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Press release

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Title: **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2004/05**

UK-wide figures published today showed that higher education institutions in Wales have continued with their successes in recruiting students from under-represented groups.

The figures, for the academic year 2004/05, show the Welsh higher education (HE) sector's achievements in widening participation in HE.

Welsh universities and colleges continued to recruit higher proportions of young, full-time undergraduate students from state schools, lower socio-economic groups and neighbourhoods with low participation in HE than the UK as a whole.

The proportion of part-time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of HE and who were from a low participation neighbourhood not only increased from 2003/04, it was also the highest proportion in the UK.

A major achievement is that the proportion of students in Welsh institutions in receipt of a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) continues to rise and, for full-time students, remains higher than the proportion for the UK as a whole.

The main results for Wales in 2004/05 were:

- 92% of young full-time undergraduate entrants to Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) in 2004/05 were from state schools or colleges, compared to 87% for the UK as a whole.
- 17% of young full-time undergraduate entrants to Welsh HEIs were from low participation neighbourhoods, compared to 14% for the UK as a whole.
- The proportion of full-time undergraduate entrants to Welsh HEIs from the four lowest socio-economic groups continued to be slightly higher than the proportion for the UK as a whole.
- Up from 14% in 2003/04 to 17% in 2004/05, Wales continued to have the highest proportion in the UK of part-time undergraduate entrants with no previous HE experience and from a low participation neighbourhood.
- The proportion of full-time undergraduate students in Welsh HEIs in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) continued to rise, with 5% in receipt of DSA in 2004/05. This also continued to be greater than the proportion for the UK as a whole.
- 22% of mature full time undergraduate entrants in Wales had no previous experience of HE and were from a low participation neighbourhood, compared to 16% for the UK as a whole.

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, said:

“This is great news for Wales. It confirms the commitment of our universities and colleges to offering opportunities to all those with the ability to benefit from higher education. The higher education experience is immensely rewarding and our institutions work hard with schools and colleges to spread this message throughout the communities in Wales through our *Reaching Wider* initiative, which is all about raising aspirations amongst both young and mature potential students.

“The growth in the number of students in receipt of a DSA in Wales is also welcome. We shall build further from this strong position following our recent appointment of a Disability and Diversity Co-ordinator, who will work closely with the sector to maximise their support for disabled students.” End.

Media contacts

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Performance Indicators

Full text and tables of Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK 2004/05 can be found on the HESA website at www.hesa.ac.uk/pi.

The Performance Indicators are published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on the behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and in Northern Ireland the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).

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.