

Meeting
04/07/08

Agenda Item
13

Reference No
HEFCW/08/44

1 Issue

- 1.1 In 2006/07, 301 out of the 7235 Erasmus exchange students from the UK were from Wales, compared to 326 assumed enrolments in 07/08 (Circulars W08/04HE and W08/06HE). The paper asks the Council to approve without discussion a rise in the budget available to compensate HEIs for a full-fee waiver for Erasmus students abroad on a full academic year. The additional amount will be £80,066 in each of the two years 08/09 and 09/10 and is subject to a review in January 2009 .

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 HEFCW's current Corporate Strategy recognises the importance of (the Welsh sector) being fully engaged in European-wide HE developments stemming from the Bologna Process; the promotion of student and staff mobility is a key action line associated with the Bologna reforms.

3 Recommendation(s)

3.1 The Council is invited to:

- i. **approve without discussion a rise in its commitment to Erasmus from its 07/08 level by £80,066 in each of the two years 08/09 and 09/10, subject to a review in January 2009.**

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 The decision is required now to enable to HEFCW to support HEIs in their aspirations for mobility in 08/09 and 09/10, and to enable them to plan their Erasmus activities and to market this scheme to students.

5 Council members' interests

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

6 Further information

Contact Dr Tove Oliver (Tel 029 2068 2264; E-mail: tove.oliver@hotmail.com)

7 Background

- 7.1 The June 2007 Council meeting (HEFCW/07/CE4) and subsequent letter from the Chief Executive to HEIs confirmed that:
- A fee waiver remains in place for the duration of the new programme (2007-2013), covering all Erasmus students abroad on a full academic year, including placement students and teaching assistants (a new departure), providing that they are returned as Erasmus students via their HESES returns;
 - That there is a new level of funding per student for 2007/08 of £3,070 which takes account of flexible tuition fees ;
 - But that the maintenance of this level of funding (i.e. a full fee waiver) in future years will be dependent on HEFCW receiving additional funding from the Assembly Government.
- 7.2 In Wales, there has been an 8% increase in the number of outward Erasmus students since last year (although for the first time this figure includes language assistants and placement students – as well as the usual exchange students). In 2006/07, 301 out of the 7235 Erasmus exchanges from the UK were from Wales, compared to 326 assumed enrolments in 07/08 (Circulars W08/04HE and W08/06HE).
- 7.3 If this rate of growth continues then by 08/09 the number of outward Erasmus students will be 352, and by 2011/12 it will be 444. That said, despite continued growth in recent years in Europe as a whole, the rate of outward students has now slowed from 7.2% to 3.2%.
- 7.4 In order to reach the EU target of 3 million students by 2012, the European Commission (EC) has predicted that an annual increase of 9-10% will be needed. It is also considering a target of 15% of all students being mobile by 2015.

8 Main body Heading

- 8.1 HEFCW's recurrent grant for Erasmus is £1,000,820 which equates to a compensation rate of £3,070 per student (i.e. the full fee waiver) for a total of 326 students.
- 8.2 It is very difficult to predict the likely rate of increase (or indeed decrease) in future years. However, in the light of:
- the growth in figures in Wales since last year (albeit uplifted by the addition of language assistants);
 - the likely increase in placement students participating in the scheme (placement also being a new strand of Erasmus activity);
 - the UK Erasmus National Agency now being located in Cardiff and hence the profile of the scheme being raised in Wales; and
 - an overarching policy drive to increase student and staff outward mobility across Europe and beyond (from the EC, Bologna Process, and the UK Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education 2 – PMI2);

It is recommended that the budget for 08/09 and 09/10 be increased to £1,080,886 (i.e. an 8% increase over 07/08), and that this should be reviewed again in January 2009 (once the verified HESES figures for 08/09 are in).

- The Council is invited to approve without discussion an increase in the Erasmus budget from its 07/08 level by £80,066 in each of the two years 08/09 and 09/10, subject to a review in January 2009.

- 8.3 HEFCW's Strategic Development Directorate will continue to press for clarity from the Assembly Government on who under the new DCELLS structure has responsibility for Erasmus (in so far as the Assembly Government is concerned), and what the prospects are for additional funding from them to cover the increase in budget for the full-fee waiver.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The financial implications to HEFCW are that it will make provision for an 8% increase in the compensation available to the sector for Erasmus participation in 08/09 and 09/10; i.e. an additional £160,132 in total in these two years (subject to review).

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 This information will be shared with the sector by letter with immediate effect.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 The aim of the new EU Lifelong Learning Programmes (2007-13, of which Erasmus is a major part) is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the European community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The new Erasmus programme is actively encouraging a new student cohort of lifelong learners, part-time and mature students. Outward mobility is by nature enhancing the career opportunities of the participating students and staff in the European employment market.

12 Risk Assessment

12.1

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
If the Council does not agree to take forward the proposals in the paper, there is a risk that there will be insufficient funding to enable HEFCW to fully compensate HEIs for the full-fee waiver in 08/09 and/or	Council to agree to the proposals in the paper.

09/10.

There is also a risk that HEIs in Wales will be discouraged from planning for and participating in the Erasmus programme.