

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

Reference: W07/29HE

Date: 24 July 2007

Response By: 9 November 2007

Further Information: Emma Morris

(tel: 029 2068 2292/e-mail: Emma.Morris@hefcw.ac.uk)

THE HEFCW PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE FEE WAIVER SCHEME 2007/08

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*. You will note that the basis for claiming funds has been modified to account for the introduction of variable fees. The total amount of funding available in 2007/08 will be £1.5m.

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 2007/08.

Further details are provided in paragraph 28 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. From 2007/08, institutions will be eligible for an amount corresponding to 4% of their overall fee waiver grant, up to a maximum of £5,000, 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 2007/08 in November 2007. A pro-forma for supplying this information is attached to this letter at Annex A. 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, particularly in view of the modified approach to estimating credit values which will be necessary this year. However, following receipt of institutions' final reports in August 2008 the Council may review cases where actual expenditure has exceeded that estimated and agree to make an additional contribution.

An electronic version of the pro-forma can be downloaded from www.hefcw.ac.uk. Please return the completed pro-forma to the Council's offices in Llanishen to arrive no later than **9 November 2007**.

Yours sincerely

Emma Morris
Strategic Projects Manager
Tel: 029 2068 2292
Email: Emma.Morris@hefcw.ac.uk