

Cylchlythyr

Circular

Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14: Supplementary Guidance

Date: 13 May 2011
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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: 29 July 2011
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This circular provides supplementary guidance for Learning and Teaching and Widening Access strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14. It provides: additional guidance on Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW emerging policies and priorities; further clarification of information we want you to provide on specific issues and/or priorities; 2011/12 Learning and Teaching and Widening Access funding allocations; a strategy checklist; and templates for Annual Monitoring Statements.

Strategies should be submitted by **29 July 2011**.

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.



Introduction

1. This circular provides supplementary guidance for Learning and Teaching and Widening Access strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14.
2. It provides: additional guidance on Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW emerging policies and priorities; further clarification of information we want you to provide on specific issues and/or priorities; 2011/12 Learning and Teaching and Widening Access funding allocations; a strategy checklist; and templates for Annual Monitoring Statements (AMS).
3. Strategies should be submitted by **29 July 2011**.

Background

4. Circular W10/41HE, *Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14: Initial Guidance*, gave early notice of our invitation to HEIs to submit new strategies. It provided initial guidance to support the development of strategies and sought the involvement of the sector, and other interested parties, in equality impact assessing our guidance. The initial guidance also indicated that we would provide supplementary guidance, taking account of the equality impact assessment, and funding allocations in April 2011. A summary of the equality impact assessment consultation on the initial guidance can be found at **Annex A**. Due to the need for further modelling of the funding methods, we will now publish this guidance in May.
5. The initial guidance set out the background and context of the new strategy period, identified the purpose of the strategies, provided some initial guidance on strategy development, including equality and diversity issues, and provided a timetable for strategies' submission. The guidance also publicised some Higher Education Academy (HE Academy) events to support strategy planning.
6. In planning to publish supplementary guidance we recognised that, given the dynamic nature of the policy and funding environment, we would:
 - provide additional guidance on Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW emerging policies and priorities;
 - take account of issues arising from the April HE Academy events and our series of meetings with institutions and Reaching Wider (RW) Partnerships;
 - provide further clarification about information we would wish to see included in new strategies; and
 - publish the 2011/12 Learning and Teaching and Widening Access funding allocations.
7. In February 2011, we published *HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education* which set out our widening access strategic intentions¹. We sought views to inform the equality impact assessment on our

¹ <http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/W11/09HE>

Approach. As the *Approach* and the equality impact assessment responses impact on this guidance, we have attached a summary of the responses as part of **Annex A**. In April 2011 we published Circular W11/16HE, *HEFCW's Strategic Approach to the Student Experience 2010-11 to 2012-13*², which sets out our strategic intentions in this second area, and our expectations of institutions. We carried out equality impact assessment screening on this document. Both these Approaches sit beneath our Corporate Strategy³ and define our policy aims, objectives, initial actions and direction of travel in these areas. We expect that Learning and Teaching/Widening Access strategies will reflect institutions' responses to these strategic documents.

Supplementary Guidance: Policy Developments and Priorities

8. Since Circular W10/41HE was published there have been a number of policy developments impacting on learning and teaching and widening access. Institutions will want to take account of the policies and priorities outlined below in developing their strategies.

HEFCW's 2011-12 Remit Letter

9. Our remit letter sets out the Minister's priorities for HEFCW's work in 2011-12⁴. Institutions are asked to take note of the priorities for learning and teaching and widening access set out in the remit letter, some of which are identified in the sections below.

Regional Strategies

10. Higher education institutions in the three designated regions of Wales submitted Regional strategies to us in November 2010⁵. The strategies' aim was '*to improve provision regionally, especially for learners who, for whatever reason, are geographically constrained, and for employers who are seeking HE support, of whatever kind, locally*⁶. A number of issues addressed in the strategies are pertinent to this guidance, including: the audit of current course/module provision in the region, taking account of areas of duplication; key progression routes; any new HE provision required within the region; opportunities for more coordinated widening access activities; and opportunities for joint regional work with employers. Subsequent funding arrangements⁷ were designed to encourage joint working on a regional basis to start to address these issues. Institutions should ensure that their Learning and Teaching/Widening Access strategies are aligned with their Regional strategy and take account of appropriate evidence of regional needs and priorities in shaping their new strategies.

² <http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars/W11/16HE.pdf>

³ http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/corporate_documents/corporate_strategy.aspx

⁴ http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_he_in_wales/wag_priorities_and_policies/annual_remit_letter_hefcw.aspx

⁵ <http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/W10/16HE>

⁶ Circular W10/16HE, paragraph 8.

⁷ <http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars/W10/28HE>

Foundation Degrees

11. HEFCW published a new Foundation Degree policy in 2010⁸ and announced funding to support the introduction of new Foundation Degree provision. Proposals for new provision were invited from regions to support the regional strategies. Institutions planning to offer new provision under this, and other new Foundation Degree funding initiatives, should use the Foundation Degree benchmark⁹ as a reference point and take account of Foundation Degree plans in the development of their strategies. We expect to commission a developmental review of Foundation Degree provision during the funding period, in order to inform the development of these qualifications and assess the quality of the funded provision.

