To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

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JISC CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

I am writing to inform you that HEFCW will be joining with HEFCE in a major ICT Capital Infrastructure Programme which is being established by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The programme activities covered are:

Network Infrastructure
Digitisation
e-learning
e-infrastructure
e-research
User Environments
Repositories and Preservation

Further information about these activities is provided in Annex A.

The programme will start in April 2006 and will run over the following two to three years. The JISC will issue calls for proposals. These are planned for April 2006, September 2006 and April 2007. The calls will be issued via hard copy circulars to heads of institutions with information also available on the JISC website (www.jisc.ac.uk/funding).

Welsh higher education institutions will be eligible to respond to any of these calls either as a lead institution or in collaboration with other institutions or relevant organisations. Welsh institutions will be expected to address one or more of the priorities outlined in 'Reaching Higher' - for example, improvement of institutional efficiency through cost reduction, the generation of increased income, multiplier gaining through collaboration and the building of capacity. For the JISC Capital Infrastructure Programme, proposals might, for example, seek to address the promotion of research capacity, the provision of additional capital investment for leading edge technologies or the development of e and distance learning.

Fuller information will be available through the JISC circulars in due course but in the meantime please contact me if you need more information.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES GOOD

ANNEX A	
DESCRIPTION OF EACH PROGRAMME	
Networking	UKERNA has recently completed the first phase of the Super JANET 5 procurement process which is scheduled to come into operation from 2007. In parallel, UKERNA has received initial proposals from the MANs outlining their future plans to upgrade their networking infrastructure to ensure it is compatible with the proposed SJ5 backbone. The transition from SJ4 and to SJ5 had originally been planned for 2005, which would have allowed a smooth integration of UKLight into the SJ5 architecture. The SJ4 contract has now been extended by twelve months until the end of 2006 so there is a 12 month gap in funding before SJ5 will absorb UKLight. Capital funding of £1m is therefore needed to sustain UKLight during 2006.
Digitisation	There is need to invest further in the digitisation and delivery of collections of benefit to the academic community, and in the development of common standards for digitisation of several major collections (such as 19th Century Parliamentary Papers, Journal Backfiles (eg. Nature) and art slide collections within universities); digitisation standards development; and delivery mechanisms. Discussions with the sector and with holders of collections will inform decisions on priorities. JISC also intend to work with key partners to determine a UK national scholarly and academic digitisation strategy and a national e-content strategy. Funding will also go towards the investigation and possible creation of a UK equivalent of the JSTOR journals archive.
E-Learning	The e-learning activity will largely focus upon the objectives in HEFCE's e-learning strategy and other key HEFCE strategies such as widening participation. It will also support the implementation of the DfES e-strategy. JISC will work with the recently formed HEFCE/HE Academy e-learning Partnership Board to plan coherent activities that will embed best practice in the sector and develop tools that will enable seamless transition between sectors. New programmes of work will build directly on the current activities, in particular the Distributed E-learning regional pilots, and current joint work with the HEA around assisted take-up of digital resources. The HE in non HEIs aspect will build upon the JISC core funded MLEs for Lifelong Learning programme which finished in 2005. Other activities in e-administration systems to support learning and teaching (including e-portfolios, e-assessment and personal learning environments) will support the system-wide actions in the DfES e-strategy and complement the JISC's e-learning programme and frameworks' programme. Similar activities may be supported in Wales.

ANNEX A continued…

DESCRIPTION OF EACH PROGRAMME

E-Research	The report 'Science & Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014' considers the role to be played by science and innovation in the UK over the next ten years, emphasising the need to develop a national e-infrastructure to support the research community and to help ensure that the UK retains its international position at the forefront of research. There is particular need to improve infrastructure and services for researchers in those academic disciplines, such as the arts and humanities, where use of advanced ICT tools has to date been relatively limited. A study is underway to develop an e-infrastructure 'roadmap'. The Roadmap will constitute an analysis of current provision of e-Infrastructure in terms of services and facilities currently provided; the major providers; current expenditure and plans for future provision by the key provides. The roadmap will also examine the present arrangements for coordination and liaison between the lead providers and identify gaps or overlaps in current provision. JISC will, in collaboration with the research councils and other partners, deliver the key e-infrastructure services and facilities for the UK academic community, as identified in the roadmap.
User Environments	User Environments refers to software and other technologies that support the needs of users. The User Environments programme will bring together software and user experiences from learning, teaching, research and administration, seeking to identify common requirements and processes that support these areas, especially where they directly affect the quality of users' interactions with e-systems. The programme aims to maximise the sharing of software and tools between different user communities by looking at the findings from other programmes and examining opportunities for re-use, as well as for building on and extending existing technologies. It will also feed into work on the JISC e-Framework by identifying common workflows and common services. The Programme contains three strands of work: a second phase of the Virtual Research Environments (VRE) programme will build on the work of VRE Phase 1 (funded from SR02), helping researchers in all disciplines manage the increasingly complex range of tasks involved in carrying out research; a complementary strand of activity will look at next-generation tools – including mobile devices and personalised environments – that can support both learning, teaching and research; and a third strand will develop tools to support administrative practices that are needed for both teaching and research – to help simplify the user experience by using the same technologies to support their different requirements.
Repositories / Preservation	Digital repositories are part of the necessary infrastructure to support learning, teaching, research and administration but more broadly they offer a way to manage the 'data deluge' and help the UK to operate effectively within the new 'knowledge economy'. The funding will support a range of activities towards the vision of a national network of interoperable digital repositories by the development of national

	subject repositories, national technical infrastructure such as search technologies and shared technical services, and the development of institutional repositories. It will be aligned with national approaches such as the Research Councils UK position statement on open access and e-Science / Grid activities. The activity will complement the other tranches of JISC funding for digital repositories.