

**PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE FEE WAIVER
SCHEME 2006/07**

	Meeting	Agenda item	DISCLOSABLE Reference No
	18/10/07	14	HEFCW/07/95

1 Issue

This paper reports the outcomes of the Council's Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme in 2006/07. The paper is for information only.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

There are no direct Corporate Plan implications for this table. This paper is produced annually to report on expenditure under the Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme.

3 Recommendation(s)

The Council is invited to:

- i. note the contents of this paper.

4 Timing for decisions

There are no decisions arising from this Council paper.

5 Council members' interests

No conflicts of interest have been declared in advance of the meeting.

6 Further information

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7 Background

The letter of guidance which accompanied the Council's 1998 grant settlement drew attention to part-time fee remission for students on benefit or low income as one of a number of improvements to student support arrangements intended to further the Government's commitment to widening access. As a result, the Council developed the Part-Time Fee Waiver Scheme which has operated since 1999/2000. The amount of funding available for the scheme in 2006/07 was, as in previous years, £1million.

8 Details of the scheme

- 8.1 The Scheme contains three strands of funding: one for fee waivers; one for a contribution to the costs of administering the scheme at 4% of the value of fees waived; and one for promotion of the scheme up to £4,000 per institution.
- 8.2 Allocations for fee waivers and the associated administration costs are made in December on the basis of estimates of expenditure provided by institutions. Estimated expenditure is compared with actual expenditure at the end of the academic year and any difference between the two values is recognised by making appropriate adjustments to the payment of grant for fee waiver for the following year. Payments for the promotion of the scheme are made in June on the basis of claims supported by invoices.

9 Outcomes of the scheme

- 9.1 Annex A gives details of the amounts estimated and the amounts actually spent on the scheme. Thirteen institutions claimed between them a total of £384,705 for estimated fee waivers, along with £15,388 for estimated administration costs. Actual spend was very close to the estimates at £323,590 and £12,944 respectively. Some 1,251 students were expected to benefit from the scheme; the actual number was 1,236. Three institutions waived fees worth more than they had estimated.
- 9.2 Annex B compares 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 data. Numbers of students benefiting from the scheme in 2006/07 fell by 11% although the figure accurately reflects the estimates provided by institutions for the year. Likewise the value of fees waived dropped 10% in 2006/07. This fluctuation in the figures (following a slight increase in fee waivers and students in 2005/06) appears to continue the trend of the past few years when a similar programme was introduced by the Department for Education and Skills resulting in a decline in applications for fee waivers.
- 9.3 Annex A also gives details of the amounts claimed for promotion of the scheme in 2006/07 out of the £4,000 available per institution. Eleven institutions claimed a total of £36,109.
- 9.4 Fees worth £323,590 were actually waived by institutions in 2006/07: The associated administration and promotion costs were £12,944 and £36,109

respectively, This gave a total expenditure of £372,643 in 2006/07, which represents a decrease of 11% on the total expenditure for 2005/06.

- 9.5 Throughout the sector, 1,236 students benefited from the scheme in 2006/07, 153 less than in 2005/06 but only 59 less than 2004/05. 1,157 (94%) were mature students, that is 25 years or over and 857 (69%) were female. Annex C provides further details. Students claimed eligibility for the scheme on the basis of various criteria which are also shown in Annex C.

10 Financial implications

- 10.1 The payments to institutions for 2006/07 were adjusted to take account of the difference between the estimated and actual amount of feed waived in 2005/06. As a result £434,474 was actually paid to institutions in 2006/07. In total £565,526 was returned to the contingency budget in 2006/07.
- 10.2 With the introduction of variable fees for full-time students, we recognised that the level of fees for part-time courses may have increased. It was agreed that the credit fee value in 2007/08 would be set at a maximum of £26.50. This assumed the maximum FTE fee of £3,070. In order to account for the potential increase in funding claims the total budget for Part-Time Fee Waiver in 2007/08 has been increased by £500k to £1.5M. The additional £500k was taken from the contingency budget for the year. From 2008/09 this will become part of the recurrent budget.

11 Communications implications

There are no communication implications arising from this paper.

12 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

The Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver scheme offers fee remission for students who are unemployed and actively seeking work or who are in receipt of Department for Work and Pensions benefits. It is designed to serve as an instrument for helping to combat social exclusion and to assist more people to obtain vocational qualifications. As such the scheme is intended to contribute towards widening participation, improving access and increasing rates of retention and achievement.

13 Risk Assessment

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
If the scheme is not monitored and marketed, there is a risk that opportunity for students in a position to benefit from its provision may be lost.	Scheme is monitored and marketed as detailed in this paper.