Fee arrangements

12. Circular W11/14HE¹⁰ provides guidance on the submission of Fee Plans. Fee Plans will contribute to the delivery of *For our Future* priorities, particularly in relation to utilising fee investment in support of equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education, including the objectives institutions will set to secure these outcomes. The Fee Plan guidance notes:

*'Those institutions with further to travel in terms of widening access will need to provide more investment in support of **equality of opportunity** and the Guidance clearly set outs the Minister's expectations for that area. The Council has long supported the aims of widening access and institutions should ensure that Fee Plans are consistent with their Widening Access Strategy, Reaching Wider Strategy, Learning and Teaching Strategy and Equality Statements.'*

***Promotion of higher education** is a broader investment area and institutions should ensure that the outcomes they propose here are consistent with the aims of *For our Future: The 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales*, HEFCW's Corporate Strategy, and the latest remit letter to HEFCW from the Welsh Assembly Government. For example, institutions will wish to include activities, in terms of the student experience, which contribute to the regional agenda for Wales, which support scholarly activity more generally, or which aim to strengthen and sustain the Welsh higher education sector.'*

13. Institutions should take account of their fee plan-related widening access developments and to articulate the relationship between their widening access strategy-funded activities and fee plan-funded widening access activities. The new fee arrangements have the potential to impact on student expectations, their self-perception as 'customers' and their views on the costs of study, as we noted in our *Strategic Approach to the Student Experience*. Within this *Approach* we identified that, in this context, the student voice will become increasingly important. We also identified that we will monitor fee plans, to include identification of how they support the student experience in the rapidly changing HE environment.

⁸<http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars2010/W10/29HE>

⁹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationdegree/benchmark/fdqb.asp>

¹⁰ Circular W11/14HE: Fee Plan Guidance 2012/13

14. In strategic planning and reporting, institutions should be clear in identifying the source and purpose of separate funding streams to avoid any appearance of double-funding. For audit and accountability purposes we will also want to understand clearly the use of all funding streams. We recognise that fee plan timelines are tight, but institutions should know the outcome of their fee plan submissions before submitting their Learning and Teaching/Widening Access strategies.

Students

15. Our remit letter from the Welsh Assembly Government for 2011-12 sets out the Assembly Government's expectation that institutions will work with their student unions to agree a student charter to enable students to become active participants in shaping their learning experience:

'I expect HEFCW to ensure that HE institutions and their student unions jointly agree a student charter which clearly lays out the mutual roles and responsibilities of institutions and of their students'.

16. Our remit letter identified further action for HEFCW which you will also wish to take account of, that:

'it will be important to ensure that student unions are appropriately funded if the student voice is to be meaningful. I expect HEFCW to discuss this matter with the National Union of Students Wales, to establish best practice in the funding of effective, democratic students' unions, and student representation on decision making bodies, and to ensure that best practice in respect of student union representation becomes the norm in the Higher Education sector in Wales.'

Professional Standards Framework

17. Our *Strategic Approach to the Student Experience* identified that we would encourage institutions to engage with the updated Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning. This has recently been subject to a UK-wide consultation and the revised framework will be available on the HE Academy website shortly¹¹. In this context we undertook to encourage institutions to facilitate staff development to enhance the student experience.

Research-informed teaching

18. We continue to expect that appropriate time should be allocated for staff scholarship in order to ensure that the curriculum is current, and that teaching is informed by scholarly activity and research. Further information on teaching and research is available on the HE Academy's website¹².

¹¹ <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/accreditation/ukpsf>

¹² <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingresearch/teachingandresearch>

Internationalisation and the European Higher Education area

19. Our *Strategic Approach to the Student Experience* also identified that we would promote the internationalising of curricula and engagement with the European Higher Education Area, including through the recognition of qualifications and mobility. This includes the promotion of the production of the Diploma Supplement by institutions in Wales, either separately or through the use of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), and it enables academic and professional recognition at international level¹³.
20. We recognise the importance of internationalisation. In this way, students in Wales can learn to be global citizens and develop the high level skills employers require. The HE Academy and UK HE International and Europe Unit (which are co-funded by HEFCW) can help HEIs to internationalise more fully. Welsh Higher Education Brussels also supports the sector to engage with EU funding opportunities which can enhance the student experience, through programmes such as the Lifelong Learning Programme and Erasmus Mundus.
21. Opportunities to study or work outside the UK enhance students' life experience and employability skills. We support student exchange and placement through the Erasmus-fee waiver scheme in 2011/12 (to be reviewed in 2012/13). However, widening access students, for a range of reasons, do not take advantage of Erasmus or similar schemes to the same extent as the rest of the student population. While we understand that there are a range of good reasons for this, we would welcome institutions encouraging applications from widening access groups and monitoring student engagement, with a view to ensuring that there is effective equality of opportunity in this area.

Enhancing learning and teaching through technology

22. In developing their new Learning and Teaching Strategies, institutions should take account of the contribution made by ongoing and planned technology-enhanced learning provision and to reflect on the issues raised and lessons learnt from their involvement in the Gwella and Building Capacity programmes¹⁴. These were discussed at the *Future Directions: Feeding Forward, Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology* Higher Education Academy April event. The strategy for the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology (W08/12HE) is currently being reviewed by Aspire¹⁵, on behalf of HEFCW. The outcomes of this review will be published in June. Institutions will want to ensure that their strategies are sufficiently agile to take account of the outcomes of this review.

¹³ <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/eadministration/hear.aspx>

¹⁴ http://elearning.heacademy.ac.uk/weblogs/gwella/?page_id=2

¹⁵ <http://www.aspire-edu.org/>

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

23. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has now been established¹⁶. It will work with, and through, higher education institutions in Wales to deliver increased and sustainable Welsh medium learning and teaching opportunities at all levels and contribute to a professional, well-trained, bilingual workforce. It is important to reflect this work within institutional Learning and Teaching/Widening Access Strategies. Institutions should ensure that their Widening Access Strategies reflect the institution's commitment to providing Welsh medium progression routes to Coleg Cymraeg HE provision, including how they will raise aspirations and skills to study in Welsh. They should also ensure that their Learning and Teaching Strategies address the student experience of those learning through the medium of Welsh.

