

Press release

Date: 29 June 2010

Title New directions for higher education in Wales

Plans for a higher education (HE) system in Wales that contributes strongly to social justice and supporting a buoyant economy were outlined today by the universities' funding body.

HEFCW's new Corporate Strategy outlines its expectations for higher education in Wales up to 2013. It wishes to see universities and further education colleges working together in a more integrated fashion across the regions of Wales to improve provision for all learners who are able to benefit from HE.

The funding council also wishes to see improved research performance, at international standards of excellence, with stronger links to users and other beneficiaries.

HEFCW says that it believes there are too many higher education institutions in Wales for optimal effectiveness under contemporary, highly competitive, conditions. It wants to see substantially fewer institutions, better able to take risks, withstand shocks, and remain innovative into the longer term.

The Strategy is aimed at delivering the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy and plan for higher education, *For our Future*, published in November 2009.

Roger Thomas, Chair of HEFCW, said: "*For Our Future* sets a clear framework for the development of higher education in Wales. Our Corporate Strategy sets out how

we propose to work with the providers in Wales to deliver *For Our Future* and the structure of our Strategy is based on its key themes.

“We plan to work with providers to build a first class higher education system in Wales that will perform at a high level and make best use of available funds, which is particularly important in the current economic climate. We have already started to target our funding to drive forward strategic goals.”

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: “Institutions are already demonstrating their commitment to the Welsh Assembly Government’s vision for an improved higher education system in Wales through initial work on better regional delivery of HE that will benefit learners and employers; work on the *Coleg Ffederal* for Welsh medium higher education; the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI); and recent major research collaborations, such as the Climate Change Consortium. Welsh institutions will be encouraged to build on these types of developments, making the best possible use of funds to encourage a first rate higher education system.”

Notes

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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.

Our Corporate Strategy sets out our medium to long-term objectives for higher education in Wales.

It outlines how we expect higher education (HE) to tackle the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities of social justice and a buoyant economy over the coming years, through the themes of widening access, the student experience, skills, knowledge transfer and research. The strategy also includes a number of performance targets for the HE sector in Wales covering, for example, quality, access to higher education, employment and income.