

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Degree Apprenticeships 2019/20: Consultation on the Funding Methodology and Requests for Expressions of Interest

Date: 23 November 2018
Reference: W18/29HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in
Wales
Response by: 10 December 2018 and 20 January 2019
Contact: Name: Angela West
Telephone: 029 2085 9738
Email: angela.west@hefcw.ac.uk

This circular requests indicative expressions of interest for Degree Apprenticeships in Digital, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing for 2019/20. It also provides a consultation on our approach to the allocation of funding for Degree Apprenticeship provision in 2019/20.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government

Introduction

1. This circular requests indicative expressions of interest for Degree Apprenticeships in Digital, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing for 2019/20. It also provides a consultation on our approach to the allocation of funding for Degree Apprenticeship provision in 2019/20.
2. We are requesting return of the indicative expressions of interest by **10 December 2018**. Responses on the funding should be provided by **20 January 2019**.

Background

3. The Welsh Government (WG) Apprenticeship skills policy plan, [Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy](#), set out its commitment to developing Degree Apprenticeships. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has confirmed in a [letter](#) to HEFCW her expectations for Degree Apprenticeships in Wales and a commitment to allocate £20m for funding of degree apprenticeships over a 3 year period. Initial subject areas for Degree Apprenticeships were confirmed as IT/Computing, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.
4. The HEFCW circular [W18/13HE Degree Apprenticeships](#), on 26 June 2018 outlined our approach on Degree Apprenticeships for Higher Education in Wales. The call for bids 2018/19 within this, set out the requirements of one or more of the pathways identified on the [Digital Degree Apprenticeship \(Wales\)](#) framework, issued on 29 April 2018.
5. Welsh Government has designated Instructus Skills as the issuing Authority for the [Digital Degree Apprenticeship \(Wales\)](#). This framework is now published on the [Apprenticeship Frameworks Online](#) (AFO). Instructus Skills has also been commissioned to take forward development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering frameworks. It is anticipated that these will be published in January 2019, enabling HEFCW to offer funded Degree Apprenticeship places in all three priority areas for 2019/20.
6. All proposals submitted by HEFCW funded institutions will need to be supported with evidence of how the provider will deliver against a set of criteria, this includes the extent to which:
 - i. Measures are in place to ensure that there is a diverse mix of individuals recruited to Degree Apprenticeships. We will be expecting explicit reference to under-represented groups in higher education, apprenticeships, as well as those groups with protected characteristics, principally gender or disability. References where appropriate should be made to the equality impact assessment and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act goals;
 - ii. Arrangements in place for delivery through the medium of Welsh.

Expression of Interest

7. This circular invites HEFCW funded institutions to provide additional comment on indicative apprenticeship numbers for 2019/20, and seeks a steer on our approach to the allocation of funding for degree apprenticeships in the three priority areas for the academic year of 2019/20. Total funding available during this round of funding will be £5m, and funding will be £27k per apprentice pro-rated over the duration of the apprenticeship.
8. We understand from institutions that demand for Degree Apprenticeships in the three priority areas of Digital, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing in 2019/20 is likely to be high. This means that the process of allocation of funded numbers is likely to be competitive.
9. To enable us to plan effectively, we are therefore asking funded institutions to provide us with an early indication of the numbers of Degree Apprenticeships in each priority area for which they anticipate seeking funding. We recognise that these numbers are subject to change in the final bid submissions. We would also like respondents to indicate the year of entry of these applicants: ie the numbers that will be entering at Level 4, and those which will be seeking top-ups from previously undertaken Level 4 and 5 qualifications. Please submit this information by **10 December 2018**.

Allocation of funding

10. HEFCW anticipates receiving applications for more Degree Apprenticeships than enabled by the funding available. This means that we need to determine the priorities and methods by which funding is allocated. All bids will need to pass a minimum quality threshold in order to have numbers allocated.
11. Allocation of funding for Degree Apprenticeships above the minimum quality threshold could be on the basis of a combination of any of the following:
 - i. Distribution of the numbers across the three priority areas: this could be done equally across the three areas, or as a proportion of the demand should there be a variation in demand across the three areas;
 - ii. Distribution of the number across the three priority areas taking into account numbers already allocated to digital: numbers could be proportionally allocated to reflect this.
 - iii. Distribution of the numbers across each institution: this could be done on the basis of an even split; split in proportion to institution size; or in proportion to evidenced demand from each institution;
 - iv. Distribution of the numbers by region: this could be done on the basis of an even split, or on the basis of the demand within each region;

- v. Allocation of numbers to the best bids: this would prioritise numbers within providers which most appropriately reflected the requirements set out by HEFCW;
 - vi. Capping the numbers of Degree Apprenticeships at employer level: setting a maximum number of funded Degree Apprenticeship Places which any one employer could take up. This would ensure that smaller employers were able to access provision;
 - vii. Prioritising bids which offer the best value for money: this could be on the basis of level of fee, or those which provided the most progression (ie with more apprentices entering at levels 5 and 6), which would enable greater numbers of apprentices to benefit;
 - viii. Prioritising collaboration: this could include allocating more numbers to bids which demonstrated effective partnerships between HE and FE, including effective links between specific Higher Level Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships, again enabling greater numbers of apprentices to benefit.
12. Do you see any potential positive or negative impacts or unintended consequences in terms of equality and diversity and the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act's seven wellbeing goals, Sustainable Development Principle and five ways of working according to how the numbers are distributed?
13. In consulting on the funding methodology for degree apprenticeships and seeking expressions of interest:
- i. what **effect** (if any), positive or adverse, will the consultation outcomes have on:
 - a. **opportunities** for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - b. **treating** the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
14. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make in response to this consultation?
15. Please respond to us by **20 January 2019** indicating which of these allocation method or methods you think should be prioritised, and which methods you think would be least helpful.

Next steps

16. We will hold an event on **14 January 2019** to enable institutions to understand the bid criteria, and benefit from information on good practice relating to this apprenticeship provision. Invitations for this will be circulated separately.
17. We expect to be able to publish the call for bids, including setting out our requirements, once the Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing

Frameworks have been published (likely to be in January 2019).
Responses to this consultation will inform the application process.

Further information / responses to

18. You should return the indicative expressions of interest by **10 December 2018**. Responses on the funding should be provided by **20 January 2019**.
19. For further information, contact Angela West (029 2085 9738; angela.west@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

20. We have carried out an impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including our Well-Being Objectives. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about impact assessments.