Retention, completion and student success

24. Our Widening Access *Approach* confirmed our intention to prioritise student learning, retention and success. To this end we have established, from 2011/12, access and retention premia, as defined in circular W11/07HE¹⁷. In addition, we have worked with the HE Academy and Welsh HEIs to develop the publication: *Engaging students to improve student retention and success in higher education in Wales*¹⁸. Furthermore, our March 2011 remit letter emphasises the Assembly Government's anticipation of effective progress on raising further the level of participation and success in higher education which includes: *'improved retention and completion rates of students studying at Welsh institutions.'* In this context, Learning and Teaching/Widening Access Strategies should reflect clearly institutions' focus on, and commitment to, improving retention, completion and student success.

Child Poverty Strategy

25. Our Widening Access *Approach* refers to the Assembly Government's Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan for Wales, published in February 2011¹⁹. The Strategy places a duty on HEFCW to publish its own Child Poverty Strategy by September 2011, setting out how it will work with the sector, the Assembly Government and other agencies to contribute to the eradication of child poverty²⁰. Our strategy will take account of raising the education and vocational aspirations of the parents, carers, families and communities that support the social and economic needs of disadvantaged children. Institutions' strategies will need to reflect their institutions' response to child poverty issues.

¹⁶ <http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/>

¹⁷ Further information on widening access-related funding is set out in the Funding section below.

See also Circular W11/07HE

¹⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/6cg3tbl>

¹⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/poverty/newcpstrategy/?lang=en>

²⁰ The Assembly Government has indicated that the proposed publication date may change.

Part-time Learners and Part-time Study Pathways

26. Circular W11/07HE, published in February 2011 confirmed that, following consultation, we have embedded the former *Additional Support for Part-time Learners* ('Graham') funding, to support part-time provision, into Widening Access and Innovation and Engagement strategy funding. The implications of this for widening access are set out in more detail in the Funding section below.
27. We will require Widening Access Strategies to articulate and identify clear outcomes for how they propose to further widen access to, and take account of, part-time learners of all ages. **Annex B** sets out the principles governing the use of part-time funding.

Widening Access Priority Groups

28. In addition to part-time as set out above, learners of all ages from Communities First areas are a key widening access priority, as set out in our Corporate Strategy, our Widening Access strategic *Approach* and as reflected in our February 2011 funding changes circular (W11/07HE). We recognise that the Assembly Government's existing Communities First strategy ends in 2012 and we are in discussion with Assembly officials to consider the implications of this for widening access to higher education planning and delivery.
29. We recognise that, in addition to the priority groups above, your Widening Access Strategies may want to respond to the needs of broader learner groups, including learners of all ages: from low participation neighbourhoods; with non-traditional qualifications; in the Universities Heads of the Valleys (UHOVI) area; from care backgrounds; and with disabilities and/or other protected characteristics. In doing so you should ensure that your strategic priorities align with your regional strategies and Reaching Wider strategies, as appropriate.

STEM subject development and alignment with national programmes such as the HE STEM National programme

30. Our remit letter 2011-12 makes specific mention of the need to continue '*to focus on the increasing delivery of subjects of strategic importance namely science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).*' In this respect, the National HE STEM Programme has supported higher education institutions in developing, delivering and sharing new approaches to recruiting and retaining learners of all ages in the study of STEM subjects. The Wales 'spoke' of the National STEM Programme, with funding from HEFCW, has made links with, and funded, innovative STEM projects at a number of institutions and Reaching Wider Partnerships. Where institutions have STEM provision their widening access strategies will need to consider issues such as:
 - raising academic and vocational aspirations to study STEM subjects;
 - developing and sustaining STEM progression routes to and through HE;
 - responding to equality of opportunity issues such as gender balances by subject area;
 - retention and student support issues;
 - fair access to the professions and higher level skills.

Modern Foreign Languages subject development

31. Our remit letter requires us to focus on the increased delivery of subjects of strategic importance. In addition to STEM subjects, this includes the maintenance of modern foreign languages (MFL). In this respect, CILT Cymru has supported higher education institutions in developing, delivering and sharing new approaches to recruiting and retaining learners of all ages in the study of MFL subjects²¹. Where institutions have MFL provision they should set out in their strategies their planning intentions for widening access to, and participation in, MFL provision.

Equality and diversity

32. We would expect institutions' Learning and Teaching/Widening Access Strategies to set out how their equalities schemes are embedded in widening access and other provision and you should also include the outcomes of relevant work supported from the Disabled Students' premium allocations.

Funding

Funding: Learning and Teaching Strategies

33. Institutional allocations for Learning and Teaching Strategies are provided at **Annex C**. The total sum available for 2011/12 is **£1.252m**. This includes an additional sum of £200k, for this year only, for enhancing learning and teaching through technology. The funding is allocated to institutions pro rata to total funded credits in 2011/12 (with initial teacher training credits moved to the institutions which are providing the teaching). In a change from previous years, floors and ceilings have been removed from these allocations, as reported in Circular W11/07HE²².

