

Circular

Additional Support for Part-Time Students 2007/08

16 August 2007

Ref: W07/35HE

To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Summary: This circular announces allocations for Additional Support for Part-Time Students in 2007/08. The provision is aimed at maintaining and strengthening part-time provision with a particular focus on widening access to higher education and at extending links with employers in the delivery of part-time higher education.

Response by: Friday 28 September 2007

Further information: Emma Morris
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INTRODUCTION

- 1 This circular announces allocations for Additional Support for Part-Time Students in 2007/08. The provision is aimed at maintaining and strengthening part-time provision with a particular focus on widening access to higher education and at extending links with employers in the delivery of part-time higher education. It is expected that all funding will be used to benefit part-time students studying at or through an institution in Wales.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Graham Review, published in 2006, assessed part-time higher education study in Wales. In particular the review examined existing fee and student support arrangements and the possible impact of changes to this system.
- 3 Following publication of the review the Welsh Assembly Government established a working group which included representatives from higher education in Wales. The group outlined proposals to meet the needs highlighted by the review and their conclusions inform the criteria for the use of the allocations announced in this circular.
- 4 The total annual allocation has been set at £6.4M and it is envisaged that this will be made available in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. Any decision on whether this funding should be extended beyond this initial three year period will be based on institutional performance, including innovation and emerging evidence of economic and social impact.

PURPOSE OF FUNDING

WIDENING ACCESS AND STRENGTHENING PROVISION WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

- 5 With this funding, totalling £4.4M, it is intended that institutions should consolidate and build on existing provision for students studying at 60 credits or less. It is open to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to strengthen part-time study by funding provision on a targeted basis or by providing financial support for students. The use of funding should be consistent with developments being taken forward via institutions' Widening Access and Learning and Teaching strategies, where appropriate.
- 6 The Council is aware that a number of Widening Access initiatives, which provide support for part-time students in institutions, are dependent on support from EU structural funds and that there can often be a hiatus in funding between phases of some projects. Where the sustainability of such EU-funded projects is threatened by such a hiatus, the Council would expect support for such projects to form the first call on this funding stream.
- 7 In the context of the focus on widening access to higher education, the Council would expect to see this funding targeted at activities such as providing support to facilitate free access to learning for students from areas of recognised economic disadvantage including, for example, the Heads of the Valleys, Community First wards or other low participation neighbourhoods, along with possible support in respect of other benefits forfeited as a consequence of accessing learning.
- 8 Other examples of specific areas of activity which institutions might wish to support include the following, although this is not intended as a definitive list:
 - provision of bursaries and other financial support for widening access to part-time students
 - improving the promotion of part-time provision and raising awareness of opportunities to move part-time to full-time or indeed from full-time to part-time, should this encourage completion and avoid drop-out

- funding learning support outside regular working hours
- providing more blended learning opportunities such as e-learning etc.
- increasing bilingual/Welsh medium part-time provision
- developing shared modules and curriculum across a region
- disseminating good practice in collaboration
- increasing hardship funds for part-time students

STRENGTHENING EMPLOYER LINKS

- 9 The second strand of funding, totalling £2M, is aimed at strengthening engagement with employers in the delivery of part-time higher education. The use of funding should be consistent with developments being taken forward via institutions' Third Mission strategies, including building up collaborative approaches where appropriate.
- 10 Examples of specific areas of activity which institutions might wish to support include the following, although, as before, this is not intended as a definitive list:
- increasing work-based learning opportunities and more flexible delivery including e-learning
 - engaging employers in vocational skills provision
 - working with employers to identify their needs and design and improve delivery
 - developing innovative ways of responding to employers' skills needs
- NB For all of the above examples HEFCW would expect HEIs to take careful account of the views of relevant Sector Skills Councils.**
- 11 Funding should not be used to support activities which duplicate services made available through other Assembly funded programmes for employers. Funding should be used to reflect the principle that employers would normally be expected to contribute towards the cost of training their employees.

ALLOCATION METHOD

- 12 The Widening Access allocation (£4.4M) has been calculated on the basis of part-time credit volume, with extra weight given to those credit values associated with students counted for the purposes of the widening access premium.
- The remaining £2M linked to Engagement with Employers has been allocated on the basis of part-time credit volume (50% of the funding available) and a selection of elements from the new Third Mission Funding formula (50% of the funding available).
- Student and staff data used in the allocations are taken from the HESA student and staff records for 2005/06 and GO Wales data for phase 2 as at December 2006.
- 13 The allocations are shown at **Annex A**.

CLAIMING ALLOCATIONS

- 14 The release of institutions' allocations will be subject to the submission of an acceptable plan for both areas of expenditure. These should be provided by completing the pro-forma shown at **Annex B**. An electronic version of the pro-forma can be downloaded from the Council's website (www.hefcw.ac.uk) where it is available alongside this circular.

TIMING OF PAYMENTS

- 15 Subject to the submission of acceptable plans, the allocation for 2007/08 will be paid in two tranches in October 2007 and April 2008. The allocations are detailed in **Annex A**.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 16 Expenditure of the 2007/08 allocations should be completed by **30 August 2008**. Institutions will be asked to confirm that funding has been spent in full and used in accordance with the plans approved by the Council. Individual institutional monitoring pro-forma will be included with the Annual Monitoring Statements which are issued by HEFCW in July.

As indicated in paragraph 4 above, extension of this funding beyond the initial three-year period will be subject to a review in 2009. Further details of this review will be determined in due course.

RESPONSES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 17 Institutions should submit their plans for use of Additional Support for Part-Time Students funding by **Friday 28 September 2007**, using the pro-forma provided. The completed pro-formas should be addressed to Emma Morris, Strategic Projects Manager, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Linden Court, The Orchards, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5DZ.

Please note that HEFCW may be unable to distribute the allocations without an acceptable plan.

- 18 Any queries arising from this circular should also be directed to Emma Morris (029 2068 2292; Emma.Morris@hefcw.ac.uk).

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS 2007/08
ALLOCATIONS**

INSTITUTION	2007/08			Payment Details		
	Widening Access £	Third Mission £	Total £	October 2007 £	April 2008 £	Total £
University of Glamorgan	857,238	335,763	1,193,001	795,334	397,667	1,193,001
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	132,475	129,789	262,264	174,843	87,421	262,264
University of Wales, Bangor	161,650	133,666	295,316	196,877	98,439	295,316
Cardiff University	324,821	330,760	655,581	437,054	218,527	655,581
University of Wales, Lampeter	224,349	73,602	297,951	198,634	99,317	297,951
University of Wales Swansea	204,700	200,128	404,828	269,885	134,943	404,828
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	217,857	157,454	375,311	250,207	125,104	375,311
University of Wales, Newport	798,471	218,571	1,017,042	678,028	339,014	1,017,042
North East Wales Institute	408,819	128,803	537,622	358,415	179,207	537,622
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	236,882	73,961	310,843	207,229	103,614	310,843
Trinity College Carmarthen	63,539	40,843	104,382	69,588	34,794	104,382
Open University in Wales	769,199	176,660	945,859	630,573	315,286	945,859
Total	4,400,000	2,000,000	6,400,000	4,266,667	2,133,333	6,400,000