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Cylchlythyr

Circular

HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education 2010/11 to 2012/13

Date: 25 February 2011
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To: Heads of higher education institutions and directly funded further education institutions in Wales and other interested parties
Response by: None
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This circular sets out *HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education 2010/11 to 2012/13* and summarises the equality impact assessment outcomes associated with its development.

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. This circular sets out *HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education 2010/11 to 2012/13* and summarises the equality impact assessment outcomes associated with its development.

Background

2. Our Corporate Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13 identifies widening access as one of five strategic themes contributing to the delivery of social justice and a buoyant economy: the two priorities of *For our Future*, the Welsh Assembly Government's higher education strategy¹.
3. *HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education* (referred to as our *Approach*) sits beneath our Corporate Strategy and provides a fuller picture of our strategic intentions in this area.

HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education

4. Our *Approach* is attached as **Annex A**. It sets out our definition of widening access, our measures of success and our initial actions against the following strategic priorities:
 - i. to prioritise recruitment from Communities First areas;
 - ii. to improve access for groups under-represented in higher education;
 - iii. to prioritise student learning success and retention;
 - iv. to support fair access to the professions, high level skills and the priority sectors;
 - v. to encourage flexible learning opportunities, including part-time;
 - vi. to secure clear articulation and progression pathways into higher education;
 - vii. to maximise the potential for collaborative, cross-sectoral, multi-agency approaches;
 - viii. to deploy resources to deliver our widening access objectives;
 - ix. to apply a regional framework to target widening access more effectively;
 - x. to improve the evidence base to support widening access and impact assessment.

¹ Our Corporate Strategy is available at: www.hefcw.publications/corporatedocuments

Diversity and Equal Opportunities

5. In developing our *Approach* we undertook an internal, initial screening and subsequently published the draft *Approach* to involve fully universities and other providers in the consideration of the equality impact of this policy on groups with protected characteristics².
6. We received fifteen consultation responses, including ten from higher education institutions, one from a further education institution, two from third sector organisations and two Wales-wide or UK-wide bodies. Four responses were submitted after the November deadline, but they were taken into account to fully inform the development of the *Approach*.
7. All responses welcomed the *Approach* and it was generally agreed that the responses confirmed that equality and diversity issues had been addressed sufficiently and embedded within the *Approach*.
8. An analysis of the equality impact assessment responses is attached as **Annex B**.

Further information / responses to

9. For further information, contact Jane Johns (tel 029 2068 2219; email jane.johns@hefcw.ac.uk) or Rachel O’Gorman (tel 029 2068 2227; email rachel.ogorman@hefcw.ac.uk).

² We published our draft *Approach* as circular W10/36HE in October 2010. www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/circulars