

Meeting	Agenda Item	Reference No
04/05/07	16	HEFCW/07/45

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## INTRODUCTION

- 1 This paper presents for approval without discussion (subject to approval by the Committee) the unconfirmed minutes of the Council's Widening Access Committee (WAC) held on 20 March 2007 and the Committee's revised terms of reference and membership.

## BACKGROUND

- 2 At its July 2006 meeting, Council agreed to establish the Widening Access Committee with a broader membership and remit than the former Reaching Wider National Steering Group which steered the Reaching Wider Initiative. The purpose of the Widening Access Committee is to advise the Council on all matters related to widening access and the Reaching Wider Initiative.

## UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE SECOND WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2007

- 3 Unconfirmed minutes of the second meeting held on 20 March 2007 are attached as **Annex A**. The meeting considered a number of key widening access issues including: HEFCW's 2006-07 remit letter and the implications for widening access; the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation of widening access activities and the Reaching Wider initiative; the FE Bill, the Leitch and Webb Reviews of Higher Education and the Foundation Degrees study; Widening Access Strategies 2006/09 and Articulation Strategies 2006/07. Members also received a presentation from the consultants who undertook the national evaluation of widening access funded activities and the Reaching Wider initiative and who are undertaking further work to support HEFCW's consultation on the evaluation report.
- 4 As noted in the minutes, members considered the Committee's revised terms of reference and membership, attached as **Annex B**, and they invited Council to approve the proposed revisions.

***The Council is invited to approve the Widening Access Committee's revised terms of reference and membership.***

***The Council is invited to approve, subject to confirmation by the Committee, the unconfirmed minutes of the Widening Access Committee meeting of 20 March 2007.***

## AVAILABILITY OF PAPERS

- 5 Copies of all papers referred to in the Widening Access Committee minutes can be made available to members on request.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6 There are no financial implications arising from this paper.

## PUBLICITY IMPLICATIONS

7 There are no immediate publicity implications arising from this paper.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8 The Widening Access Committee has been established to advise the Council on widening access matters, including the Reaching Wider Initiative. The Widening Access Committee helps to ameliorate the risk of:
- The widening access and Reaching Wider Initiative policy areas not being aligned, as requested by the Assembly Government;
  - the Council not being fully informed of any statutory duties or emerging thinking regarding widening access.

## DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

9 There are no immediate implications arising from this paper. However, the Widening Access Committee will monitor the impact of diversity and equalities policies on students more effectively than the former Reaching Wider National Steering Group.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10 The Council is invited to:
- i) Approve the Widening Access Committee's revised terms of reference and membership.
  - ii) Approve, subject to confirmation by the Committee, the unconfirmed minutes of the Widening Access Committee meeting of 20 March 2007.

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UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE  
WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE MEETING  
20 MARCH 2007

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales



**WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE  
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES 20 March 2007  
WAC/07/min02**

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**Minutes of the second meeting of the HEFCW Widening Access Committee (WAC) held on 20 March 2007 at the HEFCW offices, Linden Court, Llanishen, Cardiff**

**Present:**

**Members:** Philip Gummett, Chair and HEFCW Council Member

Aled Jones, Chair, West and Mid Wales Reaching Wider Partnership  
Danny Saunders, South East Wales (First Campus) Reaching Wider Partnership (deputising for Julie Lydon)  
Gerry Jenson, Fforwm Representative  
Heather Graham, sector representative (Open University in Wales)  
Helen James, sector representative (NEWI)  
Karen Jones, Higher Education Wales (deputising for Amanda Wilkinson)  
Meri Huws, Chair, North Wales Reaching Wider Partnership  
Rhys Williams, Chair, South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership  
Rob Humphreys, NIACE Dysgu Cymru  
Teresa Rees, sector representative (Cardiff University)  
Viv Davies, UALL Cymru (deputising for Colin Trotman)

**Officers:** Celia Hunt, Head of Learning and Teaching  
Emma King, Reaching Wider National Officer  
Jane Johns, Secretary and Reaching Wider National Coordinator

**In attendance:** Brett Duggan, Arad Consulting  
Stuart Harries, Arad Consulting

**Apologies:** Becky Church, NUS Wales, Deputy President  
Peter McAllister, Welsh Assembly Government  
Jackie Brown, Welsh Assembly Government  
Trisha Jenkins, special adviser

1. The Chair welcomed members to the second Widening Access Committee (WAC) meeting and introduced Arad Consulting staff who would be reporting on the national evaluation of widening access activities and the Reaching Wider (RW) Initiative.
- 1.2 The Chair noted that Heather Graham was leaving the OU in Wales and on behalf of the Committee thanked her for her work and wished her well. The Chair also congratulated Rob Humphreys on his appointment as Director of the OU in Wales.
- 1.3 The Chair reminded members to return their declaration of interest forms to Emma King and asked for any specific declarations of interest. No declarations were made.

