

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## Revised Student Charter Guidance 2019

<b>Date:</b>	04 June 2019
<b>Reference:</b>	W19/15HE
<b>To:</b>	Regulated institutions in Wales and their Students' Unions Funded institutions in Wales and their Students' Unions Other interested parties
<b>Response by:</b>	No response required
<b>Contact:</b>	Name: Dr Cliona O'Neill Telephone: 029 2085 9731 Email: <a href="mailto:cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk">cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk</a>

This circular provides revised guidance for Student Charters. It applies to all regulated and funded institutions. Institutions and Students' Unions will need to take account of these amendments in their 2019/20 Student Charters.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Sponsored by  
**Welsh Government**

## Introduction

1. This circular provides revised guidance for Student Charters. It applies to all regulated and funded institutions. Institutions and Students' Unions will need to take account of these amendments in their 2019/20 Student Charters.

## Background

2. HEFCW's 2011-12 remit letter from Welsh Government included the requirement that 'all regulated and/or funded institutions would be required to publish a single student charter on their website, covering all staff and students'.
3. In response to our 2012-13 remit letter, HEFCW published [W11/31HE: Guidance on the development of student charters](#). Guidance on good practice in funding effective, democratic students' unions and representatives followed the 2011 publication of a final report by the Student Charter Group in England ([circular W11/46HE](#)).
4. In response to a 2013-14 remit letter request we reviewed Circular W11/46HE, and published [circular W13/27HE](#): Monitoring the impact of guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding effective, democratic, students' unions and student representatives. Following this we updated the Student Charter guidance in 2014 ([circular W14/05HE](#)).
5. [HEFCW's 2017-18 remit letter](#) asked that HEFCW 'continue its joint working with student representatives to ensure that we maximise students' involvement in the shaping of their education'. This commitment is reflected in our Corporate Strategy and seeks to engage students at all levels of decision-making.
6. In 2017 HEFCW consulted on revisions to the student charter guidance ([circular W17/02HE](#)) in response a number of developments, most notably the introduction of the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015. The revised guidance was published as [circular W17/19HE](#). Changes included:
  - Introduction of a statement on how student interests were protected.
  - Inclusion of a statement on the Consumer and Market Authority (CMA) guidance on consumer law, published in 2015.
  - A requirement for the charters to take account of the Welsh Language Standards.
7. [HEFCW's 2019-20 remit letter](#) makes reference to student well-being and mental health. [Welsh Government's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's report on suicide prevention](#) recommended that 'the Welsh Government takes a lead in the current work with HEFCW and for it to expect further and higher education providers in Wales to introduce Student Mental Health Charters.' This work should be done in time for the start of 2019-20 academic year to ensure that students in Wales benefit

from the work as soon as possible.’ As there are already student charters in Wales, unlike England, HEFCW agreed with Welsh Government that we would consult with institutions and students with the aim of including a well-being and health statement in existing charters from 2019/20.

### Changes to the charter

8. HEFCW convened a Task and Finish group in April 2019 to advise on amendments to the student charter. This included representation from Universities Wales, higher and further education, the part-time student representative from HEFCW’s Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee (SOAC), and NUS Wales. The recommendations of the Group were then considered by SOAC. The revised guidance was subsequently shared with the Universities Wales Pro Vice Chancellors’ Learning and Teaching Advisory Group, the HE in FE network, Vice Presidents of Students’ Unions, and NUS Wales for comment, as a soft consultation.
9. The revised guidance is provided at **Annex A**. It includes the following changes:
  - Emphasis that institutions and Students’ Unions will need to work in partnership.
  - Removal of the reference to Higher Education Academy, as that organisation no longer exists.
  - Amendment of the requirement for a clear dissemination strategy to that for an approach to reflect that fact that a separate strategy for this is not required, as it should be part of a broader approach to communications.
  - Removal of the reference to the charter ideally being no more than 2 pages, as most institutions use an electronic charter.
  - Addition of a requirement to include a statement that the institution is committed to student well-being, including mental health, and the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, providing links to further information on the institution’s strategies relating to this area. Regulated FEIs will need to include links to information about their student well-being and health commitments.
  - Merging the requirements to confirm that the institution complies with its responsibilities under consumer protection law, as set out by the [Competition and Markets Authority](#), and that to provide information on the cost of study.
  - Inclusion of information on support for students regarding complaints.
  - Addition of a requirement to include a statement regarding the need for the institution to meet its statutory responsibilities regarding equality, diversity, safeguard, and protected characteristics.

## **Timetable**

10. Institutions and SUs need to take account of these changes for 2019/20, particularly in order to meet the Welsh Government recommendation on suicide prevention.

## **Further information**

11. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2085 9731; email [cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)).

## **Assessing the impact of our policies**

12. 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. Consultations through HEFCW's Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee and Task and Finish Group with a focus on health and well-being. Contact [equality@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hefcw.ac.uk) for more information about impact assessments.