

**PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE FEE WAIVER  
SCHEME 2007/08**

	Meeting	Agenda Item	<b>DISCLOSABLE</b> Reference No
	12/12/08	22	HEFCW/08/100

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**1 Issue**

This paper reports the outcomes of the Council's Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme in 2007/08. The paper is for information only.

**2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper**

There are no direct Corporate Plan implications for this table. This paper is produced annually to report on expenditure under the Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme.

**3 Recommendation(s)**

The Council is invited to:

- i. note the contents of this paper.

**4 Timing for decisions**

There are no decisions arising from this Council paper.

**5 Council members' interests**

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

**6 Further information**

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## 7 Background

The letter of guidance which accompanied the Council's 1998 grant settlement drew attention to part-time fee remission for students on benefit or low income as one of a number of improvements to student support arrangements intended to further the Government's commitment to widening access. As a result, the Council developed the Part-Time Fee Waiver Scheme which has operated since 1999/2000. The amount of funding available for the scheme in 2007/08 was increased by £500K to a total of £1.5million. The additional funding guarantees that the scheme will be able to meet any increased claims arising from the introduction of variable undergraduate fees in 2007/08.

## 8 Details of the scheme

- 8.1 The Scheme contains three strands of funding: one for fee waivers; one for a contribution to the costs of administering the scheme at 4% of the value of fees waived, up to a maximum of £5,000; and one for promotion of the scheme up to £4,000 per institution.
- 8.2 Allocations for fee waivers and the associated administration costs are made in December on the basis of estimates of expenditure provided by institutions. Estimated expenditure is compared with actual expenditure at the end of the academic year and any difference between the two values is recognised by making appropriate adjustments to the payment of grant for fee waiver for the following year. Payments for the promotion of the scheme are made in June on the basis of claims supported by invoices.

## 9 Outcomes of the scheme

- 9.1 **Annex A** gives details of the amounts estimated and the amounts actually spent on the scheme. Fifteen institutions claimed between them a total of £541,122 for estimated fee waivers, along with £20,023 for estimated administration costs. Actual spend was lower than the estimates at £473,915 and £18,957 respectively. Some 1,422 students were expected to benefit from the scheme; the actual number was 1,222. Two institutions waived fees worth more than they had estimated.
- 9.2 Annex A also gives details of the amounts claimed for promotion of the scheme in 2007/08 out of the £4,000 available per institution. Twelve institutions claimed a total of £41,009.
- 9.3 **Annex B** compares 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 data. Numbers of students benefiting from the scheme in 2007/08 decreased slightly by 1%. However, the value of fees waived rose by 46% in 2007/08. This steep rise in the level of claims is most likely the anticipated result of the introduction of increased fees for some part-time undergraduate courses.
- 9.4 Fees worth £473,915 were actually waived by institutions in 2007/08. The associated administration and promotion costs were £18,957 and £41,009

respectively, This gave a total expenditure of £533,881 in 2007/08, which represents an increase of 43% on the total expenditure for 2006/07.

- 9.5 Throughout the sector, 1,222 students benefited from the scheme in 2007/08, 14 less than in 2006/07 and 167 less than 2005/06. 1,192 (98%) were mature students, that is 25 years or over and 815 (67%) were female. **Annex C** provides further details. Students claimed eligibility for the scheme on the basis of various criteria which are also shown in Annex C.

## **10 Financial implications**

- 10.1 The payments to institutions for 2007/08 were adjusted to take account of the difference between the estimated and actual amount of feed waived in 2006/07. As a result £538,640 was actually paid to institutions in 2007/08. In total £961,360 was returned to the contingency budget in 2007/08.
- 10.2 It should be noted that from 2008/09 the Open University in Wales will be eligible to claim fee waiver funding from the scheme. There is potential that this will significantly increase the level of funding claimed by the sector.

## **11 Communications implications**

There are no communication implications arising from this paper.

## **12 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications**

The Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver scheme offers fee remission for students who are unemployed and actively seeking work or who are in receipt of Department for Work and Pensions benefits. It is designed to serve as an instrument for helping to combat social exclusion and to assist more people to obtain vocational qualifications. As such the scheme is intended to contribute towards widening participation, improving access and increasing rates of retention and achievement.

## **13 Risk Assessment**

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
If the scheme is not monitored and marketed, there is a risk that opportunity for students in a position to benefit from its provision may be lost.	Scheme is monitored and marketed as detailed in this paper.