

## Circular

# Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund

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**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** 20 December 2007  
(to Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre)

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This circular presents the outcomes of the consultation on the HEFCW Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund and HEFCW's decisions in the light of the consultation. It also sets out arrangements for the Fund for 2007/08.

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## **Introduction**

- 1 This circular presents the outcomes of the consultation on the HEFCW Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund and HEFCW's decisions in the light of the consultation. It also sets out arrangements for the Fund for 2007/08.

## **Background**

- 2 At the Welsh Medium Higher Education Sector Group (WM HESG) meeting in June 2007, members discussed proposals put forward by HEFCW for the future use of the Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund. These were designed to enable the Fund to support explicitly the new National Development Plan for Welsh medium higher education. The proposals set out key criteria for the Fund and an approach to drawing up a sector-wide development programme and allocating the available funding. As part of this, the paper proposed a phased withdrawal over two years of the direct allocations which some institutions currently receive from the Fund.
- 3 WM HESG members supported the criteria and the overall approach to drawing up and allocating funding against the development programme. There was, however, considerable concern amongst the three largest providers of Welsh medium provision in receipt of direct allocations, Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and Trinity College Carmarthen, about the proposals to alter the allocation method from 2007/08, as they had already planned expenditure for the year ahead.
- 4 We had decided to consult on the Fund through the WM HESG as this was the group which had been given responsibility by HEW for driving forward the National Development Plan. However, members also wished heads of institutions to be consulted directly.
- 5 In the light of these concerns, we undertook a formal consultation exercise over the summer, which also included a revised approach which would give institutions more time to prepare for proposed changes to the allocation method.

## **Consultation responses and HEFCW decisions**

- 6 The responses to the consultation showed a similar level of broad support to that expressed by WM HESG members for the key criteria and overall approach. There was still concern amongst the institutions in receipt of direct allocations about the proposals to withdraw this earmarked funding. A summary of the responses to the consultation is at Annex A.
- 7 We considered the responses to the consultation at our Council meeting in September 2007.

- 8 We confirmed the key criteria for the Welsh Medium Provision Fund, as set out in the consultation (see Annex B). We will work with the WM HESG and the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre (WMTDC) to draw up a sector development and funding programme against which the Fund can be allocated.
- 9 We have, however, decided that we will continue the present allocation method for 2007/08 in terms of the direct allocations to Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Trinity College, Carmarthen and University of Wales Institute, Cardiff and a sum for allocation for developments by UWIC and the other institutions in the sector. The sum set aside for allocations against increases in enrolments will be discontinued and added to the sum available within the Fund to support collaborative developments.
- 10 We are deferring a decision on the precise arrangements for allocating the Fund from 2008/09 onwards until the February 2008 Council meeting. A decision at this time will fit in with institutions' planning cycles for Welsh medium developments which they have indicated begin in March. Deferring the decision for this period will give the sector, HEFCW and the WMTDC an opportunity to have some practical experience of drawing together institutional and collaborative proposals into a coherent development programme.
- 11 In reaching these decisions, the Council confirmed its strong commitment to using the Development Fund in ways that are consistent with and support the National Development Plan. We would regard it as a poor use of public funds to offer development funds on any other basis and we believe that the institutions that are the main beneficiaries of current funding would agree with this standpoint. We would also expect that these institutions, because of the weight of their contribution to overall Welsh medium activities, will continue to be major beneficiaries of the funding under any revised arrangements, but, henceforth, in ways that are coherently related to the National Development Plan.
- 12 We presented a paper reporting the outcomes of the consultation, including HEFCW's decisions on the future use of the Development Fund, to the November 2007 meeting of the WM HESG. Members unanimously approved the paper.

## Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund: Allocations for 2007/08

- 13 The Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund agreed by HEFCW for 2007/08 is £390,000.
- 14 Part of the Fund for 2006/07 has not yet been allocated. This includes the sum of £51,970 set aside for institutions other than Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and Trinity College Carmarthen to make applications for support to the WMTDC. There were proposals which potentially could have been supported from this funding. However, given the timing and the developments in the WM HESG, including the identification of subjects for collaborative development, we decided that it would be better to carry this sum forward to 2007/08 and bring the proposals within the emerging development programme. Some of these proposals may be funded once they have been discussed by the relevant Welsh medium network panels.
- 15 Similarly there is a sum of £26,428 from 2006/07 for general developments which has also been carried forward.
- 16 We would like the sector to have the opportunity to make good, early progress against the National Development Plan. We have also been able to make available for 2007/08 only an additional £270,000 to increase the support available to the subjects identified by the WM HESG for collaborative development.
- 17 This gives total development funding available for 2007/08 of £738,398. We presented a proposed distribution to the WM HESG at its meeting in November. This was endorsed by the Group and is set out below:

<b>1) Subjects for collaborative development</b> (as agreed by the WM HESG)	<i>Law</i>	<i>£90,000</i>
	<i>Creative industries</i>	<i>£90,000</i>
	<i>Environmental studies</i>	<i>£90,000</i>
	<i>Education</i>	<i>£60,000</i>
	<i>Health-related subjects</i>	<i>£15,000</i>
	<i>Sports and Leisure</i>	<i>£25,000</i>
	<i>Biological Sciences</i>	<i>£15,000</i>
<b>2) Direct allocations</b>	<i>Aberystwyth University</i>	<i>£48,007*</i>
	<i>Bangor University</i>	<i>£105,617*</i>
	<i>Trinity College, Carmarthen</i>	<i>£68,676*</i>
	<i>University of Wales Institute, Cardiff</i>	<i>£13,338*</i>
<b>3) Sum available for applications from:</b>	<i>University of Glamorgan, Cardiff University, UW Lampeter, Swansea University, UWIC UW Newport, NEWI, Swansea IHE, Open University in Wales.</i>	<i>£53,352 * plus carry over from 2006/07 £51,970 = £105,322</i>
<b>Balance</b>		<b>£12,438</b>

\* updated in line with the overall HEFCW uplift in teaching allocations between 2006/07 and 2007/08.

## Drawing up a sector development and funding programme

- 18 Some of the schemes for inclusion in the development and funding programme will come through the plans for the initial list of subjects identified by the WM HESG in the National Development Plan for collaborative development in the sector. These are: Law; Creative industries; Environmental studies; Education; Health-related subjects; Sports and Leisure; Biological Sciences. This will be a task for the Welsh medium network panels and over the next few months, the panels working with the WMTDC, will be drawing up development plans for their subjects.
- 19 Other developments may be put forward by a single institution, or a smaller group of institutions, where there is deemed to be a niche area, critical mass of provision or a lead provider. HEFCW would expect that there will be instances where institutions will be able to draw on their own resources or obtain funding from other sources to contribute to some projects. These elements of the sector development programme will be put together in two stages.
- the submission of expressions of interest by 20 December 2007, followed by
  - the submission of more detailed funding proposals by 27 January 2007.

Further details are given below.

### ***Expressions of interest***

- 20 **All institutions:** We are asking all institutions to submit to the WMTDC expressions of interest in being lead- or partner-institutions **in subject areas other than those identified for collaboration** in the National Development Plan. In order to receive development funding and apply for postgraduate scholarships and teaching fellowships in any subject area in future, institutions must submit an expression of interest. Where possible, these expressions of interest should be accompanied by outline development plans for the subjects involved. The expressions of interest should be submitted by **20 December 2007**.
- 21 **Institutions receiving direct allocations from the Fund:** In addition to the expressions of interest noted above, the information provided by institutions receiving direct allocations from the Fund should also outline how they will use this funding in 2007/08, including initial indications of projected outcomes for provision development and additional Welsh medium enrolments. It may be that some of their planned use of funding encompasses those subjects identified for collaborative development. These developments can then be incorporated in a coherent manner within the relevant overall subject development plan.
- 22 Once the expressions of interest have been received, HEFCW and WMTDC officers will draw the information together for discussions with institutions, collectively or individually as appropriate. This will include

exploring the potential for further collaboration where more than one institution is interested in a particular subject area.

### ***Funding proposals***

- 23 **Institutions receiving direct allocations from the Fund:** The WMTDC will request more detailed information from the institutions in receipt of direct allocations on the use of this funding, including in relation to planned outcomes and timescales. Note: HEFCW will contact these institutions separately to seek a monitoring report on their use of 2006/07 allocations.
- 24 **University of Glamorgan, Cardiff University, UW Lampeter, Swansea University, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, UW Newport, NEWI, Swansea IHE, and the Open University in Wales:** The WMTDC will invite the above institutions to submit funding proposals against the sum set aside at (3) in the table at paragraph 17. Institutions may submit collaborative proposals. In this context, some proposals may encompass those subjects identified for collaborative development, particularly where these may be an important area of provision for the institutions concerned. If approved, such developments would then be incorporated within the relevant overall subject development plan.

(Note: Some of the proposals submitted in 2006/07 may be funded from the carry-over sum once they have been discussed by the relevant Welsh medium network panels.)

The WMTDC will contact institutions directly with further details. However, the date for responses is expected to be **27 January 2008**.