Funding: Widening Access Strategies

34. Institutional allocations for Widening Access Strategies are provided at **Annex D**. **The allocations are indicative at present** as the part-time credit data is subject to verification by HEIs²³. The verification process will be completed by the end of May when we will confirm the total allocations.
35. The total sum available for 2011/12 is **£5,647,595**. The total includes the widening access element (**£2,016,595**); the part-time students element (**£3,600,000**) and funding for other HEFCW widening access work e.g. Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme (**£31,000**). These funding streams should be used for the purposes for which they were intended. In locating the part-time funding within

²¹ <http://www.ciltcymru.org.uk/>

²² W11/07HE: Changes to the funding system for higher education in Wales

²³ Part-time credit data are extracted from the HESA 2009/10 student record

the Widening Access Strategy funding we are ring-fencing it to be used solely to support learning and teaching and widening access for part-time students.

36. The additional support for part-time students fund (Graham funding) followed other HEFCW funding streams in receiving an in-year cut of 4% in 2010/11 and in the region of an 8.5% cut in 2011/12. However, as part of the process of embedding the funding within Widening Access and Innovation and Engagement strategies, there has been a slight rebalancing of funding with 33% going to Innovation and Engagement and 66% to Widening Access. This means that overall, the part-time element of the Widening Access Strategy funding has been reduced by 11.9% on 2010/11 funding.
37. As indicated in our remit letter, please note that the figures given above and in **Annexes C and D** are **provisional, and are subject to change in-year**. We will, of course, inform you of any changes as soon as possible.
38. Our February circular on changes to the funding system (W11/07HE) confirmed that we would fund Widening Access Strategies more explicitly against Communities First areas from 2011/12. Whilst retaining the same method of allocation for 2011/12 as in 2010/11, we have replaced the previous widening access categories based on low affluence with the categories now used in our premium calculations. This impacts on individual institutions differentially according to their performance. The categories of widening access students used in 2011/12 are students from Communities First and low participation areas and Assembly Learning Grant recipients. The total funding for the widening access element in 2010/11 and 2011/12 is the same. See also the notes accompanying the annexed allocations table. We are retaining support for students with non-traditional qualifications through arrangements for widening access strategies, as we confirmed in our changes to funding circular, though specific funding is not linked to this group.
39. The part-time student element also follows the same allocation method as in 2010/11. However, in 2011/12 it takes equal account of credits studied by students from Communities First and low participation areas. This differs from 2010/11 which included students from areas of low affluence, students with non-traditional qualifications on entry, and a smaller number of Communities First areas. We have not taken account of Assembly Learning Grant recipients, as in the premium and widening access funding element, because the vast majority of Assembly Learning Grant recipients are full-time. See also the notes in the annexed funding table.
40. We note that, despite this additional funding, part-time numbers continue to fall (by 8% from 1,594,114 in 2010/11, (2008/09 HESA Student record) to 1,464,892 in 2011/12, (2009/10 HESA student record)). We will be monitoring this carefully, as one of our Corporate Strategy measures, as we consider that those institutions experiencing more substantial reductions may have further distance to travel in relation to developing and supporting this *For our Future* priority.
41. Additional funding streams which relate specifically to widening access developments and which institutions will want to include within their strategic

planning include: Access and Retention Premium total allocation (**£9,990,922**), Part-Time Premium (**£1,771,285**) and the Disabled Students' Premium (**£994,400**). In addition, fee planning and associated income, as it relates to widening access, should be included within the broader Widening Access Strategy.

42. We recognise that institutions fund widening access from additional internal and external funding streams. We would like to understand the funding implications and intended outcomes of the use of such resources and would appreciate their inclusion in strategic planning.

The Checklist tool

43. We recognise that strategies have a dual purpose, as we indicated in our initial guidance. They are institutional documents that must be developed and implemented in a manner that enables institutions to pursue their distinctive missions and purpose. In addition, strategies are the basis on which we: allocate funding; understand institutions' strategic intentions and support strategic planning and delivery; account for public funding; use as the basis for strategic dialogues; and respond to the Assembly Government and others on sector performance and progress in relation to specific issues.
44. We recognise possible tensions arising from this dual function and, therefore, we do not wish to be overly prescriptive about the structure and content of institutional strategies. However, there are some categories of information which we require in order to inform our funding decisions.
45. We have provided a checklist of information which we require in **Annex E**. The checklist is intended to be a tool to enable institutions to shape their strategies to suit their needs, while ensuring that we receive the information we require to analyse strategies more efficiently and effectively.

Outcome templates

46. As is our usual practice, we will monitor the performance of the strategies using our Annual Monitoring Statement (AMS) process²⁴.
47. **Annexes F and G** provide strategy outcome templates for institutions to identify the short- and medium-term outcomes they will achieve. The outcome templates set out institutions' strategic intentions during this strategy period. Short-term outcomes might include milestones towards medium-term outcomes. We will use these to generate the templates for your annual monitoring statements.
48. The areas where we require you to set specific target outcomes, and the reason for requiring it, are set out below:

²⁴ See Circular W10/41HE paragraph 29.

