

For approval without discussion

Welsh Medium Provision Fund

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw

Disclosable

Meeting
14/03/08

Agenda Item
20

Reference No
HEFCW/08/21

1 Issue

This paper seeks the Council's agreement to revised arrangements for the Welsh Medium Provision Fund from 2008/09.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

The 2007-10 Corporate Strategy and Corporate and Operational Plan states that: "Particular support is given to maintaining and developing Welsh medium provision, through both institutional funding and support for the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre. We will be working with the sector to establish a new strategic framework and development plan for Welsh medium provision"; and notes planned actions to achieve this.

3 Recommendation

The Council is invited to confirm the arrangements for the Welsh Medium Provision Fund from 2008/09 as set out in this paper.

4 Timing for decisions

Decisions at this meeting will enable the Welsh Medium Provision Fund to be used to support the implementation of the national development plan from 2008/09.

5 Council members' interests

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

6 Further information

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7 Background

- 7.1 In November 2006, following an independent options appraisal undertaken on behalf of the sector, HEIs in Wales committed, through HEW, to the establishment of a sector strategic framework, including a national development plan, for Welsh medium provision. A new Welsh Medium Higher Education Sector Group (WM HESG) was set up, with senior management representation from each HEI.
- 7.3 The national development plan focuses on three main areas: marketing; staff development; and provision development. The Council has made available for a number of years a Welsh Medium Provision Fund to support the development of provision and resources. It is therefore appropriate that this Fund is now used to support directly the provision development section of the national development plan. With this in mind, we put proposals on the future use of the Fund to the WM HESG in June 2007. The proposals included phasing out the direct allocations which the main providers of Welsh medium provision received, so that the Fund would be allocated against an agreed provision development plan.
- 7.4 At the WM HESG meeting, the members representing the three largest providers of Welsh medium provision, Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and Trinity College Carmarthen, indicated their concern about the proposal to withdraw the direct allocations. In the light of this, we conducted a formal consultation with the sector, following the WM HESG meeting.
- 7.5 The Council discussed the responses to the consultation at its meeting in September 2007 and confirmed its strong commitment to using the Development Fund in ways that are consistent with and support the national development plan. As concerns remained amongst the three main Welsh medium providers, the Council agreed to continue the present allocation method for 2007/08 and defer a decision on the precise arrangements for 2008/09 onwards until February 2008. This would allow further progress on drawing up a sector-wide plan for provision development and give institutions time to adapt to the proposed changes. This decision was reported and welcomed at the November 2007 meeting of the WM HESG.
- 7.6 Considerable progress has been made in drawing up the sector plan for developing provision, facilitated and co-ordinated by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education (CWMHE - previously called the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre). This includes preparing programmes of development for the subject areas which the WM HESG has identified as ones where the sector will work collaboratively: Environment/ Geography; Creative Industries/Media; Law; Education and Training; Biological Sciences; Sport and Leisure, and Health-related subjects. Institutions were also asked to submit expressions of interest in taking forward developments in other subject areas. From these, subject areas have been identified where particular institutions will be regarded as lead providers, and work is continuing on identifying some smaller collaborative groupings for certain subjects.

8 Confirmation of arrangements from 2008/09

- 8.1 In the light of the progress in drawing up the provision development plan, we reported to the WM HESG meeting on 22 February 2008 that the Council would be asked to confirm formally that the revised arrangements for the Fund would be introduced from 2008/09.
- 8.2 Therefore we are asking the Council to confirm that from 2008/09 the Fund will be allocated against the provision development plan agreed by WM HESG, co-ordinated by CWMHE.
- 8.3 As set out in the consultation document last year, the Fund will operate against key criteria which have been supported by WM HESG:
- The funding is used to support the development and expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
 - The funding is used directly to support Section 2 of the Sector Development Plan (Provision Development). Projects which are not consistent with the plan will not be funded.
 - The funding is used strategically to ensure the maximum benefit from available resources.
 - Funding is allocated against clear development plans which have measurable outputs, targets and timetables, including for the preparation and delivery of provision, and student enrolments, and that progress will be closely monitored against these.
 - There will be mechanisms for withdrawing/deferring/recovering funding from particular projects if agreed progress is not made, or if there is not sufficient assurance that progress can be made. Funding will then be reallocated to other projects.
- 8.4 The allocations from the Fund will be made against the provision development plan by a panel consisting of the chair of the WM HESG, the Director of CWMHE, a HEFCW officer, plus up to three external members to be invited by the chair of the WM HESG. Annual progress reports will be made to the Council.

The Council is invited to confirm the arrangements for the Welsh Medium Provision Fund from 2008/09 as set out in this paper.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 Within the overall sum identified for the Welsh Medium Provision Fund for 2008/09 (see Agenda item 7, HEFCW/08/10, Annex E), £404,000 will be available to support the development of provision.

10 Communications implications

- 10.1 We will notify heads of institutions on the arrangements for the Fund from 2008/09, once the recurrent grant for 2008/09 has been confirmed at the May meeting of the Council.

11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 11.1 The issues discussed in the paper are crucial to the Council's policies on supporting Welsh medium provision in the sector. Widening access to HE in the context of Welsh medium provision will be included within the national development plan.

12 Risk Assessment

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
The sector is unable to make sufficient progress against the provision development plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developments will take place against agreed subject strategies with appropriate targets and timescales.• Progress will be monitored by the WM HESG on which HEFCW is represented.• CWMHE will also work closely with the WM network panels and institutions, including monitoring progress on the individual projects which are part of the subject strategies.