### **Finalising the sector development and funding programme**

- 25 A standing panel consisting of the Chair of the WM HESG, the Director of the WMTDC, HEFCW officers, plus up to three external members to be invited by the chair of the WM HESG will scrutinise the proposed distribution against the development programme. This process will take place from 11 February 2008 onwards. The panel will consider the development plans put forward by the Welsh medium network panels and the proposals by individual institutions or groups of institutions.
- 26 We expect all materials and resources produced through the HEFCW Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund to be made available to all institutions in the sector. Agreement on how this will be achieved will form part of the discussions between the institutions concerned or the appropriate Welsh medium network panel and the staff of the WMTDC.
- 27 We would emphasise this is the start of a process of bringing together collaborative and institutional developments into an overall development and funding programme to support the National Development Plan. We expect to adapt and refine the approach in the light of experience.

## Summary of action required

### 28 *Expressions of interest:*

- **All institutions** are asked to submit expressions of interest in being lead- or partner-institutions in subject areas **other than those identified as areas for collaboration in the National Development Plan** (see paragraph 20).
- **Institutions receiving direct allocations** from the Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund are also asked to outline how they will use this funding in 2007/08, including initial indications of projected outcomes for provision development and additional Welsh medium enrolments (see paragraph 21).

Responses should be sent by **20 December 2007**, either by email or letter, from the institution's representative on the WM HESG to:

Dr Ioan Matthews  
Director  
Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre  
Y Llwyfan  
Ffordd y Coleg  
CARMARTHEN  
SA31 3EP

Email [i.a.matthews@mantais.ac.uk](mailto:i.a.matthews@mantais.ac.uk)

### 29 *Funding proposals*

The WMTDC will contact:

- the following institutions to request more detailed information on the use of their direct allocations from the Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund for 2007/08.

Aberystwyth University  
Bangor University  
Trinity College, Carmarthen  
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
(see paragraph 23)

- the following institutions to invite funding proposals:

University of Glamorgan  
Cardiff University  
UW Lampeter  
Swansea University

UWIC  
UW Newport  
NEWI  
Swansea IHE  
Open University in Wales  
(see paragraph 24)

- 30 HEFCW will contact Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Trinity College, Carmarthen and UWIC separately to request monitoring reports on the use of 2006/07 allocations (see paragraph 23).

***The expected date for responses is 27 January 2008***

- 31 The WMTDC will update the WM HESG on progress at its next meeting on 22 February 2008.

## **Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund Consultation (Circular W07/25HE)**

### **Summary of responses**

Responses were received from:

University of Glamorgan  
Aberystwyth University  
Bangor University  
Cardiff University  
University of Wales, Lampeter  
Swansea University  
University of Wales, Newport  
Trinity College, Carmarthen

The consultation was set in the context of the commitment by the sector, through HEW, to a strategic framework for Welsh medium provision. This includes the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive National Development Plan through the new Welsh Medium Higher Education Sector Group (WM HESG).

### **Consultation questions**

The consultation sought views on four aspects in particular.

#### **1 Future key criteria for the Fund**

The consultation set out key criteria which HEFCW would expect for adopt for the Fund to ensure that it supported the National Development Plan: These criteria had already been endorsed by the WM HESG at its meeting in June 2007.

- The funding is used to support the development and expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
- The funding is used directly to support Section 2 of the Sector Development Plan (Provision Development). Projects which are not consistent with the plan will not be funded.
- The funding is used strategically to ensure the maximum benefit from available resources.
- Funding is allocated against clear development plans which have measurable outputs, targets and timetables, including for the preparation and delivery of provision, and student enrolments, and that progress will be closely monitored against these.
- There will be mechanisms for withdrawing/deferring/recovering funding from particular projects if agreed progress is not made, or if there is not sufficient

assurance that progress can be made. Funding will then be reallocated to other projects.

## **Responses**

These criteria were supported by respondents to the consultation, a few noting particularly that they welcomed them wholeheartedly. One institution, which was not supportive of other proposals in the circular, welcomed the criteria “in principle”.

## **2 Future arrangements for the Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund**

This section set out the arrangements for determining the use of the fund in future. Details can be found in paragraphs 10 to 17 of the circular. Broadly, this suggested producing a funding plan, which would be consistent with the National Development Plan. The first stage would be to put together expressions of interest by institutions both in terms of the subjects already identified for collaborative development by the WM HESG and subjects where institutions considered they had lead role/niche provision. This development programme would be brought to the first WM HESG meeting of the 2007/08 academic year.

The distribution of the Fund would then be considered, against the development programme, by a panel consisting of the chair of the WM HESG, the Director of the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre, HEFCW officers, plus up to three external members to be invited by the chair of the WM HESG. There would be a combination of setting money aside for subjects prioritised for collaborative development (including through plans put together by the network subject panels), and making allocations against proposals for developments by individual institutions or collaborations by smaller groups of institutions.