Specific areas where outcomes are required	Rationale for this information
Widening access <i>For our Future</i> priorities	HEFCW Corporate Strategy measures and priorities relating to: Communities First, low participation and Assembly Learning Grant students, UHOVI residents, and improving module completion rates
Care leavers	Assembly Government and HEFCW monitoring
National Student survey outcomes: including activities to achieve these	HEFCW Corporate Strategy measure
Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology	Additional funding allocated in previous strategy period
Welsh medium developments: to include engagement with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	HEFCW Corporate Strategy measure
Aligning with the regional agenda: to include increasing progression, and collaboration and reducing nugatory duplication	To ensure consistency with regional strategies
Staff development: to include engaging with the HE Academy's Professional Standards Framework	HEFCW's commitment to the UK-wide framework
Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship	An Assembly Government priority
Public information: to include costs of study	Supporting effective practice. See HEFCW circular W10/07HE

Setting outcomes

49. The clear identification of outcomes enables institutions to measure progress and demonstrate achievement. In setting outcomes, please ensure that they are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)**.
50. In this strategy period, we will focus less on short-term outputs eg numbers of students attending an event, or number of one-off events, and we will focus more on understanding how outcomes will deliver your stated high-level strategic objectives.
51. Effective outcomes should demonstrate the impact of the activities. While not every outcome can, or should, be quantitative, we need to understand how the achievement of qualitative outcomes will be measured and success demonstrated. Outcomes must be appropriately ambitious, while remaining realistic and achievable.

52. As we are prioritising SMART strategic outcomes and impact measures, we have prepared a sample template with examples of categories, activities and outcomes. This is available on request from officer contacts below.
53. Within the short-term outcome templates we are asking institutions to identify the approximate sum and funding source used to support each strategic aim to enable funding transparency and accountability. Funding might be from a range of sources, as we identified above.
54. We recommend that, institutional processes and procedures monitor progress towards identified outcomes to ensure that outcomes remain achievable, realistic and relevant over the course of the strategy period.
55. Our initial guidance confirmed that we expect institutions to publish the first section of their widening access strategies and we set out our reasons for this²⁵. We will monitor the publication through the annual monitoring statement process.

Further information

56. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk) or Jane Johns (tel 029 2068 2219; email jane.johns@hefcw.ac.uk).

²⁵ Circular W10/41HE Annex B paragraph 15

Annex A

W10/41HE: Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14: Initial Guidance – Responses to equality impact assessment consultation and involvement process

1. Officers received two responses on the equality and diversity impact of the L&T and WA, and RW initial strategies guidance by the response deadline. A further response was submitted subsequently.
2. Generally, the responses from HEIs indicated that they did not consider that our L&T, WA and RW initial guidance would negatively impact on, nor create unintended consequences to, individuals with protected characteristics or groups under-represented in higher education.
3. In relation to part-time students, one response highlighted that part-time provision increased learning choices and chances thereby promoting and sustaining equality of opportunity. Therefore, any potential diminution of part-time higher education in the new strategies' period would reduce equality and diversity in our student populations.
4. Another response suggested that changes in the RW strategy funding methodology could potentially impact adversely on students with protected characteristics. Officers have taken this view into account when modelling RW and WA budgets, working within the parameters set out in our consultation circular W10/37HE.¹

HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education – Responses to equality impact assessment consultation and involvement process

5. We published Circular W10/26HE, *HEFCW's Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education 2010/11 to 2012/13*, as part of our equality impact assessment process.
6. The Circular invited views from HEIs, directly funded FECs and other interested parties. We particularly sought views on the extent to which:
 - i. our proposed strategic objectives, priorities and initial actions promote our aims of ensuring equity, opportunity and success in higher education to enable learners of all ages and backgrounds who face the highest social and economic barriers to fulfil their potential as students, lifelong learners and citizens;
 - ii. our *Approach* references the new equality and diversity legal framework and promotes and encourages best practice;
 - iii. our *Approach* will encourage cultural change and proactive approaches to ensure that equity and diversity issues are fully integrated into our own and the sector's policies and priorities.

¹ W10/37HE Initial proposals for changing the funding system for higher education in Wales. WWW.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/circulars.

7. We received **fifteen** consultation responses, including **ten** from HEIs, **one** from FECs, **two** from the Third Sector and **two** from Wales-wide or UK-wide bodies. Four responses were submitted after the 22 November deadline, but they have been taken into account to fully inform the development of the *Approach*. Officers have analysed the responses, which included views on the *Approach* priorities, as well as some views which specifically focussed on points i – iii above. The summary analysis below takes account of all views received. All responses welcomed the *Approach*.
8. Generally, the responses confirmed that equality and diversity issues had been addressed sufficiently and embedded within the *Approach*. Largely questions i – iii were not specifically addressed.

Question 1: The extent to which our proposed strategic objectives, priorities and initial actions promote our aims of ensuring equity, opportunity and success in higher education to enable learners of all ages and backgrounds who face the highest social and economic barriers to fulfil their potential as students, lifelong learners and citizens;

9. One response suggested detailing how we would work with organisations such as SPA and UCAS to ensure fair access, in particular, for part-time students. Another response recommended that, in general, the feeling was that the draft Strategy was not radical enough and indeed should explicitly state the vision of a restructured sector and desirable attributes of that vision. One response cautioned against a ‘broad brush’ approach to widening access to enable the sector to respond appropriately to specific need, for example, those of women in minority ethnic communities.

Question 2: The extent to which our *Approach* references the new equality and diversity legal framework and promotes and encourages best practice;

10. Five responses directly addressed this question. Responses were mixed: some confirmed that the framework was fully referenced while others noted that:
 - i. further detail on promotion and encouragement of best practice was required;
 - ii. the *Approach* should be reviewed against the new legal framework of the Equality Act 2010, taking account of the new protected characteristics and the potential impact of the Act on public sector duties (from April 2011), including monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Question 3: The extent to which our *Approach* will encourage cultural change and proactive approaches to ensure that equity and diversity issues are fully integrated into our own and the sector’s policies and priorities.

