

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Postgraduate Taught Master's Incentivisation Bursary Schemes 2020/21

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To: Heads of higher education providers in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in
Wales
Response by: Response required by **31 January 2020** to
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This circular provides details of HEFCW's Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Master's Incentivisation Bursary schemes for academic year (AY) 2020/21 and our approach to the allocation of funding.

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



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Introduction

1. This circular provides details of HEFCW's Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Master's Incentivisation Bursary schemes for academic year (AY) 2020/21 and our approach to the allocation of funding.
2. Bursaries are available for Welsh and EU domiciled Master's students who will be studying science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine related subjects, also known as STEMM subjects and/or who will be studying through the medium of Welsh and/or who are aged 60 or over, in Wales, in the academic year 2020/21.

Background

3. In September 2019 we confirmed details of new bursary arrangements for PGT Master's students in Wales for the academic year 2019/20, following an [announcement by Welsh Government](#) in June 2019 of new support arrangements for postgraduate students.
4. Circular [W19/27HE](#) provided details of the scheme aimed at attracting Welsh students starting in AY 2019/20 to study PGT Master's degrees in Wales in STEMM subjects. The scheme aimed to encourage the recruitment of Master's students in Wales in these subjects, where there is a high demand for postgraduate qualifications and which are instrumental in the growth of high-tech industries and the wider economy in Wales.
5. The scheme also made available additional funding for students to undertake a Master's degree through the medium of Welsh. Through this scheme, the Welsh Government aims to increase the proportion of Welsh domiciles studying their Master's degree in Wales to 80%. The additional bursary for Welsh medium Master's students is important to the continued development of the Welsh-speaking workforce and will contribute to achieving the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
6. Circular [W19/29HE](#) confirmed arrangements for a bursary scheme for Welsh and EU domiciled students starting in academic year 2019/20 aged 60 or over, studying for a Master's degree in Wales. The scheme was [introduced](#) in August 2019, on a one-year basis, in view of current Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) restrictions on the provision of loans for postgraduate courses to individuals aged 60 or over.

Details of 2020/2021 bursary schemes

7. Welsh Government has confirmed that, subject to the approval of their proposed budget by the National Assembly for Wales, the PGT Master's bursary schemes which operated in AY 2019/20 will continue in AY 2020/21.

Method of funding allocation

8. We are making no changes to the funding allocation methods used for AY 2019/20 starters for both the STEMM/Welsh medium scheme and the scheme for students aged 60 or over in AY 2020/21.
9. We will allocate funding for AY 2020/21 to providers in proportion to their AY 2020/21 estimated Master's numbers in the relevant STEMM subjects, those taking 40 or more credits of their course through the medium of Welsh and students aged 60 or over.
10. Estimated Master's numbers for AY 2020/21 are based on the proportion of PGT entrants that are Master's students, taken from the AY 2018/19 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record, and the number of forecast PGT entrants in AY 2019/20 taken from the student number forecasts provided to us by providers in July 2019.
11. The data extracted to calculate the allocations will be sent to providers for verification and is to be returned to hestats@hefcw.ac.uk by **31 January 2020**. This means that only provisional allocations, based on unverified data, are included here, in **Annex A**.

PGT bursaries for STEMM and Welsh Medium

12. Our proposed allocation of funding is based on £2k per eligible STEMM Master's student and £1k per eligible Welsh medium Master's student. It is our expectation that bursaries awarded to eligible students by providers under this scheme are in line with the amounts we have used in the allocation of funding set out above.
13. Funding will be based on data about eligible students that has gone through a process where each provider has verified the figures to be used in the funding allocation, paragraphs 9 to 11. If there is a shortfall it is for the provider to determine how this will be managed, no additional funds will be made available.

