

## Press release

**Date:** 3 August 2010

**Title** £7 million investment for skills

An investment of £7.64 million is being made to improve the skills of Wales's workforce over the next three years.

Universities in Wales have been invited to submit proposals to offer new, regionally-based, part-time Foundation Degrees through universities, further education institutions and employers.

The funding, announced by Education Minister Leighton Andrews on 7 July, is designed to spur Welsh businesses to become more competitive and successful in the marketplace by upskilling their workforce, and at the same time providing improved access to higher skills and higher education for people working in Wales's 'priority' sectors.

The new courses, which will be developed with employers and Sector Skills Councils, will improve local availability of higher education for potential learners through the workplace, and are designed to be of economic benefit both to companies and Wales's economy.

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "This is a major investment at a time of acute economic pressure. We recently announced a new regional approach to the delivery of higher education in Wales, which will see real changes in how the needs of learners and employers are met by higher education providers in the regions of Wales., Our Foundation Degree proposals are designed

to meet the needs of employers and learners at local level, and give a fillip to improving the skills available to Welsh employers.”

Professor Robin Williams, Chair of HEFCW’s Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee, said: “Investing in these courses is also an investment in Wales’s workforce, and ultimately in a brighter economic future for Wales. We urge employers, universities and colleges in Wales to work together to take real advantage of this fund and to establish a meaningful and crucial range of part-time Foundation Degrees to boost company competitiveness in these difficult times.”

Education Minister Leighton Andrews said: "Foundation degrees make a crucial contribution towards meeting Wales’ economic skills needs and are a key part of *For Our Future*, our vision for HE. They are essential in widening participation, enabling more learners to achieve a higher education qualification - a valuable tool for upskilling the workforce in Wales."

## **Notes**

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## **Foundation degrees**

Foundation degrees focus on acquiring both skills and knowledge, and integrate study with work-based learning and project work in order to address the needs of employers. They normally guarantee progression to at least one honours bachelors degree.

HEFCW will allocate funding on a regional basis. We will consider no more than one proposal from each region, but this proposal may comprise a number of strands or elements, some or all of which may be funded.

More information about Foundation Degrees: W10/29HE:

[www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/circulars/circulars.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/circulars/circulars.aspx)

More information about working on a regional basis:

[www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars\\_2010/W10%2016HE%20Regional%20strategy%20guidance.pdf](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2010/W10%2016HE%20Regional%20strategy%20guidance.pdf)

The priority economic sectors set out in *Skills that Work for Wales* are:

automotive; aerospace; bioscience; construction; creative industries; defence; energy; environmental management; financial services; food; health (not public sector); leisure and tourism; retail; and telecommunications and ICT.

Full statement from Education Minister Leighton Andrews:

[cymru.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2010/100706found/?lang=en&ts=3](http://cymru.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2010/100706found/?lang=en&ts=3)

**The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** (HEFCW) is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body. We strategically use resources from the Welsh Assembly Government and others to:

- secure higher education learning and research of the highest quality
- make the most of the contribution of higher education to the culture, society and economy of Wales
- ensure high quality, accredited teacher training across Wales.

We also provide advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of higher education institutions in Wales.