

To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Reference: W04/38HE
Date: 3 June 2004
Response By: N/A
Further Information: Anita Colley
Tel: 029 2068 2276
Email: anita.colley@hefcw.ac.uk

SPECIALIST HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ADVICE TO HEFCW-FUNDED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Further to the individual and sector overview advice provided by OPM in relation to institutional HR strategies, I am writing to update you on the Council's plans to provide further specialist advice in 2004/05.

As you may be aware, we are currently in the process of a tender exercise to procure further advice in order to assist institutions in the further development of their HR strategies and HR information systems. We anticipate that the next round of advice is likely to begin in Autumn 2004.

As you know, the 2004 Strategic Plan request circular *W04/31HE*, asks institutions to submit a revised HR strategy as part of their strategic plan submissions in July 2004. We recognise that institutions are currently at different stages in the development of their HR strategies, and the nature and content of the provision of further advice to each institution will depend on the extent to which the revised HR strategies meet the requirements set out in the Council's earlier guidance.

However, we hope, through the next round of advice to:

- i) Improve practice in the six priority areas: recruitment and retention; staff training and development; equal opportunities; regular reviews of staffing needs; annual performance reviews for all staff; and action to tackle poor performance.
- ii) Facilitate the development of suitable HR information systems to support the effective monitoring and evaluation of HR practice and performance and to develop institutions' capacity to develop measurable targets as part of fully developed HR strategies. This arises from a key general recommendation of the OPM work.
- iii) Encourage institutions to reward teaching through their HR strategies, specifically by making excellence in teaching a demonstrably genuine criterion for promotion of academic staff, broadly defined. This arises from the Minister's guidance to the Council to develop measures to reward teaching excellence.

The consultancy work will involve the dissemination of good practice, where it is identified in the HE sector in Wales, and building on good practice developed in the HE sector elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

In order to offer appropriate help to individual institutions, we would like to pass on to the successful contractor, on a confidential basis, copies of the individual feedback reports issued by OPM in 2003. If any institution has any objections to the reports being used in this way, they should contact Anita Colley, at the HEFCW offices, to discuss their concerns.

In the interim period, we would encourage institutions to continue the work already underway on the further development of their HR strategies, taking into account the individual feedback and sector overview provided by OPM and guidance provided in circular *W04/06HE* relating to the development of mechanisms for supporting excellent teaching through HR strategies, specifically by making excellence in teaching a demonstrably genuine criterion for promotion of academic staff.

If you have any queries relating to this letter please contact Anita Colley (Tel: 029 2068 2276; e-mail: anita.colley@hefcw.ac.uk).

PROFESSOR PHILIP GUMMETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE