
Welsh Medium Premium Payments

20 December 2006 Ref: W06/56HE

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

Summary: This circular invites institutions to provide views on a range of options under consideration in respect of funding for Welsh medium provision

Response by: Stage 1 19 January 2007
Stage 2: 17 February 2007

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 This circular invites institutions to provide views on a range of options under consideration in respect of premium funding for Welsh medium provision. The circular builds upon the responses of the sector to a consultation event held at HEFCW's offices in September 2006 which was informed by advice received from consultants appointed by HEFCW to explore the appropriateness of the existing arrangements for Welsh medium premium payments.
- 2 The circular seeks views on proposals relating to the definitions of Welsh medium provision, in terms of eligibility for premium funding, and on the threshold level below which such funding should not apply. In addition, comments are sought on proposals relating to the specification of subjects which are eligible for premium payments, in respect of additional payments per Welsh medium module, and to data returns relating to staff.
- 3 The consultation is in two stages:
 - Responses on the eligibility threshold for Welsh medium premium funding (paragraphs 8 to 10) are requested by **19 January 2007**. This will enable us to introduce the proposed changes for 2007/08 premium funding. A form is provided for you to submit your responses on this section.
 - Responses on the remaining consultation questions. Decisions following the consultation will influence how institutions record Welsh medium data in future. Given that the data which the Council uses to calculate premium payments is retrospective, these changes will take time to feed through to institutional allocations. Responses are requested by **17 February 2007**.

BACKGROUND

- 4 HEFCW uses data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) records on Welsh medium provision to derive information for Welsh medium premium allocations and measure progress against the Reaching Higher Welsh medium target. We have become aware from discussions with colleagues in the sector that there is uncertainty about the definitions and their interpretation. Moreover, since the definitions and guidelines were first issued in 1994, there have been considerable developments in approaches to learning and teaching as well as curriculum and portfolio changes in institutions. In the light of these factors, we considered it appropriate to review the guidelines.
- 5 We also commissioned London Economics to undertake a study of the costs of Welsh medium provision with a view to informing us as to the appropriateness of the existing Welsh medium premium arrangements. The consultants visited institutions to talk to relevant staff as well as requesting and analysing data from institutions. Their findings were discussed at a sector seminar on 29 September and have informed this consultation.
- 6 Depending on the responses received to this consultation, it is hoped that it will be possible to put proposals to Council in the new year with a view to phasing in any changes in respect of Welsh medium premium funding from 2007/08.
- 7 Consultation topics on which we wish to have your views are highlighted in the text in bold italics. The current definitions and guidelines on Welsh medium HESA data and the premium are at Annex A. A proposed revised document, which is discussed further below, is at Annex B.

ELIGIBILITY THRESHOLD

- 8 The current definitions include a minimum threshold proportion of the module which is delivered through the medium of Welsh for the provision to be eligible for premium funding. This currently stands at 25% of the module (Annex A, c). We have considered a number of alternatives in respect of adjusting this eligibility threshold. We are mindful of the need to balance a desire to encourage as much Welsh medium delivery as possible, and to ensure that the additional costs of such provision are reflected in additional funding through the premium, with the desire to ensure that such Welsh medium delivery is of a meaningful volume. We also would wish to ensure that Welsh medium provision attracts premium funding in an equitable manner, and that comparable volumes of provision are not excluded from eligibility for premium funding inappropriately.
- 9 With these considerations in mind, we propose to retain a minimum threshold of eligibility but to adjust the level at which it is applied, and the form in which it is calculated. We are conscious that the current formulation of a 25% threshold per module excludes from eligibility relatively small proportions of large modules which, in absolute terms, can constitute a relatively large amount of learning activity delivered through the medium of Welsh. Indeed, this approach can exclude substantial elements of Welsh medium provision which, had they been packaged into a greater number of smaller modules, would have attracted premium funding. For this reason, it is proposed to define the minimum threshold in terms of credit volume. Such an approach would have no impact on data collection requirements: we would calculate a notional credit volume delivered through the medium of Welsh as the product of the percentage indicator currently returned in the HESA Student Record at fields 91 to 106 and the total credits for the module, returned in field 9 of the HESA module record.
- 10 It is proposed to set the minimum eligibility threshold at 2 credits, which, at 20 notional learning hours, is considered to represent an appropriate minimum experience through the medium of Welsh to be meaningful for this purpose.

