

Circular

Funding To Support Circular W07/42HE, 'Enhancing Learning And Teaching Through Technology: A Strategy For Higher Education In Wales.'

Date: 12 December 2007
Reference: W07/50HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: 15 January 2008; further responses required by 7
February 2008 and 6 February 2009
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This circular outlines the means by which we will support Circular W07/42HE, 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales,' from 2007/08 to 2009/10.

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Introduction

- 1 This circular outlines the means by which we will support Circular W07/42HE, 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales,' from 2007/08 to 2009/10.
- 2 We developed a Statement of Position of E-Learning in Higher Education in Wales (Circular W07/03HE) with the help of our E-Learning Subgroup. This was sent out for consultation in January 2007. Responses to this statement informed the development of Circular W07/42HE, 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales.' Consultation on this circular has now ended, and we anticipate publishing the revised form of the strategy in early April 2008.
- 3 Given the importance of enhancing learning and teaching through technology, we are pleased to announce that we are allocating an additional £1,000,000 to support and encourage institutions in taking up the opportunities provided by technology and to meet the objectives of our strategy for enhancing learning and teaching through technology.
- 4 Institutions are requested to respond to this circular by **15 January 2008**.

Benchmarking

- 5 The Higher Education Academy and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (led by the Academy) launched an e-Learning benchmarking exercise in September 2005, as part of HEFCE's 10 year e-Learning strategy to support HE institutions further to 'embed' e-Learning (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/HEFCE/2005/05_12/). There was no direct funding to institutions participating in the exercise, but support was provided by consultants appointed by the Academy. One Welsh institution participated in the pilot phase of the project, two participated in Phase I, and a further four have participated in Phase II, which ends in December 2007. Further information on the benchmarking project is available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elearning/benchmarking>.
- 6 Feedback indicates that institutions used the exercise as an opportunity to audit their current e-learning provision and practice, and so inform their decisions about required institutional development. Themes that emerged in the exercise as areas for further work included e-assessment and organisational issues. The collaboration opportunities provided by the benchmarking exercise also facilitated the development of working relationships with other institutions.

- 7 Seven institutions in Wales have participated in the UK-wide e-learning benchmarking exercise. We believe this project has substantial benefits in informing the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology for institutions in Wales. Our proposals to support Circular W07/42HE therefore focus on taking forward the outcomes of this work.

HEFCW Funding

- 8 The additional £1,000,000 will be allocated on a pro-rata basis to each institution's total funded credit values for 2007/08. This approach brings together the institution's learning load for full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate provision. It is a one-off allocation to be spent in the period from 2007/08 to 2009/10.
- 9 No institution will receive less than £33,000, in order to ensure that all institutions receive a sufficient allocation to undertake worthwhile actions. An upper limit of £155,000 on individual allocations has been set.
- 10 The proposed funding allocations to each institution for the three year period are provided in the table below:

| | Floor £33,000 Ceiling £155,000 |
|--|---|
| Institution | £ |
| University of Glamorgan | 155,000 |
| Aberystwyth University | 111,148 |
| Bangor University | 92,078 |
| Cardiff University | 155,000 |
| University of Wales, Lampeter | 33,000 |
| Swansea University | 121,169 |
| University of Wales Institute, Cardiff | 103,905 |
| University of Wales, Newport | 79,236 |
| North East Wales Institute | 56,114 |
| Swansea Institute of Higher Education | 60,350 |
| Trinity College Carmarthen | 33,000 |
| | |
| Total | 1,000,000 |

Funding arrangements

- 11 This funding is made available to enable institutions to build on and take forward the outcomes of the UK-wide benchmarking process run by the Higher Education Academy and JISC.
- 12 Those institutions yet to engage in the benchmarking process must complete benchmarking in order to access the funding. This should be completed by December 2008. The benchmarking will be supported by consultants working for the Academy, in order to ensure parity across the sector. The costs of carrying out the benchmarking will be paid directly by HEFCW from the allocation for each institution. Institutions will be notified separately, in parallel with this circular, of deductions applied.
- 13 To access the funding all institutions will need to undertake to utilise consultancy support, visits and feedback, which will be arranged by the HE Academy and funded separately by HEFCW. For institutions which have completed benchmarking, this support will be provided from 2007/08 to 2009/10. For institutions which have yet to complete benchmarking the support will be provided from 2008/09.
- 14 In order to access this funding you will need to write to us by **15 January 2008** in order to inform us that you wish to access this funding and undertake to utilise the consultancy support. If you have not completed benchmarking you also need to indicate agreement to collaborate with the Academy in order to achieve benchmarking by December 2008.
- 15 You will need to submit brief outline proposals for development and enhancement based on the outcomes of your benchmarking exercise. A template is available at **Annex A**. The proposals should include:
 - outcomes of the benchmarking process which are to be addressed;
 - details of how the funding will be spent;
 - targets relating to the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology to be addressed in the Annual Monitoring Statement (AMS) for Learning and Teaching for 2008/09 and 2009/10.The procedures which each institution must follow to access the funding are detailed in **Annex B**.
- 16 **The seven institutions which will have completed benchmarking by December 2007** need to submit outline proposals by **7 February 2008**. Funding to these institutions will be paid in March 2008, immediately preceding the launch of the final version of 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales'.

