

Complaints against HEIs funded by HEFCW Annual Report

Disclosable

Meeting
04/07/08

Agenda Item
18

Reference No
HEFCW/08/49

1 Issue

This paper provides for information an annual report of complaints received by HEFCW against HEIs funded by HEFCW for the financial year 2007-08.

2 Corporate Planning Implications

HEFCW shall, under its '*Corporate Governance and Compliance Arrangements*' Corporate Strategy to 2010 and Corporate Plan and Operational Plan 2006-07 to 2008-09 deal with complaints received against HEIs funded by HEFCW.

3 Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:

- i. Note the complaints against HEIs funded by HEFCW received and actions taken in 2007-08.

4 Timing for decisions

The report is received by the Council at the end of each financial year.

5 Council members' interests

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

6 Further information

contact Niina Hammond (Tel 029 2068 2252; E-mail: Niina.Hammond@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Background

7.1 HEFCW's Procedure for Dealing with Complaints Against funded HEIs

- 7.2 HEFCW and the Assurance Service occasionally receive allegations of financial irregularity or impropriety, mismanagement, waste and fraud in higher education institutions.
- 7.2 There is a procedure in place to manage HEFCW's response to these allegations a copy of which is attached and available from the HEFCW website at: http://194.81.48.132/About_Us/4040.htm. The procedure has recently been updated to reflect changes in roles post Organisational Design and will undergo a review and Equality Impact Assessment in 2008.
- 7.3 Complaints by staff or students concerning a particular institution are to be addressed through the institution's own internal complaints and appeal procedures.
- 7.4 The Financial Memorandum between HEFCW and HEIs sets out requirements for the governance and management of institutions. Where allegations are received that these requirements are not being met, HEFCW must satisfy itself that the matter has been investigated, appropriate action taken, and relevant people informed.
- 7.5 There were no complaints against HEIs received during the year that came within HEFCW's remit. However, HEFCW continues to receive copies of correspondence from a former student of a Welsh HEI who is dissatisfied with his treatment on an academic matter. This has been ongoing for the last three years at least. This complainant also continues to correspond with the Assembly, WAO, media and others. HEFCW is no longer responding to this complainant's correspondence.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from this paper. In the event of any investigation required at an HEI, additional resource could be required.

9 Communications implications

- 9.1 There are no communications implications for the Council arising from this paper.

10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 This paper has no implications for age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or the Welsh language.

11 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 It is possible that a complaint would be mishandled by the Council.

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
Mishandling of complaint received/incorrect decision made	Complaints received by Clerk to the Council/Assurance Service and co-ordinated in accordance with procedure.