11. A few of the responses directly addressed the issue of encouraging cultural change. Most responses considered that cultural change was slow to take effect or difficult to measure. One UK organisation suggested that the *Approach* should go further towards encouraging cultural change and should make explicit reference to curriculum design, including curriculum content, pedagogical and assessment issues and programme delivery.

Additional views

12. In addition to the questions above, the responses raised a range of more general issues including:
 - i. Almost half the respondents suggested that there was an **over-prioritisation of Communities First areas** as opposed to socially disadvantaged individuals regardless of their location;
 - ii. A number of respondents questioned whether there was **sufficient emphasis on under-represented groups** in HE;
 - iii. Several responses focused on **measures of success**, including: the need to clarify the methods of monitoring and evaluating the success of the strategic intentions; confirming the specific details of evidence of success we required from HEIs and the format of monitoring; that progression indicators could be used as a success measure; that the difference between Community First learners' achievement in HE and other groups could be monitored and reductions in the gap between the groups rewarded; that success measures should include progression into employment; that measures should take account of the HEI recruitment profile as well as disability, ethnicity and age profiles of learners;
 - iv. **Improving the evidence base** to support institutional data collection, analysis and action planning, the use of qualitative as well as quantitative data and evidencing impact were all proposed ways of improving institutions' strategic planning and performance;
 - v. **Fair Access to the Professions** priorities would be challenging to achieve given that many professions are only accessible with postgraduate qualifications and potentially higher undergraduate fees could result in fewer widening access students affording postgraduate study;
 - vi. **Implications of potentially higher undergraduate fees** should be considered when the Assembly Government's response to higher fees (proposed by the Browne Review) is known, however, given popular assumptions that the Browne Review applies in full to Wales, it will be harder to persuade learners from lower income families of the cost benefits of higher education
 - vii. **Retention** references in the *Approach* were welcomed including: welcoming the recognition of the role of student support structures and pre-entry information, advice and guidance in aiding retention; noting that Assembly Government policies such as those relating to bursaries and financial support can impact on retention and are outside HEIs' control;
 - viii. While **Recognition of Prior Learning** was increasingly used by HEIs, references to encourage APEL (accreditation of prior experiential learning) should be highlighted.
13. Officers took account of these responses in finalising the draft *Approach*.

Annex B Principles governing the use of widening access part-time funding

- 1 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 funding. ***The fact that postgraduate students are studying part-time will not be considered sufficient justification alone.***
- 2 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 could be in the context of the HE regional strategies and/or the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI) programme. Institutions are encouraged to consider collaborative approaches which involve both higher and further education institutions.

Purpose of funding

Widening access and strengthening provision within institutions

- 3 With this funding, it is intended that institutions should consolidate and build on existing provision for students studying part-time. It is open to 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' Learning and Teaching /Widening Access and other strategies, as appropriate.
- 4 As in 2010/11, funding cannot 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.
- 5 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:
 - i. providing bursaries and additional hardship funds for widening access to part-time students
 - ii. improving the promotion of part-time provision and raising awareness of opportunities to move from part-time to full-time or from full-time to part-time, should this encourage continuation and student success
 - iii. funding learning support outside regular working hours
 - iv. providing more flexible learning opportunities such as e-learning etc
 - v. increasing bilingual/Welsh medium part-time provision
 - vi. developing shared modules and curricula across a region, including providing progression routes to and through higher education
 - vii. disseminating effective practice in collaboration.

Annex C Learning and Teaching Strategy Allocations 2011/12

Institution	First tranche September 2011 £	Second tranche March 2012 £	Total allocation £
University of Glamorgan	100,816	100,816	201,632
Aberystwyth University	59,811	59,811	119,622
Bangor University	50,302	50,301	100,603
Cardiff University	136,562	136,562	273,124
University of Wales, Trinity Saint David	26,962	26,963	53,925
Swansea University	67,412	67,413	134,825
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	57,304	57,303	114,607
University of Wales, Newport	43,635	43,635	87,270
Glyndŵr University	31,417	31,416	62,833
Swansea Metropolitan University	34,408	34,408	68,816
Open University Wales	17,372	17,371	34,743

Annex D Indicative Widening Access Strategy Allocations 2011/12 – subject to verification²

Institution	Widening Access element £	Part-Time element £	Total £
University of Glamorgan	419,500	608,646	1,028,146
Aberystwyth University	119,620	102,609	222,229
Bangor University	125,676	80,785	206,461
Cardiff University	188,233	166,078	354,311
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	78,946	123,907	202,853
Swansea University	212,129	147,256	359,385
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	182,204	108,830	291,034
University of Wales, Newport	233,923	595,011	828,934
Glyndŵr University	116,081	344,559	460,639
Swansea Metropolitan University	147,314	203,187	350,501
The Open University in Wales	192,968	1,119,133	1,312,101
Total	2,016,595	3,600,000	5,616,595

² Indicative allocations. See the following notes for further information on the funding model. They are subject to institutional verification of the part-time credits used to calculate the part-time student funding. Verification is being sought in early May and final allocations will be confirmed at the end of May. The usual regulations regarding verification apply.