- 17 **Institutions which have not yet completed the benchmarking process** will receive their allocation, minus the cost of benchmarking in March 2008. Their outline proposals for development and enhancement, based on the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise, should be submitted by **6 February 2009**. Should these institutions fail to complete benchmarking or submit outline proposals by this deadline we will withhold their learning and teaching strategy funding to the value of the funding allocated to support their proposals.
- 18 Institutions will be expected to utilise part of their consultancy support to help them develop/refine more detailed implementation, dissemination, and evaluation plans based on their outline proposals.
- 19 The funding must be used for transformational purposes and capacity/capability enhancement, in order to help institutions meet the indicators of success of the strategy. Therefore no more than 10 per cent of this funding should be spent on equipment or software. Institutions are free to utilise their allocations for collaborative work with other institutions.
- 20 We expect institutions to share and disseminate experiences and interim outcomes through normal community activity and existing networking groups, and through participation in programme-level events and activities. Each institution will also be expected to establish a publicly accessible project website. A weblog and/or wiki would be acceptable alternatives.

Accountability for funding

- 21 There will be no requirement to submit a separate institutional e-learning strategy. We will monitor the use of this funding through the AMS for Learning and Teaching. We will therefore expect you to identify appropriate targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 related to the use of this funding to be reported through this AMS, as specified in paragraph 15. We will also seek reassurance from the consultants (see paragraph 13) that they are satisfied regarding the progress being made by each institution. This will be achieved via annual reports from the Academy to HEFCW in December of each year. Institutions will be expected to collaborate with the consultants throughout the duration of the project in order to provide information for these reports.
- 22 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales' will be reviewed in three years time. To assist the review we will require each institution to submit a report by 20 December 2010. This should state and illustrate:
 - how the funding was used;
 - staff time allocated;

- evidence of the impact of the funding and the transformation achieved;
 - evidence of the impact of this on learning and teaching;
 - how the impacts have been evaluated internally;
 - the indicators of success in the sector e-learning strategy which were achieved through this funding;
 - the institution's vision for future use of technology to support learning, teaching, assessment and the curriculum.
- 23 The HE Academy will carry out an evaluation of the transformation achieved through use of this funding in 2010/11, three years after the publication of the final version of the strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology. This will be informed both by the consultants' reports (paragraph 21) and the institutional reports (paragraph 22).
- 24 We are allocating this funding separately to the funding to support Learning and Teaching Strategies, but perceive close links between the two areas, given that the strategy in Circular W07/42HE addresses the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology. Therefore we may withhold Learning and Teaching Strategy funding if funding has been spent in an inappropriate manner, a final report is not submitted, or if the consultants are dissatisfied regarding the progress made regarding outcomes and targets identified in the outline proposal.

Responses

- 25 Responses to this circular are required by **15 January 2008**. These should address the points identified in paragraph 14. Further responses are required by **7 February 2008** or **6 February 2009** as identified in paragraphs 16 and 17.
- 26 Please address your responses to Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).

Annex A. Outline proposals for development and enhancement

Institution Name:

Date:

Name of individual
completing form:

Date benchmarking
completed:

Benchmarking Method used
in the UK-wide HE Academy-
led exercise:

Outcomes of benchmarking process which are to be taken forward through use of
this funding:

Annex B. Procedures which each institution must follow to access the funding.

| Category | HEI | Activities to be undertaken to access allocations: |
|--|---|--|
| HEIs that have completed the UK-wide Academy-led benchmarking project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity College Carmarthen • University of Glamorgan • University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. | <p>Write to us by 15 Jan 2008 to inform us that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wish to access your allocated funding • undertake to utilise the consultancy support. <p>Submit outline proposals for development and enhancement based on the outcomes of your benchmarking exercise by 7 February 2008</p> |
| Institutions which will complete the UK-wide Academy-led benchmarking project by December 2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberystwyth University • Bangor University • University of Wales, Lampeter • University of Wales, Newport | <p>Write to us by 15 Jan 2008 to inform us that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wish to access your allocated funding • undertake to utilise the consultancy support. <p>Submit outline proposals for development and enhancement based on the outcomes of your benchmarking exercise by 7 February 2008</p> |
| Institutions which have not completed the UK-wide Academy-led benchmarking project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiff University • North East Wales Institute of Higher Education • Swansea Institute of Higher Education • Swansea University | <p>Write to us by 15 Jan 2008 to inform us that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wish to access your allocated funding • are willing to collaborate with the Academy in order to achieve benchmarking by December 2008 • undertake to complete benchmarking by December 2008 • undertake to utilise the consultancy support <p>Submit outline proposals for development and enhancement based on the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise by 6 February 2009</p> |