

10 June 2011

[Institution details:
VC name and address]

[Salutation]

In our Circular W11/14HE, published on 5 April 2011, we invited institutions to submit new fee plans for 2012/13. The Circular set out the Welsh Government's and the Council's expectations should institutions wish to charge new students tuition fees above the basic amount of £4,000 per year. We have reviewed the fee plan for your institution and I am writing to say that in its present form the plan does not, in our view, meet the necessary requirements.

I assume you will wish urgently to revise and resubmit your plan. In doing so, we need fuller and clearer descriptions of certain of the activities you have proposed (remembering that this document must be understandable to prospective students, their parents, employers and other interested parties). In many cases, the scale of expressed ambitions needs to be increased and/or better demonstrated through the provision of a baseline and clearer SMART targets through which you and we will be able to judge whether your institution is meeting the Welsh Government's expectations. In all this, we will be looking carefully to see how your future investment will impact on the student experience.

You will wish to refer again to Appendix A of our Circular, which reproduced the Welsh Government Guidance, and sets out a list of the eligible areas in respect of equality of opportunity and promoting higher education where progress would be required should fee levels above £4,000 be sought. A further email from my colleague Emma Morris will follow as soon as possible after this message, setting out our detailed concerns for your institution.

Should you wish to resubmit, may I ask please for all speed in case we need any further iteration with you. We will analyse re-submissions in the order in which we receive them, with a view to completing the review process by, or very soon after, the end of June. This date is important so that our Council, at its 8 July meeting, can then consider the proposed outcomes, before we announce the outcomes on 11 July. The later we receive any resubmission, the greater the risk that we will not be able to reach the point of approval on this timetable.

May I ask also for a formal assurance that your governing body endorses the revisions to your original plan, and that the requirements specified in our Circular concerning the 'student voice' continue to be met. We shall need this by the end of June.

In the meantime, we will continue to treat fee plans in the utmost confidence. We will not comment publicly on the state of play over individual cases before 11 July.

For completeness, may I confirm that where we remain unpersuaded that your fee plan meets the necessary requirements, the institution will not be able to charge tuition fees above £4,000 a year for any of the relevant courses in 2012/13. We remain willing to discuss further the issues raised by this note and the following email. If you have any queries please contact Emma Morris as soon as possible.

Philip Gummett
Chief executive