

**To: Heads of higher education
institutions in Wales**

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Response By: 31 October 2003
Further Information: Alison Allan/
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**WIDENING ACCESS STRATEGIES 2003/04 (INCLUDING DISABILITY PROVISION
DEVELOPMENT PLANS)**

The Council has decided that, rather than seeking full revisions of widening access strategies (including disability provision development plans) for 2003/04, it will ask institutions to provide progress reports and updates (further details are given below). There are a number of reasons why the Council does not think it appropriate to ask institutions to undertake major work on their strategies at the moment.

The emphasis on widening access as a priority in the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education, *Reaching Higher*, means that both the Council and the sector are reassessing policies and practices in this area.

All higher education institutions, with FE partners and others, are involved in *Reaching Wider* partnerships. They are putting considerable effort into establishing the partnerships and their programmes. As you may be aware, Jane Johns, formerly Director, Widening Access Office, University of Wales, Lampeter, took up the post of national co-ordinator for *Reaching Wider* on secondment to the Council from 1 July, for a year in the first instance. Jane will be supporting the partnerships to build strong collaboration within and between partnerships, as well as fostering the development and dissemination of good practice and innovation. We will also be establishing a Reaching Wider Steering Group over the next couple of months. The work of the partnerships is being complemented by the Welsh Assembly Government's *AimHigher Wales* campaign.

An evaluation of relationships between HE and FE, particularly in respect of HE provision within FE colleges, is being undertaken by KPMG on the Council's behalf. We expect to receive a final report in December. During the 2003/04 academic year, the Council is also planning to commission a study of the costs of widening access in the future.

The Council is mindful of the pressures placed on institutions by the reconfiguration and collaboration agenda, and is concerned to reduce the burden of documentation it requires from institutions wherever possible. Moreover, in some instances, the outcomes of reconfiguration and collaboration plans will influence institutions' approach to widening access.

As a basis for releasing Widening Access Fund and Disability Provision Development Fund allocations for 2003/04, therefore, we are requesting institutions to provide progress reports on 2002/03 activity and implementation plans for 2003/04. Allocations for 2003/04 are presented in **Annex A**. Details of reporting requirements for widening access strategies and disability provision development plans are given below.

Progress reports

A full account should be given of progress against the plan for 2002/03, including the achievement of in-year targets, as well as progress towards longer-term targets and the aims and objectives of the strategy.

In addition, an account should be given of how the institution's Widening Access Fund, Widening Access Premium, Disability Premium and Disability Provision Development Fund allocations for 2002/03 were used. This should be set out in the expenditure tables at **Annex B**.

This information enables the Council to assess activity in the sector and also to account for the use of public funds. Significant in-year changes in plans/use of funding should be noted and explained.

Implementation plans

These should include the programmes and activities which institutions intend to undertake during 2003/04, with measurable or verifiable targets and timescales. The plan should include reference to the sector target for widening access which the Welsh Assembly Government has recently agreed with the Council¹ and how the institution's activities will enable it to contribute to meeting the target. The plan should also demonstrate how links are being made between the institutional strategy and the institution's membership of its *Reaching Wider* partnership.

The proposed use of the institution's Widening Access Fund, Widening Access Premium, Disability Premium and Disability Provision Development Fund allocations should be set out in the expenditure tables at **Annex C**.

You may if you prefer, submit a full strategy. In this case, we ask you still to complete the expenditure tables in Annexes B and C.

The request for Widening Access strategies in 2002 (Circular W02/40HE) drew attention to the obligation for the Council to prepare a **Race Equality Scheme** and institutions to prepare

Race Equality Policies under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Since race equality issues are a core consideration in the widening of access to higher education, the circular stressed that the Council would expect to see information on current and planned activities to address race equality issues, as well as on proposed longer-term development work. The attention which institutions paid to this varied in their strategies last year. Institutions are asked to include in their reports this year a statement on how matters relevant to race equality are being taken forward as an integral part of the widening access strategy.

We are planning to issue some summary feedback from the widening access strategies on aspects such as student retention, which the Assembly Government has highlighted as a key issue within widening participation; on provision for disabled students; on modern foreign languages (in the context of the Assembly Government's strategy for Modern Foreign Languages); and on race equality in widening access.

The Council expects the **Reaching Wider** partnerships to lead to an increasingly co-ordinated and collaborative approach to widening access both within the geographical areas which the partnerships serve and across the boundaries of partnerships, including, in some cases, across the whole of Wales. The Council will monitor the extent to which the establishment of the Reaching Wider partnerships is influencing widening access activities within institutions more generally, particularly in ensuring coherence and complementarity between institutional strategies and Reaching Wider programmes. It will also consider the potential for moving some or all of the Widening Access Fund into the resources for the partnerships in the future.

Institutions are requested to submit their reports to Alison Allan by **31 October 2003**. Provided no issues requiring further information are identified, allocations will be released in two equal instalments in December 2003 and March or April 2004.

Chief Executive

(Annexes B and C are confidential to institutions.)

¹ The percentage of all undergraduate new entrants to HE courses at UK HEIs or FEIs who are domiciled in the 100 core Welsh Community First areas to rise from 8.9% (2000/01) to 11.4% (2010/11).

WIDENING ACCESS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2003/04

Institution	Eligible Students	Total Enrolments	Eligible Enrolments as % of Institution's Total Enrolments	90% pro-rata to Eligible Students (£)	10% pro-rata to Eligible Enrolments as % of Institution's Total Enrolments (£)	Total (£)
University of Glamorgan	3,267	13,060	25	389,715	22,568	412,283
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	679	8,294	8	80,997	7,222	88,219
University of Wales, Bangor	690	6,334	11	82,309	9,930	92,239
Cardiff University	1,297	14,713	9	154,717	8,125	162,842
University of Wales, Lampeter	389	2,311	17	46,403	15,346	61,749
University of Wales Swansea	1,062	7,725	14	126,684	12,638	139,322
University of Wales College of Medicine	65	819	8			15,000
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	1,107	6,495	17	132,052	15,346	147,398
University of Wales College, Newport	1,515	6,662	23	180,722	20,763	201,485
NEWI	793	4,603	17	94,596	15,346	109,942
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	806	4,283	19	96,146	17,152	113,298
Trinity College, Carmarthen	314	2,121	15	37,457	13,541	50,998
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	48	470	10			15,000
Total	12,032	77,890	193	1,421,798	157,977	1,609,775

DISABILITY PROVISION DEVELOPMENT FUND
ALLOCATIONS 2003/04

Institution	Premium allocations (previously announced in Circular W03/18HE) (£)	Disability Provision Development Fund Allocations (£)	Total allocation = premium and DPDF (minimum allocation - £10,000) (£)
University of Glamorgan	50,200	19,399	69,599
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	36,000	13,911	49,911
University of Wales, Bangor	47,400	18,317	65,717
Cardiff University	51,400	19,862	71,262
University of Wales, Lampeter	17,200	6,647	23,847
University of Wales Swansea	39,600	15,303	54,903
University of Wales College of Medicine	1,400	8,600	10,000
University of Wales Institute Cardiff	18,000	6,956	24,956
University of Wales College Newport	9,200	3,555	12,755
North East Wales Institute	33,600	12,984	46,584
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	25,400	9,815	35,215
Trinity College Carmarthen	11,000	4,251	15,251
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	1,000	9,000	10,000
HE provision in FE Colleges	10,000		10,000
Total	351,400	148,600	500,000

Note: Figures may not add to totals because of rounding