

2 November 2007

Professor Philip Gummett  
Chief Executive HEFCW  
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Dear Professor Gummett

**The response of the Welsh Language Board to HEFCW's Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2006-07**

Thank you for submitting a copy of the report on the implementation of HEFCW's Welsh Language Scheme in 2006-07 and apologies for the delay in responding. This is a comprehensive report and it is clear that the Scheme is implemented consistently within the institution. We also note that a number of the issues identified in our response to the last monitoring report have been addressed, and we offer further observations below.

**Monitoring Process**

We note that you have developed more formal monitoring processes following the implementation of the Scheme in its first year and the Welsh Language Board's response to the last monitoring report. The new procedures include regular meetings with Human Resources staff and the GO Wales Officer as well as reporting to the Management Board on a quarterly basis. Clearly, robust monitoring systems are essential in order to ensure compliance with the Scheme, and we trust that you will witness the benefits of these formal systems during the final year of the implementation of the current Scheme.

**Public Correspondence**

We note that the Welsh language correspondence received this year remains small. Compared with the figures in the previous monitoring report it is noted that the number of Welsh letters received this year rose from 7 to 17, although 16 of these were bilingual. Therefore, in line with our last response, in order to make it clear to the public, HEFCW could note at the bottom of its headed notepaper that it welcomes any form of Welsh language communication. We suggest paying particular attention to this matter when developing the new Corporate Style Guide and the Communications Strategy in 2007/08.

It is not apparent from the report how HEFCW records the number of Welsh language communications received, particularly phone calls. In our view it is both valuable and important to provide informal guidance to staff on the

implementation of the scheme by means of individual meetings with the WLS Officers. However, as you review the provision of appropriate and effective guidance this year, we feel it would be beneficial for you to develop more formal methods, such as developing a Staff Guide. Such guidance does not have to be a lengthy written document, but we feel it would be a good thing to formalise the arrangements and ensure clarity for staff and consistency in the implementation of the Scheme across the organisation. This would include identifying your expectations with regard to recording the language of phone calls.

### **Website**

It is pleasing to see that HEFCW's website still complies with the requirements of the Language Scheme and that procedures are in place to ensure that information in Welsh and English is updated at the same time. You note, however, that you still encounter difficulties in ensuring that both versions of the annual volume of higher education statistics appear on the website at the same time. It would be useful if you could provide further details of the strategies utilised to lessen this delay and how successful they are.

As you note, in accordance with the current Language Scheme, documents are placed on the website in their original language. We see that some circulars which are specifically concerned with the Welsh medium sector are available in bilingual form on your website at present. As the final year of the current Scheme comes to a close, however, it would be useful for you to prioritise some further documents for bilingual production.

We welcome the fact also that large sections of the GO Wales website are now bilingual, and we trust that the advice offered in our response to the last monitoring report concerning Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards will be helpful to HEFCW's WLS Officers as they discuss the development of the website with GO Wales Officers.

### **Language Skills Strategy**

It is very pleasing to see that there has been a positive response to the recent survey of the linguistic ability of the staff. It is hoped that HEFCW's formal and informal investment in nurturing and developing the Welsh language skills of those staff who have expressed an interest or who are currently engaged in learning the language will bear fruit, and we wish them every success.

### **Development of Welsh Medium Higher Education Provision**

Thank you for the summary of the current position as regards the strategic framework and development plan. We would appreciate receiving a copy of the first-phase development plan of the Welsh Medium Higher Education Sector Group together with the advice you will be providing for the minister. We would also be interested in the annual monitoring statement on ITT provision, due in November 2007. With regard to the above developments, and in the absence of Dr Lowri Lloyd, please contact me if there is any matter you would like to discuss further.

Thank you once again for submitting a detailed and comprehensive report. We look forward to seeing the results of the implementation of the final year of the current Scheme and to the preparations for revising the Scheme in due course. If there is anything in this letter, or any aspect of the general progress made by higher education institutions in implementing their Welsh Language Schemes that you would like to discuss further, please contact me to discuss such matters over the phone or to arrange a meeting if you feel that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

**Jeni Smallwood**

*Post-16 Education and Training Unit*