

Press release

Date: 18 July 2007

Title: Welsh universities strike gold

Universities as generators of income continue to boost Wales's economy and communities, figures published today show.

Higher education institutions in Wales not only create and work with businesses for economic gain - they also assist with local regeneration.

The sixth annual *Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI)* survey report shows that universities and colleges in Wales continue to improve across a range of indicators of economic and social contribution through activities such as delivering training and consultancy services or commercialising new knowledge.

The survey, published jointly by the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and co-financed by the higher education funding bodies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, reveals that:

- In the 2005/06 academic year, Wales accounted for 11% of income from collaborative research involving both public funding and funding from business, outperforming six out of nine English RDA regions. Welsh income generation has increased in this area by more than 70% since 2001/02.
- Wales accounts for almost 9% of UK income from consultancy contracts with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Since 2001/02, the number of consultancy contracts with Welsh HEIs has increased by over 300%.

- Wales has almost 7% of the UK higher education sector's cumulative portfolio of active patents, again outperforming seven out of nine English RDA regions. Welsh patent activity has increased significantly since 2001/02.
- In 2005/06, Wales generated 13.5% of all higher education business spinout and staff start-up activity and 13.5% of all UK graduate start-ups. Since 2001/02 the number of spinout companies and staff start-ups which have survived for more than three years has increased by 88%, with the estimated turnover of all active firms increasing by over 69% to more than £37 million.

Minister for Education, Culture and the Welsh Language Carwyn Jones said: "The higher education sector in Wales is a key contributor to the Welsh economy. I am delighted by yet another year on year improved performance. Higher education is punching above its weight in this area. I look to the sector to continue this success."

Professor Sir Roger Williams, Chair of HEFCW, said: "This survey shows that we cannot underestimate the economic and community contribution which higher education makes to the businesses and social enterprises with which it works. The growth over the past six years has been tremendous, with Welsh universities not only improving year-on-year, but also surpassing expectations for a sector of its size, which accounts for some five per cent of higher education in the UK."

Notes:

The full report is available on the Higher Education Funding Council for England's website:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_17/

- **The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** (HEFCW) is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body responsible for administering funds made available by the Welsh Assembly Government in support of:
 - the provision of education in higher education institutions (HEIs);

- the undertaking of research by HEIs; and
- the provision of prescribed courses of higher education at further education institutions.

HEFCW is also 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, HEFCW provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of the higher education sector in Wales.

Contacts for further information

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