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Circular

Widening Access to Higher Education Allocations 2009/10 and Related Information

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in
Wales
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This circular provides information on institutions' widening access strategy development in the context of the *Review of Higher Education in Wales*. It sets out the 2009/10 allocations to be made to institutions to support their implementation of widening access strategies and it offers some brief guidance on our expectations for reporting progress and expenditure through the annual monitoring process.

This document is available online, in large print, Braille, on CD and on audio CD and cassette. Should you or someone you know require this in an alternative format, please contact us on (029) 2068 2280 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.

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Introduction

1. This circular:
 - a. provides information on institutions' widening access strategy developments in the context of the *Review of Higher Education in Wales*;
 - b. sets out the 2009/10 allocations to be made to institutions to support their implementation of widening access strategies;
 - c. offers brief guidance on our expectations for reporting progress and expenditure through the annual monitoring process.

Background

2. Institutions submitted to us their current widening access (WA) strategies for the period 2006 to 2009 and we would normally have published guidance in 2008 inviting new strategies which would begin in 2009/10. However, in June 2008 (circular WA08/22HE) we set out the reasons why we considered it advisable to defer a request for new three-year widening access strategies until 2010/11.
3. A key reason for not requesting institutions to submit new strategies in 2009, but to roll forward their existing strategies for one year and to include targets for 2009/10, was in order that our guidance for a new strategy period takes full account of the outcomes of the *Review of Higher Education in Wales* under Professor Merfyn Jones and the Welsh Assembly Government's response. At the time of publishing this circular, neither the Jones Group report, nor the Welsh Assembly's response to it, have been published.
4. In publishing future guidance we will also want to take account of the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) review of widening access strategies 2006 to 2009 and Reaching Wider (RW) proposals 2008 to 2010. We commissioned the review in October 2008 to inform the development of widening access strategies. Mindful that the widening access strategies were produced in 2005/06, prior to several key Welsh Assembly policy developments and in a different economic context, the review will use the strategies as a benchmark of widening access work and a basis for offering recommendations for further action to HEFCW and the sector. Within this context, the principal aims of the review, to be published in autumn 2009, are: to contribute to our strategic thinking on widening access and RW policy and practices; provide information on the UK-wide contextual setting for widening access which will allow comparison with the Welsh HE sector; and to inform appropriate departments of the Welsh Assembly Government, the RW Partnerships and HEIs' WA Departments on progress and achievements of the WA strategies and RW initiatives.
5. The HEA, with HEFCW, will present and consider the review's findings, conclusions and recommendations in a strategic dialogue with the sector in early November 2009. We anticipate that the review will form an important

part of the process of developing new widening access strategies/RW proposals beyond 2010.

6. Turning to widening access allocations, we publish annually:
 - a. Institutions' Widening Access Strategy allocations;
 - b. Widening Access Premium allocations, which include a Communities First Premium and funding for students with non-traditional qualifications; and
 - c. The Disabled Students Premium.
7. Widening Access Premium allocations (including Communities First Premium and funding for students with non-traditional qualifications) and the Disabled Students' Premium for 2009/10 are published annually in the Recurrent Grant Circular (see below for the link to this year's circular).
8. In 2009/10 widening access strategy funding and progress will continue to be monitored using the annual monitoring process (AMS). In the light of 2008/09 monitoring this circular offers some brief guidance on our expectations for target setting and reporting progress.

2009/10 Widening Access Related Allocations

9. The sum available for Widening Access Strategy allocations for 2009/10 is **£1,866,597**. Institutions' allocations for 2009/10 are set out in **Annex A**.
10. **Annex B** sets out the 2009/10 allocations for the Widening Access Premium and the Disabled Students Premium. These premia were published in the Recurrent Grant Circular 2009/10 (W09/08HE) which can be found at: www.hefcw.ac.uk/circulars.
11. As in previous years, we will make Widening Access Strategy allocations in two equal instalments in **November 2009** and **March 2010**. We will release the March 2010 payment subject to the receipt of satisfactory annual monitoring statements in November 2009.
12. In rolling forward existing strategies to include funding and targets for 2009/10 we anticipate that institutions will want to begin making plans for new strategies beyond 2010. They will need to take account of a number of emerging Welsh Assembly policies, priorities and developments impacting on widening access including:
 - *Skills that Work for Wales* and its associated action plan (July 2008)
 - *Transforming Education and Training* (September 2008)
 - *A New Approach to Adult Community Learning* (September 2008)
 - The outcomes of the Jones Group's review of higher education.
13. In preparation for developing future widening access strategies we strongly encourage institutions to consider how they will evidence the impact of their

widening access work. Evidence of impacts will need to be robust, longitudinal and contain both quantitative and qualitative data. Evidencing the impact of widening access will be a further indicator of institutions' success in widening access. Moreover, in the current economic climate, where our 2009-10 remit letter notes that all budget lines are provisional and subject to change in year, robust evidence of impact will contribute to the case for retaining and, if possible, increasing this funding stream.

