

**To: Heads of higher education
institutions in Wales
Principals of directly funded further
education colleges**

Reference: W03/42HE
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Response By: 14 November 2003
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THE HEFCW PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE FEE WAIVER SCHEME 2003/04

As you will be aware, the Council has, for a number of years, run a scheme for the remission of part-time undergraduate fees. The scheme is one of the measures supporting the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to widening access to higher education and is to continue until further notice.

The guidelines for the Scheme are set out in the enclosed document, *Part-time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme* and are substantially unchanged from those operated in previous years. The total amount of funding available in 2003/04 will be £1m.

The main principles underlying the Scheme are that it should

- be sufficiently robust to meet the objectives set; and
- minimise administrative requirements.

In respect of the Council, this last point means

- the Council will deal with institutions rather than with students;
- grants to support the Scheme will be provided to institutions on the basis of estimates of expenditure made at the start of the year and will be adjusted on the basis of details of actual expenditure at the end of the year.

In respect of institutions it means

- institutions will assess student eligibility for support under the Scheme on the basis of Benefits Agency means testing or self-certification by the student rather than by applying detailed tests themselves;
- the information required for report will be drawn substantially from that already collected by institutions.

Institutions are urged to promote the arrangements for waiving fees amongst the target groups of students. To this end, up to £4,000 will continue to be made available to each institution for publicity in 2003/04. Further details are provided in paragraph 27 of the enclosed document, *Part-time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme*.

Similarly, the Council will continue to make a contribution towards the cost of administering the Scheme. As in previous years, institutions will be eligible for an amount corresponding to 4% of their overall fee waiver grant for the purpose of administration.

Further Education Colleges with part-time undergraduate higher education provision funded directly by the Council should submit fee waiver claims in relation to that provision direct to the Council. Higher Education Institutions which franchise part-time undergraduate higher education provision to Further Education Colleges should notify their franchise partners of the arrangements for the scheme and incorporate any claims relating to the franchised provision in the returns they provide to the Council. Higher Education Institutions will subsequently be responsible for reimbursing their franchise partners for the appropriate amount of fee waiver grant.

The Council will require an estimate of the overall fee waiver grant institutions are seeking for 2003/04 in November 2003. A proforma for supplying this information is attached to this letter. The Council recognises that it may be difficult to predict this early in the academic year the value of claims likely to be made under the Scheme. Following receipt of institutions' final reports in August 2004, therefore, the Council may review cases where actual expenditure has exceeded that estimated and agree to make an additional contribution.

Please return the completed proforma to Nichola Amor at the Council's offices in Llanishen to arrive no later than **14 November 2003**. Any queries about the Scheme should also be addressed to Nichola Amor (tel: 029 2068 2295/e-mail: nichola.amor@hefcw.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

Ann Hughes
Head of Funding & Research