PGT bursaries for Master's students aged 60 or over

14. Our proposed allocation of funding is based on £4k per eligible Master's student aged 60 or over. It is our expectation that bursaries awarded to eligible students by providers under this scheme are in line with the amounts we have used in the allocation of funding set out above.
15. Providers will be expected to award bursaries to all eligible students who apply. Where the actual number of starters eligible in AY 2020/21 who apply for a bursary is greater than the number estimated and used in the allocation of funding, providers are still expected to provide bursaries. Where this is the case, providers will be allocated further funding for the additional students to ensure that they can provide all the necessary bursaries at the rate of £4k per student over the duration of their course. This will be done through a

monitoring exercise after the start of AY 2020/21 where we will collect data on the number of bursaries awarded. A similar exercise will take place for each year in which funding is provided, to pay the remaining portion of bursaries for continuing students. Any funding not spent on bursaries will be recovered.

PGT bursaries for students aged 60 and over AY 2019/20

16. In circular W19/29HE we noted adjustments may be required during AY 2019/20 to allow for the demand led process of the bursary scheme for students aged 60 or over. We now require you to provide an in-year return showing how many bursaries you have awarded in AY 2019/20, the number of withdrawals of recipients of these bursaries and an estimate of further AY 2019/20 starters who will receive a bursary for PGT Master's students aged 60 or over. Providers should use the attached template, **Annex B**, to be returned to HEFCW by **31 January 2020** by email to hestats@hefcw.ac.uk. We will use the information to assess whether further funding is required for the scheme in AY 2019/20.
17. We will use end of year monitoring to inform any adjustments to the individual providers' allocations we included in circular W19/29HE and so will not make in-year adjustments to individual providers based on this information.

Internal institutional allocation

18. Providers are expected to continue with the distribution method used in AY 2019/20 to award bursaries to eligible Welsh and EU domiciled students undertaking a Master's course which qualifies for a bursary against one (or more) of the above schemes.
19. It is our expectation that providers will publish clear information on how prospective students can access the bursary schemes on their websites and that this should be clearly signposted. HEFCW will review provider websites to ensure this information is available.
20. In developing a distribution method, providers will need to be mindful of any relevant courses that they franchise. Welsh Government has confirmed that these incentivisation bursaries can be awarded in addition to other bursaries offered.
21. The Minister's intention is that the bursaries awarded to eligible students by providers under this scheme are in line with the amounts we have used in the allocation of funding set out in paragraphs 12 and 14 above. A student can receive all three bursaries, ie if they are studying a STEMM subject through the medium of Welsh and are aged 60 or over, they may receive up to £7k of bursaries. As assumed in the allocation method, we would expect a student studying a mixture of STEMM and other subjects to receive an appropriate proportion of the STEMM bursary.

22. It will be for providers to assess individual students' eligibility. The bursaries should be allocated to postgraduate taught Master's students that fit the eligibility criteria as defined in [The Education \(Student Support\) \(Postgraduate Master's Degrees\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#), except that awards should be made regardless of age. An assessment of whether the course the student is studying on is a STEM course should be made on the basis of the academic subject category (ASC) of the course. A STEM course would be considered to be a course with a subject of study in ASCs 1, 2, 3, 4 or 6 (Medicine and dentistry, Subjects and professions allied to medicine, Science, Engineering and technology and Mathematical sciences, IT and computing). From 2019/20 the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) coding system is used to categorise subject of study and a mapping from HECoS to ASC is available on the [HEFCW website](#). The Welsh medium bursary should be allocated to those studying 40 credits or more of their course through the medium of Welsh.
23. Providers should use the bursaries to encourage under-represented groups to study STEM subjects and/or study through the medium of Welsh, for example, through initiatives such as the WISE [Women in STEM Networks](#).
24. We have allocated funding based on the assumption that full-time students receive the funding in one year. STEM and Welsh medium part-time students will receive funding over two years. Part-time students aged over 60 will receive a proportion of funding over two years and a proportion over three years. However, this will not always reflect actual patterns of study. Therefore, whilst this is the basis of allocation, providers should spread the bursary over the duration of study as they deem appropriate.
25. Given that most, if not all, providers already operate bursary schemes, we do not consider it necessary to allocate any of this funding for administrative costs for this scheme.