Views are sought on:

- i) the appropriateness of defining the threshold in credit terms and***
- ii) on the proposed threshold of 2 credits.***

Please reply to these questions on the form provided by 19 January 2007 (Annex C).

DEFINITIONS

- 11 The current statement defining a Welsh medium teaching module, which is attached at Annex A, has not been updated since 1994. The terminology in this statement no longer reflects current practice in learning and teaching, focussing too sharply on formal teaching and making no provision for e-learning and non-written assessment. A proposed revised definition is attached at Annex B.

Views are sought on the appropriateness of the revised definition, subject to the proposals on the eligibility threshold outlined below.

- 12 In revising the definition of a Welsh medium teaching module, we have made explicit the action to be taken in circumstances where a module is delivered wholly through the medium of Welsh but a student elects to be assessed through the medium of English (Annex B, c).

We would welcome:

- i) a broad indication of the extent to which delivery in Welsh/assessment in English occurs and some examples of particular instances***
- ii) in such instances, an indication of the proportion of the module which would be considered to have been undertaken through the medium of Welsh and the factors taken into account in making this judgement.***

SUBJECT ELIGIBILITY

- 13 We have given further consideration to the definition of subjects which are eligible for Welsh medium premium payments. In this respect, we propose the following.
- 14 The premium is paid for enrolments onto courses where subjects other than Welsh are taught through the medium of Welsh, in recognition of the extra costs associated with preparing and delivering such provision. Welsh language and literature courses do not constitute Welsh medium provision under this definition. Generally, therefore, modules relating to Welsh language and Welsh literature will remain ineligible for Welsh medium premium funding.
- 15 We recognise, however, that there may be modules relating to the development of language skills such that students are enabled to operate in specific professional contexts through the medium of Welsh which should be eligible. Similarly, there can be modules on the development of specific professional skills which are delivered through the medium of Welsh. Examples would include: modules on professional translation or administration skills delivered through the medium of Welsh; modules for students which provide them with the terminology and concepts to deal their particular subject area in Welsh. In these instances, the modules should be returned as eligible.
- 16 It has been drawn to our attention that Welsh literature modules, which would normally be ineligible, are sometimes used in programmes relating to Welsh history and culture as a means of addressing historical and cultural aspects revealed by the literature. In these circumstances, it is considered that the learning outcomes for students of Welsh language and literature should be different from those for students of Welsh history and culture. Although the delivery might, therefore, be common, the different learning outcomes would imply different modules. Consequently, for those students of Welsh history and culture, such modules should be constructed, and coded, as modules of Welsh history or culture, rather than literature, and returned as delivered through the medium of Welsh as appropriate.
- 17 Modules that are Welsh language or literature should be coded using HESA Module Record field 13, SBJ01 using JACS code Q560 or Q561. These modules will not be classed as eligible for Welsh medium premium funding and therefore excluded from funding calculations. If a module is coded with SBJ02, SBJ03 or SBJ04 (fields 16, 22, 25) equal to Q560 or Q561, and SBJ01 is not, this module could still be included in the premium calculations, but may be subject to manual exclusion. It is therefore important that institutions code the SBJ01 field correctly to allow us to make judgements on what is and is not eligible for Welsh medium funding.
- i) Views are sought on the appropriateness of the above proposals on subject eligibility.***
 - ii) We would welcome further examples of professional modules identified at paragraph 13 above and views on why they are seen as different from standard Welsh language modules.***

MODULE BASED PAYMENTS

- 18 During the consultation seminar, it was suggested that further incentive could be provided for the increase of Welsh medium provision if additional payments were made available on a per-module basis for the delivery of Welsh medium modules. We have considered this carefully and have taken the view that this could lead to a diversion of energy in the development of curriculum dissipated across a larger number of smaller modules in order to attract the additional funding, with no appreciable improvement in Welsh medium provision. We do not intend, therefore, to move forwards with this proposal.

