

## Press release

**Date:** 2 June 2010

**Title** Universities show responsiveness to local needs

Universities in Wales are taking the lead in improving access to higher education for learners and employers across Wales.

Higher education (HE) institutions have been charged with identifying learning needs and priorities within their regions to create clearer paths to HE from school, the community, the workplace and further education (FE).

By working with other learning providers and employers, universities will create better opportunities for progression into HE through co-ordinating programmes in community, workplace, further education and higher education settings. They will also increase their responsiveness to local employers, providing better tailored workforce development and easier access to expertise.

The aim is to create a coherent higher education system for Wales, where different providers – playing to their different strengths and missions - work together in organised, thought-through ways to deliver the best possible higher education that available funds will buy.

Professor Philip Gummert, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: “Universities and their partners face a difficult challenge in coming up by the end of November with an integrated strategy in each of the three regions of Wales that we have defined. But once over the initial stages, institutions should be able to see benefits as their plans take off, with opportunities for sharing services and resources, and eliminating unnecessary duplication.

“This is about strengthening the regional dimension of delivery. It will complement, not replace, the wider and well-established national and international contribution of our universities.

“The aim is to improve the prospects for potential learners, who will be able to better access higher education locally and on their terms, and to make it easier for employers to access local higher education support and expertise.”

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### **Notes**

The Guidance for the Submission of Regional Strategies for the Planning and Delivery of Higher Education is available at [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk) under publications / circulars.

**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:

- education in higher education institutions (HEIs);
- research undertaken by HEIs; and
- higher education courses at further education colleges.

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.