

## Datganiad i'r wasg | Press release

**22 December 2010**

### **The future shape of higher education in Wales**

A more explicit description of the future shape of the higher education (HE) sector in Wales, in order to deliver a sustainable Welsh HE system, has been published by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

This followed requests from the higher education sector for HEFCW to take the lead in defining reconfiguration expectations, and builds upon pledges made by the funding body in its latest Corporate Strategy and by the Welsh Assembly Government in its higher education strategy, For our Future.

The main elements are:

- By March 2013, the higher education sector in Wales should move to a structure of no more than six institutions.
- Their distribution should reflect regional needs such that there should be no more than two institutions per region (as we have defined previously), albeit with several delivery locations.
- Each region should have research intensive (in which we will increasingly focus our research funding to support sustainable excellence and relevance to Welsh Assembly Government objectives) and strong community/widening access focused provision.
- No more than two HE institutions should have an income below the UK median

and, given the higher population density and easier mobility, neither of these should be in south east Wales.

Discussions with the higher education sector about how to achieve the reconfigured HE sector will take place in the new year.

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: “We have not until now been so explicit in our expectations for the structure of higher education in Wales, preferring the sector to come forward with proposals. But we have been asked to give a clearer lead. We believe that the approach that we have outlined will make the sector the strongest and most sustainable it can be in order to compete in the twenty-first century for students, for research funding, for business contracts, and so on, and to provide the best possible service to Wales and the wider world. We will be discussing the road to reconfiguration with Vice-Chancellors and Governing Bodies as a matter of urgency over the coming months.”

## **Notes**

Further information:

Emma Raczka, Communications Manager, HEFCW

[emma.raczka@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:emma.raczka@hefcw.ac.uk)

029 2068 2225

Full Statement to higher education institutions in Wales attached.

*For our Future*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education, outlines its expectations for further reconfiguration of the higher education sector in Wales.

HEFCW's *Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13* builds upon *For our Future*, and outlines HEFCW's aim to encourage further reconfiguration of the higher education sector including ‘institutional mergers and collaborations, where this will underpin strength, capacity, and availability of high quality higher education’, stating that:

“At least 75% of the Welsh higher education institutions will have an annual income in excess of the UK median (36% in 2008/09), with no institution to be in the lower quartile by 2012/13 (4 in 2008/09).”

This Statement further elaborates on how reconfiguration will take shape by 2013.

For further information about defined regions in higher education in Wales, see [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)

In recent years, we have seen the following major structural developments in the HE sector in Wales:

- Merger of Cardiff University and University of Wales College of Medicine, 2004
- Integration of Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama into the University of Glamorgan Group, 2007
- Merger of University of Wales, Lampeter and Trinity University College, Carmarthen, 2010
- Statement announcing agreement in principle to create a single new university for South West Wales (University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Swansea Metropolitan University), December 2010

**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 for:

- education in higher education institutions (HEIs)
- research by HEIs and
- certain higher education courses 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.