STAFF RECORD

- 19 The HESA Staff Record requires institutions to include information on staff who teach through the medium of Welsh and staff who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. We recognise that that it is difficult to define these categories precisely and that in terms of staff who are “able to teach through the medium or Welsh” in particular, a judgement has to be made by the institution on who should be included.
- 20 These data on Welsh medium staff are potentially a valuable source of information as we work with the sector to develop and strengthen Welsh medium provision. We would wish to have a greater understanding of the basis on which institutions enter staff in these categories, so that we can use it more effectively to inform developments. Based on the information we receive in response to the consultation, we may also be able to issue further guidance which could make the data more robust.

We would welcome information on the criteria which institutions use to determine whether to return staff as teaching/able to teach through the medium of Welsh on the HESA Staff Record.

RESPONSES TO THIS CIRCULAR

- 21 As noted above, this consultation is in two stages:
- Responses on the eligibility threshold for Welsh medium premium funding (paragraphs 8 to 10) are requested by **19 January 2007**. This will enable us to introduce the proposed changes for 2007/08 premium funding. A form is provided for you to submit your responses on this section (Annex C).
 - Responses on the remaining consultation questions. Given that the data which the Council uses to calculate premium payments is retrospective, these changes will take time to feed through to institutional allocations. Responses are requested by **17 February 2007**.

Please reply to Alison Allan (alison.allan.hefcw.ac.uk).

CURRENT DEFINITION OF A WELSH MEDIUM TEACHING MODULE

The following criteria are to be adopted in defining a module as one which represents formal Welsh medium teaching:

- a) the module should be a structured element of teaching, with a syllabus approved in accordance with the institutional conventions.
- b) where the module is taught entirely through the medium of Welsh it is expected that all written work by the student will be completed in Welsh, except where the requirements of the course demand otherwise.
- c) Where a module is composed of collective teaching which is a formal part of the course (face-to-face lectures, seminars or laboratory work, or that which is comparable in the case of distance learning) and a proportion of this formal activity is carried out through medium of Welsh, then that proportion may be recorded as representing Welsh medium teaching provided it corresponds to 25% or more of the overall formal activity associated with the module. In such instances it will not be necessary for all the student's written work to be undertaken in Welsh.

The Council may seek additional information on the means by which proportions have been calculated (see below for determination of proportions)

- d) the performance of the students pursuing the module must be an integral part of the normal assessment process.
- e) the teaching should be exposed to the normal process of quality assurance used within the institution.

DETERMINATION OF THE STUDENT LOAD ATTRIBUTABLE TO A WELSH MEDIUM TEACHING MODULE

For a module taught completely through the medium of Welsh

The Welsh Medium student load will be the proportion of a full-time equivalent year attributed to the module. Within the HESA Module Record this is recorded at Field Number 6 -Proportion of FTE.

For a module taught partly through the medium of Welsh

The Welsh Medium student load will be the product of the proportion of a full-time equivalent year attributed to the module and the proportion of the module which is regarded as being taught through the medium of Welsh.

The proportion of the module which is regarded as being taught through the medium of Welsh will be defined as the percentage of the overall face-to-face collective teaching which is a formal part of the course (face-to-face lectures, seminars or laboratory work, or that which is comparable in the case of distance learning) which is offered through the medium of Welsh. Proportions less than 25% should not be counted. Within the HESA Student Record this is recorded at Fields Number 91 to 106 -Module proportion of teaching in Welsh.

Hence in terms of the HESA Student Record, for Module 6 say

Welsh Medium Student Load =
Field Number 6 (Module Record)X Field Number 96 (Student Record)

Note - Where institutions are not yet offering courses on a modular basis then data will need to be recorded in terms of the unit of learning appropriate to the course concerned (eg, University of Wales Part 1, full year of a course, etc). In such instances the 25% threshold for recording proportions will apply to the unit of learning concerned.

IDENTIFICATION OF WELSH MEDIUM TEACHING MODULE

For the purpose of identifying a module as one where teaching takes place partly or wholly through the medium of Welsh the letter W should be inserted as the final digit of the Module Identifier -Field Number 5 on the Module Record and the corresponding field (75-90)on the Student Record.

STAFF RECORD

The HESA Staff Records require institutions to prepare returns concerned with teaching through the medium of Welsh; specifically:

Ability to teach through the medium of Welsh -Field Number 21

Teaching through the medium of Welsh -Field Number 22

Full returns are not required until 1995/96. Institutions should note that in completing these returns, the criteria set out above for defining a module as one which represents formal Welsh medium teaching should be adopted in determining whether a member of staff is deemed to be teaching through the medium of Welsh.