## 2. MINUTES OF THE 10 NOVEMBER MEETING (WAC/06/MIN01)

2.1 The minutes were confirmed and the Chair noted that the unconfirmed minutes would be presented to the March 2007 Council meeting.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Min. 3.2: Jane Johns noted that the RW Practitioners' Group had requested that it receives the unconfirmed WAC minutes at an early stage.

3.2 Min. 5.3 (i): Emma King had contacted the NUS but there was no further information on planned work with students with a care background.

3.3 Min. 5.3 (ii): Phil Gummatt noted that Jane Johns was now a member of the Frank Buttle Trust's UK HE Steering Group for students with a care background.

3.4 *Resolved:* the draft unconfirmed minutes would be circulated to appropriate groups (e.g. RW Practitioners' meetings, UALL Cymru) at an early stage.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (WAC/07/01)

4.1 This paper invited members to note the terms of reference revised in light of the discussion at the November WAC meeting and to recommend the revised terms of reference to Council. Membership of the Committee was also discussed.

### 4.2 *Resolved that:*

- i. the Secretary would invite members, via email, to suggest a schools' sector member able to represent the whole of Wales.
- ii. to ensure the WAC has continuity of membership, and to benefit from his advice whilst a new NIACE Dysgu Cymru Director is established in post, it was agreed that Rob Humphries would remain a WAC member for one year after his appointment to the OU in Wales in May.
- iii. as Heather Graham was leaving the OU in Wales before the next meeting a new sector representative would be chosen, against the original criteria, from the list of previous nominations.
- iv. the Committee would invite Council to agree the revised terms of reference and membership.

## 5. HEFCW REMIT LETTER 2007-08 (WAC/07/02)

5.1 Phil Gummatt invited the WAC to note the remit letter and advise Council on the implications for widening access (WA) policy development.

5.2 Some members expressed concern about the lack of references to widening access within the remit letter. Karen Jones reported that similar issues had been discussed by HEW members and that HEW would be writing to HEFCW about this.

5.3 Viv Davies observed that the issue of tracking and monitoring permeated the remit letter and urged the Committee to have a fuller discussion about this. Phil Gummatt noted the long-term work being undertaken through the MiAP (Managing Information Across Partners) initiative.

### 5.4 *Resolved that:*

- i. HEFCW would consult its statistics officers on MiAP developments and feed back issues relating to HE monitoring and tracking to the Assembly.

6. THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF WIDENING ACCESS FUNDED ACTIVITIES AND THE REACHING WIDER INITIATIVE (WAC/07/03)

- 6.1 The Chair noted that the Arad evaluation report had been submitted to the Minister in February and a period of further consultation agreed. Stuart Harries and Brett Duggan of Arad Consulting presented the evaluation findings, recommendations and conclusions and outlined their work to support the consultation process.
- 6.2 The Committee discussed the findings and particularly welcomed the emphasis on student retention and on tracking and monitoring. Jane Johns drew the Committee's attention to circular W07/10HE which informed the sector of an additional £60,000 allocation to the Reaching Wider Partnerships to improve data collection. Phil Gummett noted that this allocation would provide a greater understanding of the current position and contribute towards further work on retention.
- 6.3 The detailed points made by members were recorded by Arad Consulting to contribute to the consultation report.
- 6.4 Jane Johns outlined the consultation process and noted the further work Arad would undertake to support the consultation process. The Committee highlighted the need for increased cross-sectoral working and, with people from a care background, the need for a multi-agency approach.
- 6.5 The Committee discussed the need to provide evidence of WA activity impact. Brett Duggan invited members to send him quantitative data and qualitative information to be incorporated in the consultation report.
- 6.6 *Resolved that:*
- i. HEFCW would coordinate a tracking and monitoring seminar and a target setting seminar in 2007/08.
  - ii. Members would send Arad examples of quantitative and qualitative data as evidence of WA impact.
  - iii. HEFCW planned to publish a widening access/Reaching Wider good practice guide in 2007/08.
  - iv. The Committee would receive the outcomes of the consultation at its next meeting (12 June 2007.)