2009/10 Annual Monitoring Statement and Target Setting Guidance

14. The widening access AMS templates are published annually and we will circulate them electronically to Heads of Widening Access or their equivalent, by **3 July 2009**. These individual AMS templates contain each institution's 2008/9 targets which they set themselves previously. Institutions are requested to report their performance against the 2008/09 targets submitted to us in November 2008 and to set ambitious, but realistic targets for 2009/10.
15. In reflecting on the 2007/08 AMS widening access target setting and reporting, we strongly encourage institutions to focus more on identifying the **strategic outcomes** they intend to achieve rather than on lower-level delivery outputs. To achieve this, institutions should set, say, **three to four high-level, measurable targets** under each, prescribed heading (pre-entry, entry, continuing and outreach) where relevant. As well as enabling officers to make realistic comparisons between institutions' reports it will also allow institutions to demonstrate more clearly the strategic intentions of their widening access work.
16. For some institutions, identifying strategic outcomes in this way will require a step change in demonstrating their strategic intentions. We would like all institutions to set high-level, strategic targets for 2009/10 rather than indicating short-term outputs. The two examples below indicate the change in target setting we would like to see:
Target: 'deliver 20 science events to 200 learners' to:
Target: 'promote HE as a serious option and develop science-related skills for pupils who reside in Communities First areas by providing a programme of science-themed classes for years 7 – 12 on campus, in the community and in schools.'
17. We appreciate that limiting the number of targets will mean that institutions do not report progress on all widening activities. However, we welcome institutions informing us, separately and on an ad hoc basis, about widening access project updates, web links, press releases, etc, throughout the year.
18. 2009/10 targets should:
 - reflect institutions' key strategic widening access priorities for the period;
 - relate to significant new developments;

- identify plans to support alignment with regional Reaching Wider Partnerships; or
 - focus on developments which respond to emerging Welsh Assembly policies and priorities, as identified above.
19. Widening access strategies include support for disabled students for which we pay the Disabled Students Premium. In 2008/09, AMS reporting varied in the extent to which institutions set targets, reported progress and expenditure against this funding. In 2009/10 target setting and reporting we require some indication of institutions' strategic intentions in this area.
20. Some widening access strategies included a section on retention. In these cases, institutions are strongly encouraged to consider including a retention-related target within the AMS 'continuing' section. Those institutions that did not include references to retention should set a target which indicates how their retention-related work will be developed and measured in 2010.
21. Those institutions that have achieved the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for Care Leavers in Higher Education should include a target for developing their action plans further, while those institutions that have not yet gained the Quality Mark should set a target that ensures they achieve the award by **December 2009**.
22. In setting targets, institutions should take account of widening access related guidance in HEFCW's 2009-10 remit letter particularly, but not exclusively, paragraph 34. The remit letter is published on our website at www.hefcw/publications/corporate_documents

Timetable and Authorisation of AMS Returns

23. As we indicate in the Annual Monitoring Statement circular (W09/13HE), all institutions should submit the following by **6 November 2009**:
- **one** hard copy of all AMS reports should be collated by each institution and sent to Rachel O'Gorman at the HEFCW office;
 - **one** electronic version of all AMS should be emailed to: AMS@hefcw.ac.uk.

These copies will then be distributed internally to appropriate HEFCW officers.

24. AMS returns must be signed off by the Head of Institution.
25. We reserve the right to audit the information provided, and will do so on a sample basis if we have any concerns.

Further information / responses to

26. For further information, contact Jane Johns (tel 029 2068 2219; email Jane.Johns@hefcw.ac.uk).

Widening Access Strategy Allocations 2009/10

Institution	Eligible Students	Total Students	90% pro-rata to Eligible Students	10% pro rata to % of Eligible Students to Total Students	Total (rounded)*
University of Glamorgan	3,871	15,190	456,385	25,988	482,372
Aberystwyth University	802	7,654	94,555	10,685	105,240
Bangor University	856	6,556	100,921	13,315	114,236
Cardiff University	1,750	17,417	206,322	10,246	216,568
University of Wales, Lampeter	266	2,394	31,361	11,331	42,692
Swansea University	1,623	9,718	191,349	17,031	208,380
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	1,122	6,650	132,282	17,206	149,488
University of Wales, Newport	1,950	7,457	229,902	26,667	256,569
Glyndwr University	831	5,212	97,974	16,259	114,233
Swansea Metropolitan University	890	4,341	104,930	20,907	125,837
Trinity University College	288	1,725	33,955	17,026	50,980
Total	14,249	84,314	1,679,935	186,660	1,866,595

* Totals may not sum due to rounding

Widening Access and Disability Premium Allocation 200/10

Institution	Widening Access Premium £	Disability Premium £	Total £
University of Glamorgan	1,549,110	99,660	1,648,770
Aberystwyth University	301,717	92,840	394,557
Bangor University	292,425	99,000	391,425
Cardiff University	579,776	143,440	723,216
University of Wales, Lampeter	145,829	37,620	183,449
Swansea University	574,907	72,160	647,067
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	451,405	91,300	542,705
University of Wales, Newport	811,595	72,160	883,755
Glyndwr University	346,145	84,920	431,065
Swansea Metropolitan University	382,731	40,480	423,211
Trinity University College	105,654	20,240	125,894
Total	5,541,294	853,820	6,395,114