ANNEX B

PROPOSED DEFINITION OF A WELSH MEDIUM TEACHING MODULE

The following criteria are to be adopted in defining a module as one which is delivered wholly or partly through the medium of Welsh:

- a) The module should be a structured element of delivery, with a syllabus approved in accordance with the institutional conventions.
- b) Where the module is delivered entirely through the medium of Welsh, all assessment work by the student must be completed in Welsh, except where the requirements of the course demand otherwise.
- c) Where the module is delivered partially through the medium of Welsh, institutions should calculate the proportion of the module which is delivered through the medium of Welsh. This approach should also be adopted where a module is delivered through the medium of Welsh but assessed through the medium of English. [Note, we may be able to provide further guidance on the latter following the responses to the consultation.]

The Council may seek additional information on the means by which proportions have been calculated.

- d) the performance of the students pursuing the module must be an integral part of the

normal assessment process.

- e) the delivery should be exposed to the normal process of quality assurance used within the institution.

PROPOSED DATA EXTRACTION AND CALCULATION OF WELSH MEDIUM FUNDING

All data for use in the calculation of funding for the Welsh Medium Premium are extracted from the HESA Student and Module records according to guidance found in the Higher Education Data Requirements 2006/07 circular (W06/39HE Annex A para 31-33).

Identification of provision through Welsh

For the purpose of identifying a module as being delivered through the medium of Welsh the letter W should be inserted as the final character of the Module identifier MODID (HESA Module record field 5) and the proportion of the module taught through the medium of Welsh should be returned in MODPW (HESA Student record fields 101-116).

Identification of Welsh language and literature provision

Modules identified as being Welsh Language or Literature, ie, where SBJ01 (HESA Module record field 13) equals Q560 or Q561, are excluded from the data extraction.

The first subject field (SBJ01) is used to define subjects for this purpose, so modules with SBJ02, SBJ03, SBJ04 = Q560 or Q561 will not be excluded. It is therefore important to code the SBJ01 field appropriately.

Determining how much of the module is delivered through the medium of Welsh

The value of MODPW and the credit value of the module, CRDTPTS (HESA module record field 9) are used to calculate a notional credit volume delivered through the medium of Welsh.

Credit volume delivered through Welsh = MODPW/100 x CRDTPTS

It is proposed that only modules that meet the minimum 2 credit value threshold be counted in the calculation of the Welsh Medium premium.

Calculation of total notional credit volume through the medium of Welsh

The credit volume delivered through Welsh is summed over all students to give the total notional credit volume delivered through the medium of Welsh per module.

Calculation of Welsh Medium Premium

The total notional credit volume delivered through the medium of Welsh is summarised by mode/level of study and by Academic Subject Category (ASC).

An average of the past two years' volume is used in the calculation of the premium. This average is multiplied by the unit of funding (UoF) for the ASC of the module and the premium for Welsh medium funding* is applied. The total amount of funding is calculated by summing over all modules to give a total amount per institution.

*Note that the premium was 26% for 2006/07 funding but is likely to change due to the move from funding by unit of resource (UoR) to UoF. The effect will be cost-neutral.

Funding is calculated by mode/level and ASC as:

Funding = (total notional credit volume delivered through medium of Welsh 2004/05 + 2005/06) x 0.5 x UoF x premium

STAFF RECORD

The HESA Staff Record requires institutions to return information relating to teaching (or ability to teach) through the medium of Welsh; specifically:

Ability to teach through the medium of Welsh ABLWELSH (P18)

Teaching through the medium of Welsh TCHWLH (C10)

(On HESA Staff record: P= person table; C= contract table; number indicates the number of the field on the record.)

Welsh Medium Premium Payments

Consultation

Stage 1: Eligibility Threshold

(Paragraphs 8 to 10)

Institution:

We agree/do not agree that it is appropriate to define the eligibility threshold for premium payments in credit terms.*

We agree/do not agree that the threshold should be set at 2 credits per module.*
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*Delete as appropriate

Comments

Signed:

Position:

Date:

