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Cylchlythyr

Circular

Additional Support for Part-Time Students 2009/10

Date: 9 June 2009
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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Response by: Friday 14 August 2009
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This circular announces allocations for Additional Support for Part-Time Students in 2009/10. 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.

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Introduction

- 1 This circular announces allocations for Additional Support for Part-Time Students in 2009/10. 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 was set at £6.4M to be made available initially for three years, 2007/08 to 2009/10. Any decision on whether funding should be extended beyond this three year period will be based upon 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 an hiatus in funding between phases of some projects. Where the sustainability of such EU-funded projects is threatened by such an 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, Communities First wards or underrepresented groups in Higher Education such as care leavers, 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 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 2007/08 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 allocations for 2009/10 will be paid in two tranches in September 2009 and April 2010. The allocations are detailed in **Annex A**.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 16 Expenditure of the 2009/10 allocations should be completed by **30 August 2010**. 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 June.

As indicated in paragraph 4 above, extension of this funding beyond the initial three-year period will be subject to a review in 2009. Consultants have been appointed to undertake the evaluation.

Responses and further information

- 17 Institutions should submit their plans for use of Additional Support for Part-Time Students funding by **Friday 14 August 2009**, 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 2009/10
Allocations**

Institution	2009/10			Payment Details		
	Widening Access £	Third Mission £	Total £	September 2009 £	April 2010 £	Total £
University of Glamorgan	824,237	329,351	1,153,588	769,059	384,529	1,153,588
Aberystwyth University	116,913	132,182	249,095	166,063	83,032	249,095
Bangor University	108,670	111,464	220,134	146,756	73,378	220,134
Cardiff University	231,114	336,591	567,705	378,470	189,235	567,705
University of Wales, Lampeter	178,361	62,345	240,706	160,471	80,235	240,706
Swansea University	208,926	194,631	403,557	269,038	134,519	403,557
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	151,818	124,806	276,624	184,416	92,208	276,624
University of Wales, Newport	748,203	210,901	959,104	639,403	319,701	959,104
Glyndŵr University	475,449	145,809	621,258	414,172	207,086	621,258
Swansea Metropolitan University	322,137	90,821	412,958	275,305	137,653	412,958
Trinity University College	74,142	43,144	117,286	78,191	39,095	117,286
Open University in Wales	960,030	217,955	1,177,985	785,323	392,662	1,177,985
Total	4,400,000	2,000,000	6,400,000	4,266,667	2,133,333	6,400,000