

Circular

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Response by: 7 November 2008

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This circular announces an additional allocation of £22,500 to each Welsh Higher Education Institution (HEI) against two of the actions contained within the Welsh Assembly Government's document *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – a strategy for action*. It also provides an update on current activity in respect of further actions assigned to HEFCW within that strategy document.

The circular requests HEIs to report outcomes to HEFCW by 7 November 2008.

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Introduction

1. This circular announces an additional allocation of £22,500 to each Welsh Higher Education Institution (HEI) against two of the actions contained within the Welsh Assembly Government's document *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – a strategy for action*. It also provides an update on current activity in respect of further actions assigned to HEFCW within that strategy document.
2. The new allocation will be paid to your institution during March 2008.
3. This circular also requests HEIs to report outcomes to HEFCW. Reporting templates are provided in Annexes B and C. Responses must be submitted to HEFCW by 7 November 2008.

Background

4. In 1998 under the Government of Wales Act, the National Assembly for Wales assumed a responsibility for sustainable development that was unique for an elected body in the UK. Wales is reported to be one of only three countries in the world with a statutory commitment to promote sustainable development. The Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme, *A Sustainable Wales - Learning to Live Differently*, was adopted in November 2000, and was concerned with better decision-making for sustainable development, with the desire to mainstream the sustainable development agenda within the Assembly Government and Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies.
5. Subsequently, the Welsh Assembly Government published *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – a strategy for action* in September 2006. Its purpose was to translate the wider aspirations and ideas originally proposed within the overarching Scheme into a series of deliverable actions for the education sector. Further information and an update of current HEFCW activity are provided in Annex A.
6. Responsibility for the delivery of the ESDGC strategy has been given to the new ESDGC Champion for Wales, appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government to work with its ESDGC Advisory Panel. HEFCW is working with the ESDGC Champion to deliver the priorities for the higher education sector, and shared current plans, including those set out in this circular, at a meeting of HEI nominated ESDGC representatives in October 2007. Regular updates will be provided at future meetings of this group.

Funding Support

7. With support from the ESDGC advisory panel, HEFCW is providing additional funding to enable HEIs to make progress against two of the HE sector related actions contained within the ESDGC action plan. These are:
 - *Action 6.2.1 HEIs undertake a self-analysis of where ESDGC is being taught within their institution and where it could be further incorporated*
 - *Action 6.3.1 All HEIs are encouraged (via good practice examples) to develop a suitable environmental management system (EMS) and equivalent measures which cover all their operations in order to minimise their overall resource use to sustainable levels.*

Use of Funding

8. The following sections deal with each of these actions in turn. However, the total funding available to HEIs is meant to cover activity in both of these areas. Institutions are free to allocate the resource to these activities as they see fit.
9. The funding should enable you to employ an individual (eg via secondment or staff replacement costs on a fixed-term basis) to undertake a comprehensive HEI-wide curriculum analysis/audit of your curriculum and to assist you in establishing or supporting the development of an EMS.
10. Where institutions have already undertaken work that gives them a comprehensive curriculum analysis, the funding may be used in support of activities that encourage further embedding of ESDGC into the curriculum.
11. We require you to report on activity undertaken by 7 November 2008, using the templates provided at Annex B and Annex C (paras 23-26 refer).

Curriculum Analysis

- *Action 6.2.1: HEIs undertake a self-analysis of where ESDGC is being taught within their institution and where it could be further incorporated*
12. The ESDGC action plan gave responsibility for this action to HEIs individually, as opposed to HEFCW. However, we proposed to the ESDGC Advisory Panel that a centrally funded initiative would give more impetus to this action, recognising that some funding support would be

needed for HEIs to be able to take this forward. Following submission of HEI responses, the Higher Education Academy will analyse these on our behalf and we will take forward the outcomes in discussion with the Advisory Panel.

13. Across the sector as a whole there is currently limited knowledge or record of what is available within the curriculum. We recognise the significance of the allocation of this additional funding, in that in taking forward one of the key activities listed within the ESDGC action plan, HEIs will be able to provide themselves with, as far as their curriculum is concerned, a baseline of activity on which to build. This may also prove to be of use to HEIs in terms of future marketing opportunities.
14. We will need to be assured that the analyses undertaken by HEIs have been carried out in a way that establishes a baseline for individual HEIs, as well as for the Welsh HE sector as a whole. We would wish to have this information to inform future discussion with the Welsh Assembly Government on ESDGC related activity and how it might be supported.

Relevant documents

15. Institutions may be aware of existing work on sustainable development in the higher education curriculum that might provide useful background material, for example:
 - The work of the Higher Education Academy's Education for Sustainable Development project, which aims to help institutions and subject communities develop curricula and pedagogy that will give students the skills and knowledge to live and work sustainably.
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/sustainability>
 - *Sustainable development in higher education: current practice and future developments* (Higher Education Academy publication)
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id587_sustainable_development_managers_report)
 - *Learning and skills for sustainable development: developing a sustainability literate society. Guidance for HEIs* (Forum for the Future)
<http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/files/learningandskills.pdf>
 - *HEFCE strategic review of sustainable development in higher education in England*. HEFCE commissioned a strategic review of sustainable development in higher education in England. The resulting report measures a baseline of sustainable development activity in the higher education sector and considers institutions' experiences in relation to the conditions for embedding sustainable development, including barriers and drivers.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2008/rd03_08/

Advice and support

16. There are examples from across the Welsh HE sector where HEIs have already undertaken curriculum analysis exercises. In conjunction with the ESDGC Champion, we plan to arrange an early seminar (or series of seminars) to provide advice to HEIs that they can then reflect in the way they take forward their analyses. We will be contacting your nominated ESDGC representative regarding dates and venues in due course.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

- *Action 6.3.1: All HEIs are encouraged (via good practice examples) to develop a suitable environmental management system (EMS) and equivalent measures which cover all their operations in order to minimise their overall resource use to sustainable levels.*
17. The ESDGC Action Plan sees the development of a whole organisation environmental management system (EMS) as a key requirement for higher education. In providing this additional funding, HEFCW aims to provide support and guidance to HEIs in developing an appropriate and relevant EMS, in order to enable them to meet the requirements of the ESDGC action plan.
 18. In this, we recognise the different rates of progress and approaches adopted to date by HEIs. We wish to support and build on the progress that exists in the sector, and to work with institutions to develop and support existing initiatives where possible. The following paragraphs set out guidance on the main themes we would expect to see incorporated within an EMS.
 19. We would particularly welcome the development of arrangements based on significant levels of collaboration between HEIs in this area, especially where they build upon other substantial collaborations in HE already supported by HEFCW.

Key Principles and Themes of an Environmental Management System

20. Environmental management systems will, as a minimum, be expected to demonstrate the following characteristics:-
 - *A whole organisation approach:* the system should apply to and engage with all facets of the HEI's activities. It must address not only the environmental performance of the built estate, but also meaningful links with students, staff, visitors and the wider community. Environmental aspirations and standards should also be reflected in procurement and marketing. This must be supported by clear senior management leadership (pro-Vice Chancellor or above) and effective links into existing management structures and current environmental activity. An environmental management

policy must be clearly and freely available and should set out the environmental standards and aspirations of the institution. The EMS should include an environmental audit and an annual action plan setting out aspirations and target dates.

- *External Focus:* environmental management systems should extend beyond the management systems and processes of the institution to cover the wider business and community. This should be reflected in both the annual action plan and the metrics used to monitor progress.
- *Accreditation:* a number of accreditation standards exist for environmental management systems. The most commonly used standards are ISO 14001, Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), and BS 8555, the latter relating to staged environmental management systems. There are also a number of combined environmental management systems and accreditations such as Green Dragon and Eco Campus. The latter is being developed specifically for the higher education sector by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and combines both accreditation standards and an environmental management system. It is anticipated that it will be fully launched in April 2008

21. HEFCW will not prescribe a single system of accreditation or EMS, but requires that all systems utilised by HEIs should obtain external certification to a recognised standard within a period of three years. We anticipate that most institutions will seek certification to ISO 14001, EMAS, BS 8555, or Eco Campus. Where institutions are proposing to use an alternative accreditation standard this should be clearly stated.

Relevant documents

22. Environmental management systems offer well established and relatively mature approaches in improving environmental management. Further information and guidance can be found at:

- Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges. This site provides detailed advice tailored for the further and higher education sector.
http://www.eauc.org.uk/environmental_management_systems_in_universities_a
- ECO Campus provides details on the development of the Eco Campus system and its staged accreditation approach. It also provides links to other sites and some background on environmental issues. <http://www.ecocampus.co.uk/>

- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment provides non sector specific advice and discussion on current issues, as well as extensive links to other information sources.
<http://www.iema.net/index.php>

Response and Future Reporting

Curriculum analysis

23. **Annex B** provides a template for reporting to HEFCW. Please expand the template as appropriate and append additional information where necessary. Return this electronically to Chris Cowburn by 7 November 2008. (This Annex will be discussed at the seminar/s highlighted in para 16, and we will be happy to adapt it in the light of those discussions. However, as we would not expect to amend it significantly, HEIs should begin their analysis on the basis of the Annex provided here at Annex B.)
24. HEFCW will task the Higher Education Academy with analysing these responses and drawing HEFCW's attention to any appropriate conclusions, making recommendations as the analysis might suggest.

EMS: Reviewing the Existing Position and Developing Future Plans

25. **Annex C** provides a template for reporting to HEFCW. Please expand the template as appropriate and append additional information where necessary. Return this electronically to Chris Cowburn by 7 November 2008.
26. The template poses a series of questions which are intended to identify progress and aspirations to date in establishing an EMS. This information will be used to establish the basis for further dialogue and support for HEIs in developing appropriate systems.

