

To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Reference: W03/24HE

Date: 17 April 2003

Response By: No response required

Further Information: See last paragraph of letter

2001/02 Higher Education-Business Interactions (HE-BI) Survey

I am writing to confirm that a further UK-wide survey of interactions between higher education and business will be undertaken this year. This letter also provides information about the survey process.

In 2002 the Higher Education funding Council for England (HEFCE) carried out the HE-BI survey for data relating to the academic year 2000/01, on behalf of all UK funding bodies and the Office of Science and Technology. It built on the survey undertaken in 2001 by the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS), based on data for 1999/2000. The specification for the 2002 survey was developed by a widely based stakeholder's group that included the Treasury, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals.

The objectives of the 2002 survey were to:

- ♦ begin to identify trends in HE-business interaction;
- ♦ develop the relevance and reliability of the indicators; and
- ♦ move towards an annual gathering of data via a standard process that will minimise the burden on HEIs.

There were responses from 98 per cent of the UK's higher education institutions (HEIs), with a 100 per cent response rate in Wales. The survey report has been sent to all Welsh HEIs and is also available on the HEFCW web-site.

It is the Council's view that the data collected via the HE-BI survey is of value to institutions in helping them to determine the strategic direction of their third mission activities. It is also of great value to the Council as it develops its Higher Education Economic Development (HEED) Fund into a full-blown stream of third mission funding from 2004/05 onwards, and we hope to be able to begin using data from the HE-BI survey to help inform future HEED Fund allocations.

In 2003 the process will again be managed by HEFCE, although in due course it is anticipated that much of the data will be gathered by HESA.

The 2001/02 survey questionnaire will be made available to all UK HEIs towards the end of May 2003. HEFCE will send a further notification to

each institution's HE-BI contacted as identified by the 2002 survey. The survey data should be returned to HEFCE by the end of June 2003, and the results will be published.

The objectives of this year's survey remain the same as in 2002. Changes to the format and content of the survey will be limited to those which should reduce ambiguity and simplify the process for HEIs, while also ensuring a sensible degree of comparability between the two years and retaining coverage for the diversity of UK HEIs.

Arising from your participation in last year's survey, the stakeholders would welcome comments regarding the development of the survey questionnaire. These should be returned to Adrian Day at HEFCE by the end of April 2003. Where consistent with the above approach, account will be taken of comments received.

The stakeholders have also recommended that there should be a substantial review of the survey process late in 2003 to inform larger improvements for 2004.

If you have any queries about the 2003 HE-BI survey, please contact Adrian Day at HEFCE (direct line 0117 931 7428; Email a.day@hefce.ac.uk). If you have any queries arising from this letter, please contact Teresa Cooper (direct line 029 2068 2304; Email teresa.cooper@hefcw.ac.uk).

Steve Martin
Chief Executive