

For information

GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme

Agenda: 25
HEFCW/18/65

Disclosable

12/07/2018

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the HEFCW budget required for the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme, following the Welsh European Funding Office's (WEFO) approval of the extension of the programme.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 The aim of the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme is to improve the employability of certain categories of young students most at risk of being 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) when they leave higher education. This is in line with the Operational Plan objective of working with stakeholders to deliver Welsh Government policy priorities, including skills and employability, and the objective of funding activities in support of meeting Welsh Government higher education policy priorities.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. note the updated budget and extended timeframe of the programme

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 No decisions are required at this time, as this is an update on the draft budget which was agreed by Council in July 2017.

5 Council members' interests

- 5.1 No conflicts of interests have been declared in advance of the meeting.

6 Further information

- 6.1 Contact Emma Mock (029 2085 9742; emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk)

7 Extension of GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme

- 7.1 The GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme was granted ESF funding by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) for the period October 2015 to March 2019. The programme attracts match funding from the nine universities in Wales which deliver the programme, a small number of employers who host paid work experience and HEFCW.
- 7.2 The Achieve through Work Experience Programme is comprised of two projects, one covering the West Wales and the Valleys area and one covering the East Wales area. The projects have separate targets and budgets, and are subject to different levels of ESF grant.
- 7.3 As there were early signs that the programme was having an impact, in June 2017 WEFO invited HEFCW to consider an extension to the programme with the offer of additional ESF grant in both the West Wales and the Valleys and the East Wales projects.
- 7.4 In July 2017 Council delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree an extension of the Achieve through Work Experience Programme with WEFO and agreed in principle to an increase in HEFCW match funding over the extended period of the programme, up to £3.54m.
- 7.5 The ESF grant that WEFO made available to extend the programme enabled an extension from the original end date of March 2019 to January 2022. There was also a requirement for additional HEFCW budget for a three-month period to enable HEFCW staff to close down the programme.
- 7.6 In May 2018 HEFCW received the formal Funding Agreement from WEFO for the extension of the programme and we are now in a position to confirm the figure for the HEFCW budget required for the period of the programme (October 2015 to the end of the close down period of April 2022). The combined budget for the West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales programmes is shown at 8.1.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 The confirmed figure for the HEFCW budget for the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme for the period October 2015 – April 2022 is £3,105,600, below the £3.54m originally agreed by Council. The various sources of funding for the extended programme are shown in the table below.

Source of Funding	Budget (£)
ESF Grant	6,308,300
HEI Match Funding	1,023,500
Employer Match Funding	155,500
HEFCW Funding	3,105,600
Total	10,592,900

Note: Figures are rounded

- 8.2 The total period of the programme covers seven academic years from 2015/16 to 2021/22. Based on universities' profiles of activity and expenditure, the bulk of the HEFCW match funding will be required in the latter years of the programme.

Council is invited to note the updated budget and extended timeframe of the programme.

9 Communications implications

- 9.1 The GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme's website is at www.gowales.co.uk. A Press Release announcing the extension of the Programme was issued on 2 July 2018.

10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 The programme includes targets for females, students from BME backgrounds and students with a disability or work limiting health condition, as well as students with caring responsibilities, care leavers, students from areas of low HE participation and migrants. As the programme is funded under Priority Axis 3, students must be under the age of 25 when they are accepted onto the programme. The programme was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment in August 2016 when the implications were addressed.
- 10.2 WEFO have also set targets relating to the three Cross Cutting Themes of Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, including the Welsh Language; Sustainable Development; and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion. The programme is delivering against these targets, and WEFO Officers report that they take an interest in how the programme reaches and supports the target cohorts.
- 10.3 Promotional material produced by the programme is bilingual, as is the paperwork and the GO Wales system which students and advisers use to manage their involvement in the programme. The number of Welsh speaking work experience opportunities that are arranged on the programme are monitored and this is reported to WEFO.

11 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 The following risks have been identified:

Risk	Action to address risk
Programme fails to engage sufficient numbers of eligible and suitable students.	Joint beneficiary delivery plans to set out how they will bring students to the programmes. Plans to be reviewed for effectiveness regularly and revised as appropriate. Information for students via website, leaflets and posters. Information to be reviewed periodically. Information for non-programme staff who are in contact with potential participants and can bring them to the programme. Information to be reviewed periodically. Joint beneficiaries sharing good practice. HEFCW monitoring and HEFCW / university progress meetings. Consideration of performance at Programme Board.
Performance of joint beneficiaries is	Programme monitoring and progress checking by lead beneficiary.

<p>variable putting achievement of overall outputs and outcomes at risk.</p>	<p>Close programme management at joint beneficiary level. Programme steering group meetings discussing individual beneficiary and cross programme outputs and outcomes. Sharing good practice events by staff. Informal sharing of good practice among universities.</p>
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