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Circular

Request for institutions' responses to HEFCW Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13

Date: 6 July 2010
Reference: W10/21HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: 10 September 2010
Contact: Name: Dale Hall
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This circular invites higher education institutions in Wales to submit copies of progress reports against their current strategic plans, and also to provide a response to HEFCW's Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13.

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 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.

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Introduction

1. We indicated in our Forecast Requests circular (W10/15HE) that we would delay our normal request for copies of institutions' current strategic plans, but that we would instead be asking each institution to provide by early September 2010 a strategic response to the requirements set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's *For Our Future* higher education strategy and plan. This circular provides the detailed arrangements for these submissions.

Progress reports on institutions' strategic plans

2. We do not require institutions to submit copies of their current strategic plans this year. Instead, we would like each institution to provide by 10 September a copy of its own latest progress report against the objectives and key performance indicators contained in its current strategic plan. This may, for example, comprise the end of year progress reports that institutions will be submitting to their Boards of Governors and/or relevant sub-committees for their final meetings in academic year 2009/10. Please note that we do not require institutions to submit a bespoke report for HEFCW, but rather simply to provide us the actual, latest strategic plan progress reports produced for their governing bodies.

HEFCW Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13.

3. Our new Corporate Strategy covering the three financial years 2010-11 to 2012-13 was recently approved by the Welsh Assembly Government, and institutions have been informed of its publication on HEFCW's website (www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/corporate_documents/corporate_strategy_plan.aspx). Our Corporate Strategy includes the sector-level measures and targets agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government by which the delivery of *For Our Future* will be measured.
4. We would be grateful if each institution could submit to us **by 10 September** a response, as indicated below, on both the key strategic themes within the HEFCW Corporate Strategy 2010-13 and on the *For Our Future* measures and targets. We recognise that the timescale for responses is shorter than usual, but we shall be reporting initial progress on *For our Future* to the Minister in October and therefore need to have the latest possible information from the sector. We appreciate your cooperation.

Corporate Strategy – key strategic themes

5. Our Corporate Strategy is structured around the following seven key strategic themes:
 - Widening Access

- Student Experience
 - Skills
 - Knowledge Transfer
 - Research
 - Reconfiguration and Collaboration
 - Governance
6. Each institution is invited to submit a general statement on how it plans to address each of the seven themes. Please provide a full, stand-alone response on each theme, without reference to other institutional documents and without any annexes, and comprising **no more than two sides of A4** per theme. We recognise that institutions have only a short amount of time to respond to this request. Therefore at this stage we only expect institutions to provide, as clearly as they are able, a 'state of play' reaction to *For Our Future*, which we will then look to develop progressively in later years.

***For Our Future* sector measures and targets**

7. Our Corporate Strategy includes 12, high-level sector measures and targets relating to the key priorities of *For Our Future*. We wish to understand how each institution sees its expected performance against each of these targets over the next few years.
8. For the following six measures and targets we will draw on information from institutions' next financial and student number forecast returns (due 23 July 2010), and from other data sources as appropriate, to get a sense of anticipated performance at each institution and across the sector. Institutions therefore need submit nothing further in relation to these.
- Growth in overseas students;
 - Improvements in the participation rates from the five Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute unitary authorities;
 - Increase in part-time students;
 - Growth in Research Council funding;
 - Reconfiguration and collaboration – annual income target;
 - Governance: no institution at 'high risk' in accordance with HEFCW's institutional risk review (IRR) process.¹

¹ Through our IRR process we will continue to assess institutional risk in the key area of 'Governance and Management' based on the outcomes of our latest institutional assurance reviews; our analysis of annual monitoring returns submitted by institutions; and the range of other issues and evidence as set out in our Strategic Engagement circular (W09/20HE).

9. For the remaining six measures and targets below, we would be grateful if each institution could submit details of its expected performance against each target in academic year 2009/10 and also its planned delivery in each of the three years covered by our Strategy, 2010-13.

- Increase in proportion of Communities First students;
- Increase in module completion rates;
- National Student Survey 'overall satisfaction' scores;
- Increase in Welsh medium activity;
- Employability performance;
- Knowledge transfer: spin-out company performance.

We will provide to each institution separately a data return form which will include details of its own current (2008/09) performance against each of the above target measures.

Future submission of institutions' strategic plans

10. Our Strategic Engagement circular (W09/20HE) indicated our intention to move to requesting copies of full institutional strategic plans once every three years, with progress updates submitted in the intervening years. We will begin to implement these new arrangements from 2011. We will expect HEFCW's Corporate Strategy priorities, including the *For Our Future* target measures, to feature strongly in institutions' future strategic plans. We will also expect institutions' interim progress reports to feature *For Our Future* target measures amongst the KPIs that form part of the progress reports. In addition, as part of our introduction of the new arrangements we will consider how we can better align the process of submission of institutional strategic plans with that of Annual Monitoring Statements. Further details of our specific requirements will be issued next year.

Timetable

11. Responses to the above must be submitted by **10 September 2010**. If any institution is able to submit sooner than this date it would be much appreciated.

Further information / responses to

12. For further information, contact Dale Hall (Tel 029 2068 2280; email dale.hall@hefcw.ac.uk).