7. LEITCH REVIEW OF SKILLS AND WEBB REVIEW OF HE (WAC/07/04)

- 7.1 Celia Hunt outlined the paper's key points relating to the FE Bill, the Leitch and Webb Reviews and the role of Foundation Degrees in Wales study and reported on the HEFCW meeting on the Leitch and Webb Review, held on 9 March, to which WAC members had been invited. Phil Gummett reported that he and Celia Hunt would be appearing before the Webb Review Panel on 28 March and invited members to comment on the principles paper which would form part of the response to the Leitch and Webb Reviews.
- 7.2 The Committee suggested the following issues be considered in the responses: the need to increase the capacity of the Sector Skills Councils; the importance of pre-level three activities that increase learners' confidence; the need for training for trainers and HE's role in this; research into pedagogy; the relationship between organisations such as the Higher Education Academy and Lifelong Learning UK; and ensuring that current good practices are not de-stabilised by new policy development. Members particularly emphasised the importance of 'bite size' learning, ie the accreditation of learning below 20 credits, and their belief that employers were more interested in work-specific skills and personal transferable skills.
- 7.3 *Resolved that: HEFCW officers would note members' views when developing their Leitch and Webb Review responses.*

8. WIDENING ACCESS STRATEGIES 2006/09 AND ARTICULATION STRATEGIES 2006/07 (WAC/07/05)

8.1 Jane Johns invited the Committee to note the paper analysing the 2006/09 Widening Access Strategies and 2006/07 Articulation Strategies and to consider any implications for future policy development focusing particularly on the strategic direction of WA, WA target setting, the links between WA and the RW Partnerships and progress towards the Reaching Higher targets. Jane Johns noted that there was very little reference to established or developing work-based learning provision within the strategies.

8.2 Phil Gummatt noted that the sector should be encouraged to ensure that links were made between WA planning and Fee Plans to ensure effective strategic development. Phil Gummatt also expressed concern that not all of the RW Partnerships shared their HEIs' WA strategies.

8.3 Members noted that, at present, HEIs were at different stages of engagement with Convergence Funding, but that it would be beneficial for HEFCW to establish the extent of existing widening access-related European Social Fund (ESF) allocations to HEIs.

8.4 Phil Gummatt noted that HEFCE expected to be questioned on the costs of widening access and its value for money as part of a National Audit Office study. Other Funding Councils would also benefit from HEFCE's work on the business case for WA.

8.5 Resolved that:

- i. Jane Johns will update the Committee on HEFCE's work on WA value for money.
- ii. HEFCW officers will work with the sector to identify the level of ESF funding currently supporting WA provision.
- iii. All RW Partnerships would be encouraged to share their HEIs' WA Strategies via future Council circulars.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

9.1 The date of the next meeting was noted as 12 June 2007

10. UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE REACHING WIDER PRACTITIONERS' GROUP (25 JANUARY 2007) (WAC/07/06)

10.1 A copy of the Practitioners' Group minutes were included in the meeting papers for information.

11. CIRCULAR W07/10HE ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION TO SUPPORT REACHING WIDER PRIORITIES (WAC/07/07)

11.1 A copy of the circular noted in point 6.2 above was provided for information.

12. HEFCW's GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME (WAC/07/08)

12.1 A copy of the draft Gender Equality Scheme was provided for information. The consultation period on the draft would close on 5 April 2007.

Signature .....Date .....

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE

## HEFCW WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE REMIT

### 1 CONSTITUTION

- 1.1 The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales hereby resolves to establish a Committee of the Council to be known as the Widening Access Committee (the Committee) until such time as resolved by Council that the Committee is to be disbanded.

