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Circular

Additional Support for Part-Time Students 2010/11

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Response by: Thursday 12 August 2010
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This circular announces allocations for Additional Support for Part-Time Students in 2010/11. The provision is aimed at maintaining and strengthening part-time provision with a particular focus on widening access to higher education and 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 2010/11. The provision is aimed at maintaining and strengthening part-time provision with a particular focus on widening access to higher education and extending links with employers in the delivery of part-time higher education. It is expected that all these funds 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 aimed at meeting the needs highlighted by the review. Funding was initially provided for three years, 2007/08 to 2009/10, and was targeted at the specific areas highlighted by the working group.
- 4 Continuation of funding beyond the initial three year period was subject to a review of institutional performance. In 2009 Old Bell 3 undertook an evaluation of the use of this funding and recommended that it should continue for a minimum of three years. The Council considered the recommendations of the evaluation in December 2009 and decided to make Additional Support for Part-Time Students available, in principle, for a further three year period, 2010/11 to 2012/13. A copy of the final report by Old Bell 3 can be accessed at www.hefcw.ac.uk.
- 5 The total allocation for 2010/11 has been set at £6.192M. It should be noted that future annual financial allocations may be subject to adjustment as a consequence of pressures arising from the current fiscal climate. Institutions should also be aware that from 2011/12 allocations may also be affected by potential rationalisation of funding streams as HEFCW seeks to develop the new Strategic Implementation Fund required by our recent remit letter, which will be expected to deploy the bulk of our revenue funding in future years

The funding for 2010/11 is split, as in previous years, between widening access and employer engagement. HEFCW will continue to prioritise funding these areas as they are now embedded as the principle components of the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education, *For Our Future*. Institutional success in both areas will continue to be reflected in the allocation provided.

- 6 The definition of part-time study will be that used by the Council in its request for End of Year Monitoring data (Circular W09/17HE, Annex E). Support is not limited to undergraduate students but can include postgraduate part-time students. However, clear links must be stated to justify their support under widening access or innovation and engagement (formerly known as Third Mission) funding. The fact that postgraduate students are studying part-time will not be considered sufficient justification alone.
- 7 In line with the aims of *For Our Future*, institutions may wish to work together on some activities to better meet the needs of part-time students. Such activities should be in the context of the strategies for Regional Planning and Delivery of Higher Education which are currently being developed. Institutions are encouraged to develop collaborative approaches which involve both higher and further education institutions dealing with higher level skills.

Purpose of funding

Widening access and strengthening provision within institutions

- 8 With this funding, (£4.257M of the overall fund), it is intended that institutions should consolidate and build on existing provision for students studying part-time. It is open to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to strengthen part-time study by funding provision on a targeted basis or by providing bursaries/ hardship funds for students from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. The use of these funds should be consistent with developments being taken forward via institutions' Widening Access and Learning and Teaching strategies, where appropriate.
- 9 In an important departure from previous practice, funding can no longer be used to provide fee waivers, although part-time students can be provided with bursaries/additional hardship funding in line with an institution's widening access aims. Other schemes are available in Wales which provide financial assistance for eligible part-time students towards fee costs. Further information on Fee Grants can be found at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk and on the HEFCW Part-Time Fee Waiver Scheme at www.hefcw.ac.uk.
- 10 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 such funding between the 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.

- 11 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 additional hardship funds 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

Strengthening Employer Links

- 12 The second strand of funding, (the remaining £1.935M), is aimed at strengthening engagement with employers in the delivery of part-time higher education. The use of these funds should be consistent with developments being taken forward via institutions' Innovation and Engagement strategies, including building up collaborative approaches where appropriate.
- 13 Funding should not be used to support activities which duplicate services made available through other publicly funded programmes for employers.
- 14 Funding should be used to reflect the principle that employers would normally be expected to contribute towards the cost of training their employees (as made clear in the Leitch and *Skills That Work for Wales* reports) .
- 15 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 then to 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.

Allocation Method

- 16 The Widening Access allocation (£4.257M) 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 £1.935M 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 2008/09 and GO Wales data for phase 4 as at December 2008.

- 17 Institutions are now permitted to vire funding between the two funded strands. This can be up to a maximum of 20% of the value of the particular strand from which they are moving money.
- 18 The allocations are shown at **Annex A**.

Claiming Allocations

- 19 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.
- 20 Institutions are reminded that all targets included in the plans must be both qualitative and quantitative. Institutions that do not include SMART targets for all activities will be asked to resubmit plans.
- 21 HEFCW has noted the recommendation by Old Bell 3 to redistribute funding away from non-compliant HEIs who do not have an agreed plan in place by November 2010, and will retain this as an option.

Timing of Payments

- 22 Subject to the submission of acceptable plans, the allocations for 2010/11 will be paid in two tranches in September 2010 and April 2011. The allocations are detailed in **Annex A**.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 23 Expenditure of the 2010/11 allocations should be completed by **30 August 2011**. Institutions will be asked to confirm that their funding allocation 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.
- 24 HEFCW will evaluate the long term performance of the Additional Support for Part-Time Students as we address the part-time challenges set out in *For our Future*.

Responses and further information

- 25 Institutions should submit their plans for use of Additional Support for Part-Time Students funding by **Thursday 12 August 2010**, 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.
- 26 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 2010/11
Allocations**

Institution	2010/11			Payment Details		
	Widening Access £	Innovation and Engagement £	Total £	September 2010 £	April 2011 £	Total £
University of Glamorgan	793,134	295,275	1,088,409	718,350	370,059	1,088,409
Aberystwyth University	116,768	152,846	269,614	177,945	91,669	269,614
Bangor University	101,273	85,155	186,428	123,042	63,386	186,428
Cardiff University	261,099	370,372	631,471	416,771	214,700	631,471
University of Wales, Lampeter	233,303	76,632	309,935	204,557	105,378	309,935
Swansea University	170,575	158,328	328,903	217,076	111,827	328,903
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	152,758	114,332	267,090	176,279	90,811	267,090
University of Wales, Newport	632,389	182,240	814,629	537,655	276,974	814,629
Glyndŵr University	435,078	130,728	565,806	373,432	192,374	565,806
Swansea Metropolitan University	218,979	73,729	292,708	193,187	99,521	292,708
Trinity University College	79,887	55,678	135,565	89,473	46,092	135,565
Open University in Wales	1,061,757	239,685	1,301,442	858,952	442,490	1,301,442
Total	4,257,000	1,935,000	6,192,000	4,086,719	2,105,281	6,192,000