Annex D continued

Widening access element split as follows:

	£
90%	1,814,936
10%	201,660
Total	2,016,595

Indicative Widening Access Strategy Allocations 2011/12: Widening Access element

Institution	Eligible students				Total Students	Sum of Communities First, Low participation and Assembly Learning Grant students divided by total students	90% pro-rata to sum of Communities First, Low participation and Assembly Learning Grant students	10% pro rata to sum of Communities First, Low participation and Assembly Learning Grant students divided by total students	Total
	Communities First students	Low participation students	Assembly Learning Grant students	Sum of Communities First, low participation and Assembly Learning Grant students					
	No.	No.	No.	No.					
University of Glamorgan	2,344	5,542	2,490	10,376	13,945	74.4	394,135	25,365	419,500
Aberystwyth University	501	1,640	704	2,845	8,396	33.9	108,068	11,552	119,620
Bangor University	317	1,777	843	2,937	7,094	41.4	111,563	14,114	125,676
Cardiff University	893	2,789	1,019	4,701	16,582	28.4	178,569	9,665	188,233
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	278	829	537	1,644	3,397	48.4	62,448	16,498	78,946
Swansea University	1,083	2,844	1,200	5,127	10,057	51.0	194,750	17,379	212,129
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	791	2,140	1,335	4,266	7,214	59.1	162,045	20,159	182,204
University of Wales, Newport	1,270	3,323	886	5,479	7,239	75.7	208,121	25,802	233,923
Glyndŵr University	281	1,670	636	2,587	4,951	52.3	98,268	17,813	116,081
Swansea Metropolitan University	740	1,644	862	3,246	4,608	70.4	123,300	24,014	147,314
The Open University in Wales	1,354	3,218	0	4,572	8,076	56.6	173,669	19,299	192,968
Total	9,852	27,416	10,512	47,780	91,559	591.5	1,814,936	201,660	2,016,595

sum of %, not total %

Annex D Continued

Indicative Widening Access Strategy Allocations 2011/12: Part-Time element

Part-time element funding: £ 3,600,000

Institution	Total Part-Time credits	Low participation Part-Time credits	Communities First Part-Time credits	Weighted total for allocation	Allocation
University of Glamorgan	235,850	113,300	45,570	315,285	608,646
Aberystwyth University	47,185	6,980	4,955	53,153	102,609
Bangor University	37,265	7,015	2,150	41,848	80,785
Cardiff University	75,180	12,930	8,770	86,030	166,078
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	53,245	16,235	5,645	64,185	123,907
Swansea University	56,810	25,060	13,880	76,280	147,256
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	42,260	19,700	8,530	56,375	108,830
University of Wales, Newport	230,417	112,250	43,360	308,222	595,011
Glyndŵr University	150,640	47,410	8,280	178,485	344,559
Swansea Metropolitan University	84,425	29,138	12,518	105,253	203,187
The Open University in Wales	451,615	180,130	76,085	579,723	1,119,133
Total	1,464,892	570,148	229,743	1,864,838	3,600,000

Model includes credits for PT students studying for at least 10 credits - all such PT students included - all money allocated pro rata

Widening Access Strategy Allocation Funding Notes

Source of Widening Access Data:

1. The method of allocation of Widening Access Strategy funding is the same as that used to allocate 2010/11 funding except that categories of student used in 2011/12 are those used in the 2011/12 Widening Access Premium: Communities First, low participation and Assembly Learning Grant (ALG). The 2010/11 Widening Access Strategy allocation was calculated on the basis of students from low affluence areas.
2. Communities First, low participation and total students numbers are extracted from the HESA 2009/10 student record and verified by HEIs through the Widening Access Premium 2011/12 verification process. The number of students entitled to a full ALG is taken from Student Loans Company aggregated data.
3. Suitably eligible students may be counted in one or more of the three categories: Communities First, low participation or ALG.
4. For young, full-time, undergraduate enrolments – low participation neighbourhoods are those areas in the bottom 40% of areas as defined by POLAR 2. For mature, full-time undergraduate and all part-time enrolments, low participation neighbourhoods are those areas in the bottom 40% of areas as defined by the proportion of working age adults with HE level qualifications (as measured using Census 2001 data). Young is defined as being aged 20 or under at the start of a course. Mature is defined as being aged 21 or over at the start of a course. The vast majority of students entitled to a full ALG are full-time.
5. The total amount of funding available for Widening Access Strategy allocations in 2011/12 is the same as in 2010/11.

Source of Widening Access Part-Time Data

6. Unconfirmed total credits studied by Communities First, low participation and total students data is extracted from the HESA 2009/10 student record. The model includes credits for part-time students studying at least 10 credits.
7. Suitably eligible students may be counted in either or both Communities First or low participation Categories. The majority of students entitled to a full ALG are full-time, therefore, this element is excluded from the allocation method. The weighted total is calculated as the total credits plus the average of low participation and Communities First credits. Funding is allocated pro rata to the weighed total.
8. This method of allocation of the former 'Graham' widening access part-time funding is the same as that used to allocate 2010/11 funding except that categories of student used in 2011/12 are those used in the 2011/12 Widening Access premium (as defined above). The 'Graham' part-time funding was calculated on the basis of the number of student from low affluence areas, a smaller number of Communities First areas and students with non-traditional qualifications on entry.

9. In 2010/11 a sum of £4.257m was available for widening access part-time funding, which was subject to a 4% in year reduction to £4.086m. Funding available in 2011/12 of £3.6m represents a budget reduction of 11.9% on the £4.086m allocated in 2010/11.
10. The total number of credits has fallen by 8% from 1,594,114 in 2010/11 (2008/09 HESA Student record) to 1,464,892 in 2011/12 (2009/10 HESA student record).