Monitoring and Clawback

26. At the end of AY 2020/21, HEFCW will request a monitoring report to provide confirmation from each provider that all the funding has been spent in accordance with the terms and conditions upon which it was allocated, ie that the bursaries had been awarded according to the eligibility outlined above. Similar reports will be requested in subsequent years in which the scheme operates.
27. We will clawback funding if necessary on the basis of the actual number of completed Master's against the above scheme eligibility. We will take these numbers from the HESA student record, checked against the verified estimates used in the allocation of funding. Using the allocation per student of £2k for STEM subjects, £1k for Welsh medium and £4k for students aged 60 or over, if the institution fails to deliver the estimated numbers against which the allocation was provided, we would reclaim this amount per

student multiplied by the number shortfall. If the clawback results in funding being available we will add this to future years' funding.

28. Any data that we use to allocate funding is included in the scope of our external audit of higher education data. The systems and processes used to collate data are also included in the scope of providers' internal audits of data systems and processes. Included in this would be a check for reasonableness of the criteria used to assess students' eligibility for a bursary. More information can be found in HEFCW circular [W18/33HE](#) Audit of Higher Education Data 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Timetable

29. The detail of the estimated, pre-verification, allocations for each provider is included at **Annex A**. We cannot make any firm financial commitment, or payments, until formal confirmation of the funding has been received from the Welsh Government. However, subject to that confirmation, we intend to pay the allocation based on full-time student numbers in two equal parts, one in September 2020 and one in April 2021. The allocation relating to the STEMM and Welsh medium part-time student numbers will be paid in four equal instalments; September 2020, April 2021, August 2021 and April 2022. The allocation relating to the part-time students aged 60 or over will be paid in six equal instalments; September 2020, April 2021, August 2021 and April 2022, August 2022 and April 2023. Should we have to amend this profile, we will inform you as soon as practically possible.

Further information

30. For further information, contact Nicola Hunt (029 2085 9735; nicola.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk) or Gemma Stephens (029 2085 9642; funding@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

31. We have carried out an impact assessment 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.
32. A similar responsibility rests on higher education providers to assess the impact of their method for allocation of the bursaries, to safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.

PGT Master's incentivisation bursaries allocation for 2020 entrants

Provider	Estimated allocation paid in: £								
	AY 2020/21				AY 2021/22		Total		
	Full-time		Part-time		Part-time				
	STEMM	Welsh medium	STEMM	Welsh medium	STEMM	Welsh medium	STEMM	Welsh medium	Total
University of South Wales	415,040	0	317,762	0	317,762	0	1,050,564	0	1,050,564
Aberystwyth University	60,702	6,000	9,157	1,500	9,157	1,500	79,016	9,000	88,016
Bangor University	279,995	40,000	49,455	1,000	49,455	1,000	378,905	42,000	420,905
Cardiff University	384,898	6,000	87,611	0	87,611	0	560,120	6,000	566,120
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	70,933	9,000	44,000	0	44,000	0	158,933	9,000	167,933
Swansea University	482,124	17,000	32,444	0	32,444	0	547,013	17,000	564,013
Cardiff Metropolitan University	319,396	0	25,194	0	25,194	0	369,785	0	369,785
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	91,944	0	31,088	0	31,088	0	154,120	0	154,120
Open University in Wales	0	0	28,277	0	28,277	0	56,554	0	56,554
Total	2,105,032	78,000	624,989	2,500	624,989	2,500	3,355,011	83,000	3,438,011

Note: STEMM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine

PGT Master's bursaries allocation for 2020 entrants aged 60 or over

Provider	Estimated allocation paid in:				£
	AY 2020/21		AY 2021/22	AY 2022/23	Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time	Part-time	
University of South Wales	12,000	4,900	4,900	2,200	24,000
Aberystwyth University	4,000	3,267	3,267	1,467	12,000
Bangor University	16,000	4,900	4,900	2,200	28,000
Cardiff University	4,000	4,900	4,900	2,200	16,000
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	0	8,167	8,167	3,667	20,000
Swansea University	8,000	1,633	1,633	733	12,000
Cardiff Metropolitan University	0	0	0	0	0
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	0	0	0	0	0
The Open University in Wales	0	4,900	4,900	2,200	12,000
Total	44,000	32,667	32,667	14,667	124,000