### 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 The specific duties of the Committee shall be:
- 2.2 To advise the Council on the development of its policy approaches in widening access, including the Reaching Wider Initiative:
- i. to contribute to the further development of the Council's strategies/programmes for widening access, including the Reaching Wider initiative;
  - ii. to make an annual report to Council each year;
  - iii. to evaluate widening access work through receipt of regular reports;
  - iv. to receive information regarding widening access funding, but not allocate or decide funding;
  - v. to receive education and/or widening access related policy and strategy reports from WAG and others.
- 2.3 To advise Council and institutions on retention issues, in particular, how they can encourage access to, participation in, and progression through, the education system by learners of all ages and levels:
- i. to advise on approaches Council might take to incentivise providers to target, recruit and retain widening access students;
  - ii. to receive reports on widening access good practice within Wales, the UK and internationally;
  - iii. to advise on and disseminate good practice;
  - iv. to promote effective partnership working in and between Partnerships and also between institutions;
  - v. to encourage an integrated approach to Partnership and institutional widening access strategies;
- 2.4 To advise on how widening access and the Reaching Wider initiative can contribute effectively to the Welsh Assembly Government's Reaching Higher targets for widening access and participation:
- i. to receive reports from the Reaching Wider Practitioners' Group;
  - ii. to promote alignment between widening access and Reaching Wider activities;
  - iii. to monitor progress towards the Reaching Higher widening access targets;
- 2.5 To provide guidance to the HEFCW officers responsible for widening access and the Reaching Wider initiative:
- iv. to advise on the development of widening access events and the annual Reaching Wider national conference;
  - v. to advise on cross-Wales activities;
  - vi. to provide guidance on evaluations of widening access and Reaching Wider policy;

vii. to ensure that the work of the Committee informs other relevant Council committees and policies.

2.6 To consider any matters referred to the Committee by the Council.

### **3 STANDING ORDERS**

#### **3.1 MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE**

3.2 The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed from within the membership of the Council. Reaching Wider Partnership Chairs, ex officio, shall be appointed until such time as Council resolves to disband the Committee. All other members shall be appointed for an initial period of two years with the option to renew for a further one or two years. In extending members' appointments, the Chair shall ensure that the Committee is not adversely affected by a substantial change in membership at any one time.

The members and Chair shall have no executive responsibilities.

The Council may co-opt members with particular expertise.

3.3 Upon taking up appointment to the Committee, members shall declare their interests by completing of a Declaration of Interests form. If a Member declares an interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the Committee, the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Members with a direct interest in any item to be considered at a meeting of the Council shall withdraw from the meeting during discussion of that item.

3.4 The Council shall determine the number of members and the quorum for meetings subject to a minimum requirement for five members including two members from the HE sector and a quorum of three members including one representative from the HE sector.

3.5 The Head of Learning and Teaching shall normally attend the meetings of the Committee. Other HEFCW officers and external expert advisors may be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Committee.

3.6 Members may nominate a substitute to attend meetings in their stead. Substitutes should come from the nominating body.

3.7 The Reaching Wider National Coordinator shall service the Committee.

### **4 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

4.1 The Committee shall determine the frequency of meetings, subject to a minimum of two meetings a year.

### **5 AUTHORITY**

5.1 The Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers. The members and Chair shall not have responsibility for funding allocations; however, the Committee may offer advice to the Council on general approaches to funding.

5.2 Subject to funding, the Committee is authorised to obtain independent professional advice if it considers this to be necessary.

## **6 REPORTING**

- 6.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Committee will be circulated to Council. Where the next Council meeting precedes the next Widening Access Committee meeting unconfirmed minutes will be submitted to Council.
- 6.2 The Committee will submit an annual report to Council on the discharge of its duties.

## **7 REVIEW**

- 7.1 The Committee Remit and membership shall be reviewed on an annual basis and any amendments reported to Council.

## **WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE (WAC) MEMBERSHIP**

### **Widening Access Committee Membership**

<b>Chair</b>	HEFCW Council Member
<b>RW Partnership Chairs</b>	Partnership Chairs from all Partnerships
<b>Sector Representatives</b>	A maximum of three sector representatives from HEIs
<b>Specialist Advisers &amp; External Organisational Representatives</b>	A maximum of three specialist advisers Fforwm representative HEW representative NIACE Dysgu Cymru representative NUS Wales representative Schools' sector representative UALL Cymru representative
<b>HEFCW Officers</b>	Head of Learning and Teaching RW National Coordinator (secretary) RW National Officer
<b>Observers</b>	WAG Head of Higher Education Division and/or their representative/s