Annex E Checklist for Learning and Teaching/Widening Access Strategies

The checklist outlines the information we need when analysing strategies, as we explain in the Outcome Template section in the Circular. If this information would not naturally fall within your strategy it can be provided as supplementary information. If the information exists in other institutional documents please indicate where.

Category	Strategy	Does the strategy include/refer to the following information?	Yes/No. If yes, which page/paragraph	If No, please indicate where this information can be found
Strategic issues	LT/WA ³	Use of an evidence base to inform strategy development and set out the strategy's rationale		n/a
	LT/WA	Consistency with the institution's mission, strategic plan, fee plan		n/a
	LT/WA	Consistency with other related institutional strategies, approaches and policies		n/a
	LT ⁴	Strategic approach to managing full-time undergraduate student numbers		
	WA ⁵	How a critical assessment of WA policies and practices in the previous strategy period has provided a clear rationale for the new strategy, including the WA target groups identified in the new strategy period		
	WA	The distinctions and relationship between widening access and marketing and recruitment strategies and policies		
Assembly Government/ HEFCW priorities	LT/WA	How the strategy responds to Assembly Government <i>For our Future</i> and other related priorities, HEFCW's Corporate Strategy and remit letters		
	LT/WA	How the strategy relates to your HE regional strategy, including issues of increasing progression and collaboration and reducing duplication		
	LT/WA	How the strategy contributes to workforce development, employability and/or workplace skills		
	LT/WA	How the institution maximises diversity and flexibility in order to meet the needs of employers and students		

³ Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy

⁴ Learning and Teaching Strategy only

⁵ Widening Access Strategy only

	LT/WA	How the strategy responds to our Widening Access and Student Experience Approaches ⁶		
	LT	How the strategy relates to the institution's approach to ESDGC		
Quality assurance	LT/WA	How the outcomes of reviews, both internal and external (such as the HEA reviews, institutional review: Wales [IR] process, Estyn inspections, and quality assurance mechanisms of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies), are addressed, in order to maintain, develop and enhance quality of the strategy		
	LT/WA	The governance mechanisms (including students) by which progress, outcomes and success against the strategy aims will be monitored, reviewed and measured		
	LT/WA	An effective risk register which includes actions to ameliorate risk		
	LT	Links between the information set required as part of the Institutional Review: Wales process and the Strategy		
	LT	How the institution will take account of the revised UK Professional Standards Framework, including staff development issues		
Equality and Diversity	LT/WA	How the strategy reflects the duties and priorities of institutional equality schemes and policies		
	LT/WA	Outcomes of the equality impact assessment/s of the Learning and Teaching/Widening Access Strategy/Strategies		
Learners	LT/WA	How the strategy takes account of Welsh medium provision, including Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol developments, to contribute to achieving the sector-wide target for the number of students undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh increasing to 5600 in 2012/13		
	LT	Actions to address enhancement of learning and teaching through technology, emphasising the outcome (learning and teaching) rather than the input		

⁶ Circular W11/09HE HEFCW's *Strategic Approach and Plan for Widening Access to Higher Education 2010/12 to 2012/13*

		(technology)		
	LT	How outcomes of the National Student Survey are addressed via the Strategy, including how you will contribute to the sector-wide measure in our Corporate Strategy that ‘the three year rolling average score for Wales in the National Student Survey ‘overall satisfaction’ question will be equal to, or greater than the comparative score for the UK’?		
	WA	How the Strategy addresses HEFCW priorities relating to: (i) increasing the numbers in HE from: Communities First and low participation areas, Assembly Learning Grant recipients, UHOVI residents, care leavers. (ii) improving module completion rates to ensure student success		
	WA	How part-time provision is developed and embedded to meet the <i>For our Future</i> expectation around maximising participation through different ways to experience higher education. ⁷		
	LT	The extent of links between the Strategy and your approach to internationalisation.		
Public information	LT	How you address systematically the provision of public information for potential and current students, including information on the costs of study.		
	WA	A commitment to publish the first section of WA strategies ⁸		
Measures of success	LT/WA	Inclusion of short-term and medium-term SMART outcomes		

⁷ ‘Part-time’ is defined by us in Circular W09/17HE, Annex E.

⁸ There is a requirement to publish part of your WA Strategy. See circular W10/41HE Annex B paragraphs 14 and 15.

Annex F Short-term Outcome Template

The same template format is provided for Learning and Teaching Strategies and Widening Access Strategies. Each Strategy should set out on a separate template its Areas of Strategic Focus for Learning and Teaching outcomes and for Widening Access outcomes. We will use this information to develop Annual Monitoring Statement templates.

Please also refer to paragraphs 44 and 45 in the Circular when completing the Outcome templates.

Area of Strategic Focus ⁹ <i>eg retention, part-time student engagement,</i>	Actions to achieve outcomes	2011/12 measurable (qualitative and quantitative) outcomes. <i>These outcomes may include milestones towards the final outcome in subsequent years</i>	Approximate financial resources allocated to this area

Annex G Medium-term Outcome Template

Area of Strategic Focus <i>eg retention, part-time student engagement</i>	Actions to achieve outcomes	2012/13 to 2013/14 measurable (qualitative/and quantitative) outcome

⁹ Institutions will want to consider the number of areas of strategic focus they use to measure their strategies to ensure they are sufficiently challenging, while being realistic and achievable. We suggest, as a guide, between eight and twelve areas.