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Press release

Date: 20 July 2006

Title: **£5 million boost for Welsh research**

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has allocated an additional £5m to higher education institutions in Wales to boost further their preparations for the next Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). This brings to £8m the additional allocation made by HEFCW since December 2005 and represents a significant shot in the arm as the institutions enter the final stages of preparing their submissions for the November 2007 RAE deadline. This funding will also help the higher education sector to position itself more strongly in support of the emerging Assembly strategy for science in Wales.

The RAE, which next takes place in 2008 on the basis of submissions made by November 2007, is a UK-wide exercise to assess the quality of research in higher education. A strong performance by the Welsh institutions in 2008 will be an essential element in positioning Wales for the future in terms of national and international research activity.

Given its importance for social and economic regeneration in Wales, improved research performance is a key target of *Reaching Higher*, the Welsh Assembly Government's long term strategy for higher education in Wales. The Assembly has agreed to the strategic use of the additional £5m from funds allocated in support of *Reaching Higher*. HEFCW has allocated the total selectively to the institutions considered most likely to benefit from this injection of funding in their performance in 2008.

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, commented:

“HEFCW is delighted to have been able to secure agreement to make this further significant allocation at a critical point in advance of the next RAE. As with the allocation of £3m in December 2005, we were again keen to ensure that this substantial funding would be deployed to best effect and have therefore once more targeted the funding strategically at those institutions who, in our judgement, are best placed to secure greatest benefit from the investment. We look forward to seeing what we hope will be a strong performance from higher education in Wales in 2008.”

Professor Sir Roger Williams, Chair of the Council, explained the significance of the allocation in the context of the broader agenda for higher education in Wales:

“The key priority for the *Reaching Higher* funding remains the reconfiguration of the higher education sector in Wales through mergers and substantial, sustainable collaboration. There will be no relaxation of the Council’s efforts to secure the type of structural change in the sector which, above all else, would enable the needs of the communities of Wales to be met more effectively for the future. Nonetheless, such structural change takes time and we are fortunate to have received encouragement from the Minister to seek additional strategic uses to which the *Reaching Higher* funding can be put in support of the broader goal of improving the contribution that higher education can make to Wales.”

Ends.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

The Research Assessment Exercise was last undertaken in 2001 in the UK. The 2008 exercise is again being co-ordinated on a UK-wide basis. Further details can be found at www.rae.ac.uk.

Details of this funding allocation can be found in the circulars section of the HEFCW website (www.hefcw.ac.uk) in circular W06/28HE.

Reaching Higher

Reaching Higher is the Welsh Assembly Government's long term strategy for higher education. It can be downloaded from the Assembly's website at the following link:

www.wales.gov.uk/subieducationtraining/content/higher/reachinghigher-e.pdf

Background - HEFCW

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Sponsored Public Body, established in May 1992, which assumed responsibility for funding higher education in Wales on 1 April 1993.

Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Council is responsible for the administration of funds made available by the Assembly in support of the provision of education, the undertaking of research by higher education institutions, and the provision of prescribed courses of higher education at further education institutions.

Under the Education Act 1994, the Council is responsible for accrediting providers of initial teaching training for school teachers and commissioning research to improve the standards of teachers and teacher training.

In addition to its funding responsibilities, the Council provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of the higher education sector in Wales.