

Meeting
18/10/07

Agenda Item
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Reference No
HEFCW/07/88

1 Issue

This paper invites the Council to ratify the release of the 2007/08 allocations for the Board of Celtic Studies, and to agree to discontinue funding for the Board's programme of research and publication from 2008/09.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

A paper on the activities and plans of the Board of Celtic Studies is presented routinely to the Council each year prior to the release of funding. This year, the Council is also asked to consider the implications of recent changes to the constitutional status of the Board.

3 Recommendations

The Council is invited to:

- i. ratify the release of the University of Wales Dictionary Unit's allocation for 2007/08
- ii. note that a business plan for the Dictionary Unit for the period 2008 to 2015 will be submitted later in 2007/08
- iii. ratify the release of the 2007/08 allocation for the Board's programme of research and publications
- iv. agree that no further funding should be provided for the programme of research and publications from 2008/09 onwards
- v. hold open the possibility of re-deploying some of the funding hitherto provided for the programme of research and publications in order to provide additional support for the University of Wales Dictionary from 2008/09 onwards.

4 Timing for decisions

Decisions are required now in order to allow the Council to release the Board's funding allocation for 2007/08, and to inform the Council's budget-setting process for 2008/09.

5 Council members' interests

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

6 Further information

Contact Linda Tiller (Tel 029 2068 2228; E-mail: linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Background

- 7.1 The Council provides an earmarked annual grant to the University of Wales to support the work of the Board of Celtic Studies. The grant is used by the Board for two purposes: to provide ongoing support for the University of Wales Dictionary Unit; and to fund a programme of research projects and publications. In 2007/08, the total funding allocated by the Council for the Board is £238,921 - £154,154 for the Dictionary and £84,767 for the programme of research and publications.
- 7.2 In return for this funding, the Board has provided the Council with a business plan for the University of Wales Dictionary Unit and submits an annual report and forward plan for the programme of research and publications.

8 2006/07 Report

- 8.1 The Board's 2006/07 report and programme for 2007/08 is attached at **Annex A**.

University of Wales Dictionary Unit

- 8.2 Under the terms of its current business plan, the Dictionary Unit completed publication of the first edition of the University of Wales Dictionary in 2002/03, and is currently producing expanded entries for the letters A and B, where entries are at present less comprehensive than for subsequent letters. It is also disseminating some aspects of its work electronically.
- 8.3 The report demonstrates satisfactory performance against the business plan in 2006/07, although there has been a degree of slippage because of various staff circumstances.
- 8.4 The Unit's current business plan, which was approved by the Council in 2002, comes to an end in 2008. The Unit has developed a new business plan for the period 2009 to 2015, which has been shared with HEFCW officers. The new plan is ambitious, with increased activity and outputs in all areas, and a corresponding increase in projected costs.
- 8.5 In view of the projected cost increases, HEFCW and the University of Wales have encouraged the Unit to explore the possibility of obtaining part of its funding from new sources, such as the Assembly and the Welsh Language Board. The University will submit its new business plan to the Council later in 2007/08, once it has established the extent to which funding can be attracted from other sources.

The Council is invited:

- ***To ratify the release of the Dictionary Unit's allocation for 2007/08***
- ***To note that a business plan for the period to 2015 will be submitted later in 2007/08.***

Programme of Research and Publication

- 8.6 The report on the Board's programme of research and publications confirms satisfactory performance against the objectives set out in the plan for 2006/07. The activities and outputs proposed for 2007/08 are in keeping with those for previous years.
- 8.7 The University of Wales has informed HEFCW that, from 2007/08, the activities of the Board of Celtic Studies are being merged into the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS). This change of status provides an appropriate point at which to reconsider the funding arrangements for the Board's programme of research and publications.
- 8.8 The funding is currently used to support two or three small-scale projects each year (typically each involving one researcher), to provide small grants for archaeological excavations and other fieldwork (generally under £3k each), and to contribute to the costs of some publications. Although the Council has, to date, maintained this funding for historic reasons, the arrangement is becoming increasingly anomalous because the research landscape has changed considerably since it was introduced. This is not least because of the establishment of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) which now offers significant additional funding for the humanities on a UK-wide basis on a rigorous, peer-reviewed basis.
- 8.9 The Council's funding for the Board's programme of research and publications appears increasingly outdated, and it is suggested that the change to the Board's status constitutes an appropriate point at which to bring this arrangement to an end. The timing of the University's planning process is such that the allocation announced for 2007/08 has already been committed. It is therefore proposed that funding for the programme of research and publication should be discontinued from 2008/09. The University of Wales is aware that a recommendation to this effect is to be submitted to the Council.
- 8.10 The Council may wish to hold open the option of re-deploying some of this funding to provide additional support for the University of Wales Dictionary from 2008/09 onwards. A decision on this matter can be taken in due course when the Council considers the Dictionary's new business plan.

The Council is invited:

- ***to ratify the release of the 2007/08 allocation for the Board's programme of research and publications***
- ***to agree that no further funding should be provided for the programme of research and publications from 2008/09 onwards***
- ***to hold open the option of re-deploying some of the funding hitherto allocated for the programme of research and publications in order to provide additional support for the University of Wales Dictionary from 2008/09 onwards.***

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this paper. The Council has already earmarked £154,154 for the University of Wales Dictionary Unit and

£84,767 for the Board of Celtic Studies' programme of research and publication in 2007/08.

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 The Council's decisions will be communicated to the University of Wales Registry by letter. There are no other communications implications.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 The funding which the Council provides to the University of Wales Press and Board of Celtic Studies helps support research and scholarship in the medium of Welsh. The paper has no implications for race, gender and disability issues.

12 Risk Assessment

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
There is a risk that withdrawal of the funding for the Board's programme of research and publications could be considered to damage scholarship in Celtic Studies.	This risk is minimal. Celtic Studies scholars now have the opportunity to tap into the very significant levels of funding available from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which did not exist when the current funding arrangements were established.
There is a risk that the University of Wales may raise objections to the discontinuation of funding for the programme of research and publications.	HEFCW officers have already discussed the reasons for the proposed discontinuation of funding with the University.