Future reporting

27. We will expect to see the impact of this additional funding allocation evidenced in future Strategic Plans, Learning and Teaching Strategies, Third Mission Strategies, and Estates Strategies.
28. In particular, progress on developing an EMS and the achievements delivered by the system will be required in your annual Strategic Plan submission, under the section on ESDGC. This report will be expected to include progress against key metrics together with a narrative report setting out progress made.

29. Your annual Strategic Plan submission should also reference developments undertaken by the HEI as a result of the self-analysis of the curriculum and any plans for further incorporation of ESDGC principles

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from Chris Cowburn, Head of Estates 029 2068 2247; chris.cowburn@hefcw.ac.uk (*environmental management systems*);

or from Dr Alyson Thomas, Senior Economic Development Manager 029 2068 2303; alyson.thomas@hefcw.ac.uk (*curriculum analysis*).

Background and Update on Current HEFCW Activity

1. The Welsh Assembly Government published *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – a strategy for action* in September 2006, under the oversight of its ESDGC Advisory Panel. In seeking to drive this agenda across all education sectors in Wales, this new strategy highlights five areas common to all sectors under which actions were identified. These are:
 - Commitment and leadership
 - Teaching and learning
 - Institutional management
 - Partnerships
 - Research and monitoring

Current activity in relation to ESDGC

2. In terms of existing activity, HEFCW's Corporate Plan already commits the Council to engage with the sustainable development agenda:
 - By 2010 HEFCW will have enabled the sector to embed sustainability in its overall strategic planning to ensure that in all aspects of their activities HEIs deliver sustainable impacts, as measured by evidence provided in the various plans requested from HEIs by the Council.
3. Further, HEFCW's current remit letter requirement is as follows:
 - To work with the ESGC Champion to take action on the relevant recommendations in the ESDGC action plan, and to submit a report on actions taken and planned by end March 2008.
4. In relation to higher education, the Strategy for Action describes an agenda for ESDGC in terms of priority and supplementary actions for the HE sector and for HEFCW in particular. We drew your attention to these in Circular W07/13HE *Strategic Planning and Related Requests 2007* (3 April 2007). We encouraged you to consider the implications for your institution in terms of actions being undertaken to develop and embed ESDGC principles across your activities, for example in terms of learning and teaching activities; third mission activities; and the training of leaders and senior management teams. In response to one of the priority actions within the Strategy for Action – that HEIs include a section on sustainable development and global citizenship in their strategic plans; and that this section should explain how training in ESDGC is being addressed and

delivered – we also asked you to provide us with this information in terms of the overall strategy of your institution, linking it with your Third Mission and Learning and/or Teaching Strategies as appropriate. In particular, we asked you to set out how your institution intends to develop a framework and timetable to deliver its contribution to this key Assembly strategy.

5. We also included references to ESDGC requirements in requests for Learning & Teaching and Third Mission strategies. Our initial analysis suggests that across the sector there is some degree of engagement with the Assembly's policy regarding ESDGC, and we now have useful information that can inform the provision of best practice advice for the sector (see Future Work below).
6. We stated that we would be writing to institutions separately following further discussions with the Assembly Government's ESDGC Champion and other colleagues in the near future. We are encouraged by the fact that the majority of HEIs have identified "ESDGC leads" in response to a request by Claire Fowler on her appointment to the position of ESDGC Champion for Wales.

Future Work

7. We have been working closely with Claire Fowler and with the ESDGC Advisory Panel to consider priorities for the current year. As a result, we have identified the following as separate, but linked, actions for taking forward within the current year (the reference numbers refer to those within the ESDGC Strategy document). We have shared our thinking on this with those individuals nominated by HEIs as their ESDGC representatives at a meeting on 23 October 2007.
 - **Action 6.1.1 HEIs to identify what actions they are taking to develop ESDGC within their institution. An analysis of good practice is produced to share with HEIs.**
- We will commission work on best practice analysis. The information provided through our analysis of this year's Strategic Plans, Third Mission Strategies and Learning & Teaching Strategies will form a good basis for this work. The specification for this work is currently being developed and you will be informed of further plans in due course.
 - **Action 6.2.1 HEIs undertake a self-analysis of where ESDGC is being taught within their institution and where it could be further incorporated**

- **Action 6.3.1 All HEIs are encouraged (via good practice examples) to develop a suitable environmental management system (EMS) and equivalent measures which cover all their operations in order to minimise their overall resource use to sustainable levels.**
- Additional funding allocation to HEIs to take forward these two actions is the subject of this circular.
 - **Action 6.1.3 Training for ESDGC is provided to leaders and senior management teams in all Welsh HEIs**
- We recognise the need to build capacity within HEIs to allow them to respond effectively to new obligations in relation to ESDGC and to ensure that leaders and managers are appropriately trained. To this end, we are working with the Higher Education Academy and the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges in Wales to plan an ESDGC conference for the Welsh HE sector on 21 May 2008. Further details will be available in due course.