## **Responses**

Most respondents agreed with this overall approach. Some of the comments made in support were very positive. Several comments emphasised the importance of working collaboratively to ensure the best use of the available resources, while welcoming the recognition of lead roles or niche markets for institutions in some subject areas. One institution queried whether the timetable for 2007/08 was rather tight.

Although the circular indicated that the approach to determining the distribution of funding would primarily be one of negotiation and agreement, a view was expressed that the approach was likely to foster competition rather than collaboration. This might lead to smaller but important institutional/departmental projects competing at a disadvantage with larger collaborative projects and that it would be helpful to ring-fence some funding for individual projects. One response was more critical, advocating rather that, to avoid “one-off” and adhoc developments, the three largest providers of Welsh medium provision should be

given responsibility to lead sectoral developments in specific subject areas, “mentor” others in expanding their provision, and lead the subject panels. This would provide three key partners for the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre and make the allocation panel suggested in the consultation unnecessary.

### **3 Transitional arrangements**

Under the present arrangements, approximately two thirds of the Fund is distributed to the three largest providers of Welsh medium provision, Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and Trinity College, Carmarthen. University of Wales Institute, Cardiff receives a smaller direct allocation, although it is also able to make bids for funding on top of this.

The original paper considered by the WM HESG in June had suggested a phased approach over two years to moving from direct allocations to allocating the entire funding against a sector development plan in line with the key criteria. Under this approach, the three largest providers would receive 60% of their current allocations for the first year and 30% in the second year.

However, in the discussions in the meeting, the members from the institutions most directly affected stressed that even a partial reduction of their earmarked allocations in 2007/08 would destabilise planned developments. They suggested that they would prefer a year’s notice and a clean break with the new method introduced in 2008/09. This was therefore presented as an alternative approach in the consultation, with the expectation that the proposals which the institutions concerned put forward for the use of their direct allocations in 2007/08 would be brought into the sector development plan and considered by the proposed panel.

Further details of the alternative approaches can be found in paragraphs 18 to 22 of the circular.

### **Responses**

One institution stated that it supported the original transitional arrangements put to the WM HESG. Other institutions not receiving direct allocations from the Fund generally were content with either approach. They did recognise the concerns of the institutions receiving direct allocations and were therefore content to accept the alternative approach to allow them time to adapt to the new arrangements. One institution did suggest, that in fairness to those not receiving direct allocations, the institutions concerned should state how they intended to use their funding and if there was not sufficient evidence that this would lead to appropriate developments, a proportion of the funding might be kept back to be used for projects involving other institutions.

In the responses received from institutions receiving direct allocations, the concerns remained that ending their access to this funding would undermine their work and the strategic and sustainable approach which they had sought to

foster. They emphasised such factors as the extensive investment made in Welsh medium provision in recent years, the importance of the funding to small but significant projects in academic departments, and that the proposed change might not only damage future progress but also risk achievements to date. One response noted that, if HEFCW did decide to implement the changes as set out in the alternative method, the proposed year's notice was vital. As indicated above, one response was more critical, interpreting the proposed approach as an annual bidding process which would not be conducive to strategic planning and would lead to unsustainable and disjointed developments. It wished the existing funding to be retained within the three leading Welsh medium institutions (to buffer them against change), while requiring them to take a lead and mentoring role in regard to other institutions in the sector. This would allow a new sectoral structure – “network” – to evolve.

Several respondents noted concerns that the funding available was not sufficient to realise the expansion of provision envisaged in the national development plan: in this context some also noted concern that the proposals were a redistribution of existing funding, rather than providing additional investment.

### **Enrolments element of the Fund**

Under the current arrangements, a portion of the Fund is available for allocation on the basis of increases in enrolments. The consultation noted HEFCW's preference (assuming that the other elements of the Fund were continued for a further year) to discontinue this and add it to the sum remaining for supporting the development plan after the direct allocations were made.

### **Responses**

Responses varied. Several, either through endorsing the proposals overall or making a specific statement were content for this element of the Fund to be discontinued. One indicated a wish that this element be retained. Another saw merit in an incentive of this nature in principle, but recognised HEFCW's reasons for withdrawing it and therefore supported the proposed change.

### **Key criteria for the Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund**

The following criteria will be adopted in considering the use of the HEFCW Welsh Medium Provision Development Fund

- The funding is used to support the development and expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
- The funding is used directly to support Section 2 of the National Development Plan (Provision Development). Projects which are not consistent with the plan will not be funded.
- The funding is used strategically to ensure the maximum benefit from available resources.
- Funding is allocated against clear development plans which have measurable outputs, targets and timetables, including for the preparation and delivery of provision, and student enrolments, and that progress will be closely monitored against these.
- There will be mechanisms for withdrawing/deferring/recovering funding from particular projects if agreed progress is not made, or if there is not sufficient assurance that progress can be made. Funding will then be reallocated to other projects.