

Press release

Date: 8 February 2007

Title: £5.3 million strengthens North-East Wales Institute's position

The North-East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWI) has been awarded £5.3 million to strengthen its position as Wales's higher education institution in north-east Wales.

The investment, from HEFCW's Strategic Development Fund, will be given over three years and will help the Institute along the road to gaining its own degree awarding powers – and to securing the university title in the future.

A significant share of the funding will go towards a new Design Technology Building in order to improve learning resources at NEWI. The building will bring together engineering, design and computer science, revamping both the departments and their curricula in the process.

The remaining funding will be used to boost NEWI's human resources. This will include a suite of staff development activities and a number of new appointments to build capacity in several subject and operational areas.

Professor Sir Roger Williams, Chairman of HEFCW, said: "In general, we encourage our higher education institutions to look to mergers and collaborations as ways of bolstering their positions as seats of learning, teaching and research. In this particular geographical circumstance, however, we have concluded that a significant investment from the Strategic Development Fund best suits NEWI's status, identity and mission."

Professor Michael Scott, Principal and Chief Executive of NEWI welcomed the investment. "This shows the great confidence HEFCW has in the work we are doing here at NEWI. It will enable the Institute to remain at the forefront of the development of design technology across North East Wales building on the joint work of three of NEWI's vocational schools: the North Wales School of Art and Design; the School of Science and Technology; and the School of Computing and Communications Technology."

Ends

Contact for further information

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Notes

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Sponsored Public 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.

Strategic Development Fund

The Strategic Development Fund (SDF) offers financial support to underpin interventions HEFCW makes with the higher education sector in support of our strategic priorities.

Complementing our Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF), it is used to support less expensive collaborations and other, UK-wide, strategic initiatives, at HEFCW's discretion. The investment can be seen against the backdrop of the Welsh Assembly Government's 10 year strategy for higher education, *Reaching Higher*, which focuses on the need to widen access and to encourage significant developments in collaboration and reconfiguration of higher education in Wales.