

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

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HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

We are pleased to inform you that, following open competition, we have commissioned the Office for Public Management (OPM) to provide further advice and support to HEIs in Wales on the development and use of human resources strategies and HR information systems.

As you know, in 2003, OPM provided consultancy advice to institutions in the development of human resources strategies. Individual feedback and an overview report on developments in the Welsh sector were provided to institutions in 2003/04 in order to assist in the further development of HR strategies, and revised strategies were submitted to the Council in July 2004.

We recognise that there is a need across the sector for further development work and have commissioned OPM to focus, in 2005, on helping institutions address the challenges of successfully implementing their HR strategies.

We are proposing that OPM begin this programme of consultancy support by providing individual feedback to institutions on the HR strategies submitted to the Council in July 2004. Feedback will be centred around the extent to which institutional strategies address the HEFCW priorities for the development of HR in the sector:

- i. improving practice in the six same six priority areas used in 2003: 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. facilitating 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 set measurable targets as part of fully developed HR strategies;
- iii. encouraging 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.

OPM will use individual feedback as the basis of opening a dialogue with institutions about what would help them progress the work on the strategy and its implementation. As part of the programme we shall also hold a seminar in mid-Wales on **2 June 2005** at which we will provide an opportunity for sharing good practice and will highlight common themes and areas for development across the sector. OPM will then be available, over the coming months, to provide direct, focused advice and support to institutions, both individually and, where appropriate, on a shared basis. The consultancy support could take a number of different forms and OPM will liaise with institutions about what kind of help would be most useful. More detail will be provided at the seminar about how this might be undertaken.

We are very keen to learn of developments in HR practice and ensure that good practice identified is disseminated through the seminar and the programme more widely. We are aware that institutions in Wales are at different stages of development in HR matters, and that HR strategies will need to take account of plans for shared or collaborative work, where appropriate. These important aspects of future development for institutions will be taken into account by OPM.

We very much hope that you will take advantage of the consultancy support available and we would be grateful if you would nominate two institutional contacts with whom OPM may take forward this work, including the institution's HR specialist and the member of senior management with overall responsibility for HR matters.

We are aware that one or two institutions may already have further developed their HR strategies since the July 2004 submission. We by no means expect institutions to have produced further updates, but would like to offer you the opportunity, where appropriate, to forward any updates that may already be in existence, so that OPM's advice may take into account the current stage of development of your HR strategy work.

Please would you forward the details of your nominated institutional contacts and any revised HR strategy documentation, where already available, to Anita Colley, Institutional Planning Manager (email: anita.colley@hefcw.ac.uk, tel: 029 2068 2276) by **Friday 22nd April**. If you have any queries about the suggested programme please contact either Anita Colley, at the HEFCW offices, or Paul Lloyd at OPM (email: plloyd@opm.co.uk, tel: 07976-204816).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Gummatt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

PHIL GUMMETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE