

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Higher and Further Education International Action Plan for Wales

Date: 04 September 2012
Reference: W12/28HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in
Wales
Response by: 25 September 2012
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This circular attaches for consultation an International Action Plan for Higher and Further Education in Wales which has been developed by Higher Education Wales (HEW), together with HEFCW, Welsh Government departments, Colegau Cymru, and other stakeholders.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Background

1. In 2009, the then Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills remitted HEFCW to work with the Welsh Government to develop an overarching international higher education strategy. This sought to build upon the expectations set out in *For our Future* (the Welsh Government's strategy for higher education) for universities in Wales to build on their capacity in an international context.
2. The need for such a strategy has been subsequently reinforced by the international dimension of the economic agenda set out in the Welsh Government's *Economic Renewal: a new direction* (2010) and, more recently, in *Science for Wales: a strategic agenda for science and innovation in Wales* (2012), which emphasises that:

'Wales has to look outwards. Our ambition has to be to work with and compete with the best in the world'.
3. HEFCW's remit letter for 2012/13 also provided a renewed steer on the international agenda. The letter states:

'I expect the Council to work with stakeholders, including the Further Education sector, to support the HE internationalisation agenda, increasing the number of overseas students, building links and bringing external income into Wales principally through a partnership approach to international engagement'.

International Action Plan for Wales

4. A Wales International Strategy Board was set up by the Welsh Government in 2009. This subsequently became the Wales European & International Further & Higher Education Group (WEIFHEG) to reflect the wider interests and remit of the group. To reflect the group's participatory nature, the secretariat is rotated between four of the partners: the Welsh Government, HEW, HEFCW, and Colegau Cymru.
5. The partners in WEIFHEG together developed the International Action Plan for Higher and Further Education in Wales provided at **Annex A**. At its August 2012 meeting, the WEIFHEG endorsed the Plan and agreed that it should be circulated for consultation by HEFCW.
6. The International Action Plan outlines five key priorities, which are closely aligned to objectives highlighted in John Fielden's (CHEMS Consulting) unpublished report *Achieving International Competitiveness* commissioned by HEW in 2010. These are:
 - a. Making Wales a destination of choice
 - b. Promoting international partnerships that are mutually beneficial
 - c. Building internationally excellent research capacity in selected areas

- d. Developing closer links between universities and businesses operating overseas
- e. Improving Wales's contribution to international development.

Consultation Process

- 7. The Action Plan will be submitted to the HEW Committee and the Colegau Cymru Board in September 2012 for its consideration by senior management.
- 8. This circular provides a more general opportunity for universities and other stakeholders to reflect on the content of the International Action Plan.
- 9. We are keen to identify from this consultation if there are any significant gaps or omissions, and which of the actions might be considered the most pressing. The aim is not to produce a major revision of the document (as it is intended that it will be an ongoing and evolving plan), rather we wish to gain a consensus from interested parties for the way forward.
- 10. Following this wider consultation a final version of the Plan will be submitted to HEFCW's Research, Innovation and Engagement (RIEC) and Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committees (SETQC) for their endorsement during October 2012. It will then be formally presented to the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for endorsement by ministers and adoption by their new For our Future Board.
- 11. Members of the WEIFHEG (including HEW and HEFCW) will then engage further with universities and other delivery partners to support and promote the implementation of the International Action Plan for Higher and Further Education in Wales.

Responses and further information

- 12. Universities and other stakeholders should submit their responses to HEFCW by **Tuesday 25 September 2012**. They should be addressed to Sheridan Nott (sheridan.nott@hefcw.ac.uk; postal address – Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Linden Court, The Orchards, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DZ).
- 13. Any queries arising from this Circular should be directed to Tove Oliver (direct line 029 2068 2264; email tove.oliver@hefcw.ac.uk).

Equality and diversity, and sustainable development implications

We will be carrying out an equality impact assessment (EIA) to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We will also consider the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE

sector in Wales. The EIA process will also assess the effects of policies on sustainable development and wellbeing. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about EIAs.