following ways.

Firstly, where some comments seemed to sum up a commonly expressed and representative view, then these are included in the body of the text. Secondly, where a large number of comments have been recorded in response to a particular question, then an attempt has been made to identify common factors within the text and to present these statistically.

This analysis of the HETNA online work will consider each of the five specific staff groups covered by the survey in detail and will highlight specific demands arising in each. Conclusions are presented for each staff cohort of at the end of each section.

## Survey Returns

Table 1 illustrates the number of responses received from each university, separated into the different cohorts covered by HETNA. 3491 responses were received in total, more than five times larger than the TALISMAN survey of 1997 and making HETNA possibly one of the largest surveys ever conducted within Scottish Higher Education in connection with ICT.

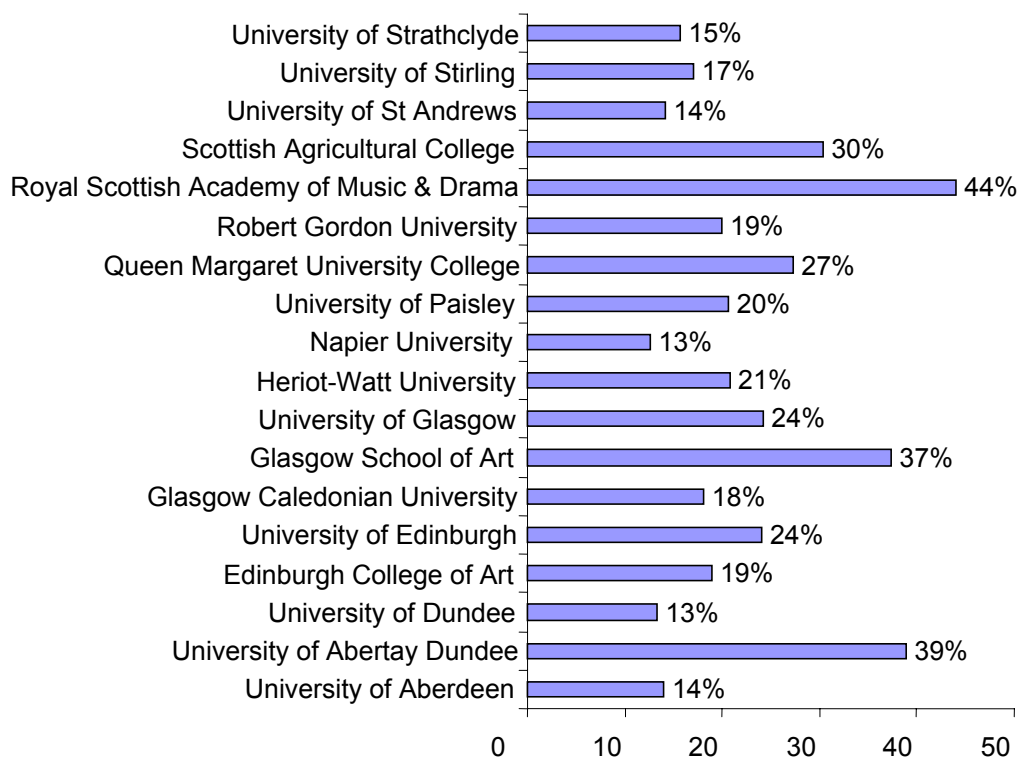
Returns to the HETNA online survey							
University	Acad	Admin	Lib	Man	Tech	Totals	
University of Aberdeen	179	19	4	3	2	207	
University of Abertay Dundee	38	48	18	1	4	109	
Bell College	13	5	3	1	1	23	
University of Dundee	96	77	25	2	6	206	
Edinburgh College of Art	6	13	6	1	4	30	
University of Edinburgh	421	278	39	17	14	769	
Glasgow Caledonian University	117	59	15	5	7	203	
Glasgow School of Art	16	28	2	3	1	50	
University of Glasgow	336	245	42	4	7	634	
Heriot-Watt University	113	46	11	1	5	176	
Napier University	63	29	11	4	0	107	
The OU in Scotland	17	17	2	4	1	41	
University of Paisley	49	29	7	7	7	99	
Queen Margaret University College	21	25	8	1	2	57	
Robert Gordon University	44	60	9	4	4	121	
Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama	9	14	6	4	0	33	
Scottish Agricultural College	38	30	4	6	2	80	
University of St Andrews	92	42	18	6	4	162	
University of Stirling	70	33	8	1	1	113	
University of Strathclyde	117	86	21	3	4	231	
UHI Millennium Institute	5	16	2	4	1	28	
Not specified	5	1	1	2	3	12	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1865</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>3491</b>	

**Table 1: Responses by institution showing role group breakdown**

(Acad=academic & academic related; Admin=administrative; Lib=library; Man=managerial; Tech=technical)

Clearly, the number of returns varies widely between different universities. The reasons for this can be assumed to be connected with the size of individual institutions, the level of access to networked PCs and the enthusiasm of individual key contacts within the universities who promoted the survey locally.

The breakdown of responses received as percentages of local institutional workforce is presented in Figure 1, below.



**Fig 1: Responses as a percentage of institutional workforce\***

\* Source: Scottish Executive, Statistics Publication Notice, *Students in Higher Education in Scotland: 2002 – 03*, Table 20, "Staff in HEIs in Scotland"