

FORMAT OF REGIONAL STRATEGIES

The revised strategies should use the same overall format as the initial strategy documents submitted in November 2010. Our expectations regarding the sections of the revised strategy document are outlined below:

A Vision, and aims and objectives

1. The partners should revisit the vision for their regional development, to provide an outline of what their region would look like once the revised strategy is delivered by the end of the three-year planning period in 2013/14. As before, providers should also set out the statement of the overarching aims and objectives of the strategy to assist in the delivery of this vision.

B Audit of current course/module provision including areas of duplication

2. Regions should revisit the audit of current higher education course provision provided in the initial strategy and, where appropriate (i.e. where there are particular issues of competition), modular provision across all HE providers in the region. This should take into account Open University distance learning provision available in the region. A summary of the high level outcomes of the audit should be given in the strategy. Strategies should identify the key areas where there is unnecessary duplication (as defined in circular W10/16HE) between the higher education providers within the region.

C Identification of key progression routes

3. The strategies should re-visit the identification of key progression routes from post-16 education into higher education and from higher education to other higher education within the region, provided in the initial strategy. Both full- and part-time provision should be included. A high level summary of the key subject/qualification progression routes should be included in the strategy. The revised strategy should also re-visit appropriate progression routes from work-based provision, including apprenticeships, into local higher education provision (course or module) and the identification of community based provision.
4. In revisiting progression routes, providers should take account of the Welsh language and the particular progression arrangements for Welsh medium provision, including the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

D Identification of any new higher education provision required within the region

5. The strategies should revisit the identification of any perceived gaps in provision, recognising those gaps already filled with new provision agreed in 2010/11. This requirement would need to be based on an

assessment of the demand for the provision within the region, from employer engagement and from looking at key sources of data on demand from employers and employer representative bodies such as Sector Skills Councils, local authorities, post-16 providers and schools, as well as the Welsh Government and other national sources. The aim would be to continue to improve the matching of regional need against provision.

6. In revisiting this assessment, current Welsh Government priorities such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), as well as Welsh medium provision, should continue to be taken into account. New provision should also continue to take account of *For our Future* expectations regarding greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery to match need and demand. Regions will also need to consider how existing resources may be redeployed to support any new provision that is to be taken forward.
7. Some limited funding will be made available to improve capacity to produce, interpret and make better use of evidence on a regional basis, in order to inform the planning of provision (see **Annex C**).

E Identification of opportunities for more coordinated widening access activities

8. The revised regional strategies should continue to build upon the close widening access partnership working already in place under Reaching Wider. The regional strategies should therefore reflect the high-level objectives of the regional 'Reaching Wider' partnerships, as well as any joint working between regional institutions as part of Widening Access strategies.

F Identification of opportunities for joint regional work with employers

9. The revised regional strategies should continue to show how the partners will work with employers, employer representative bodies including Sector Skills Councils, as appropriate, to identify where joint working could help to meet regional skills needs. This would include activities: to meet the *For our Future* expectations of strengthening the contribution of higher education to workforce development and the exploitation of knowledge; and to meet the 2011/12 HEFCW Remit Letter requirements regarding the design, content and delivery of programmes to reflect employer needs and work to enhance graduate employability.
10. Where appropriate, cross-reference should be made to those innovation and engagement strategies and bids for collaborative innovation and engagement funding that have been developed on a regional basis.

G Identification of collaborative capital developments and shared services

11. Providers should revisit the review of 'back office' services undertaken for the initial strategy and identify possibilities for collaboration. As strategies continue to be implemented, we expect providers to develop this approach with non-HE partners within the region, e.g. through local service boards. In the light of the revisiting of this review, the revised strategies should provide a high-level statement of the opportunities for shared services which could result from joint regional working.
12. Some limited funding will be made available to facilitate the sharing of services on a regional basis, taking account of work completed by Higher Education Wales (see **Annex D**). Strategies will need to show how they are taking forward this work, where services may be shared on a regional basis. This should include identifying any aspects which would benefit from potential HEFCW support to 'pump-prime' activity.
13. As noted in circular W10/16HE, HEFCW is expected to 'ensure that capital funding is not used to support unnecessary and nugatory competition between HE providers in Wales'. Whilst HEFCW is not providing capital funding directly, we will expect the revised strategy to highlight where the regional approach is informing future capital expenditure, taking into account the Welsh Government's transformation agenda and the requirement for institutions to embed sustainability.

H Governance

14. The revised strategies should re-iterate the arrangements which have been put in place to secure both the ongoing and formal liaison between partners to facilitate the regional collaboration. This should include project management arrangements (including any release of staff to facilitate this) and the partnership structure which will manage the regional dimension, including at both strategic (head of institution) and operational levels. Strategies should also confirm the institution that is to undertake the role of administrative lead over the three-year planning period. Information should also continue to be given of the stakeholders involved (particularly the involvement of students and employers) in the governance arrangements. We expect providers to continue to report regularly on regional developments through their institutional governing bodies.
15. The strategies should also provide an assessment of the equality and diversity impact of any proposals put forward in the regional strategy.
16. Providers should submit confirmation of continued institutional involvement in the regional planning process using the confirmation of institutional involvement sheet provided with the original strategy template. A further copy of this sheet may be provided on request.