

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Skills and Employability Action Plans (SEAPs) 2012/13 & 2013/14 and SEAP Funding

Date: 22 January 2012
Reference: W13/03HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: **Monday 4 March 2013**
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This circular invites institutions to submit a two year Skills and Employability Action Plan (SEAP) for 2012/13 and 2013/14. Plans should articulate activities and targets which will enhance the student experience and increase the employability of Welsh graduates. Additionally institutions are invited to submit a proposal for one-off SEAP initiative funding available across 2012/13 and 2013/14.

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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Skills and Employability Action Plans 2012/13 & 2013/14

1. In April 2012 HEFCW published the *Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales*¹ which included a draft Skills and Employability Action Plan for Wales. The Agreement commits HEFCW, NUS Wales, Higher Education Wales and CBI Wales, to work in partnership to improve the job related skills of all Welsh graduates and to offer new opportunities to re-skill and up-skill.
2. In July 2012 all Welsh higher education institutions who submitted a Fee Plan 2013/14 committed themselves to the principles outlined in the Agreement. We are now putting together a finalised Action Plan for Wales and we would like to invite institutions to contribute towards this by submitting their own two year Skills and Employability Action Plan (SEAP) for 2012/13 and 2013/14. Plans should articulate activities and targets which will enhance the student experience and increase the employability of Welsh graduates.
3. HEFCW is strongly committed to enhancing the employability of Welsh graduates, particularly in view of the significance which is attached to this in *For our Future*². In that context these plans, together with the work of the other three Agreement partners should provide the basis of a sound framework from which to meet the Minister's Remit Letter 2012-13 requirement that within Wales we are '*embedding employability skills in the HE curriculum, that students have the opportunities to undertake work placements in industry, and that both prospective and current students as well as graduates have access to high-quality careers advice, information and guidance services*'³.
4. To support institutional SEAPs the Council agreed in December 2012 to provide £1million of one-off funding to encourage the development of innovative and collaborative skills and employability related initiatives and activities. Individual institutional allocations can be found at **Annex A**.
5. This circular provides guidance to aid the drafting of SEAPs and proposals for the use of SEAP funding. Submissions should be made using the pro-formas attached at **Annex B** and **Annex C** and should be returned to HEFCW by **Monday 4 March 2013**.

Background

6. In the 2011-12 remit letter to HEFCW, the Minister asked HEFCW to look at enhancing employability in order to give graduates from Welsh institutions the extra 'edge' which would make them attractive to employers and more able to compete successfully in the global economy. In order to

¹ [Link to Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales](#)

² [For our Future](#)

³ [Remit letters to HEFCW from the Minister](#)

meet this requirement HEFCW, NUS Wales, HEW and CBI Wales drafted the *Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales*.

7. The Agreement sets out the challenge faced in Wales and the commitment of all partners to bring together activities within an Action Plan for Wales. Three priority areas were identified under which future effort will be focussed:
 - Work placements and work experience
 - Employer approved courses
 - Embedding employability skills across all higher education curricula
8. The published Action Plan for Wales will highlight examples of leading practice across the higher education sector encouraging students and employers to take full advantage of the expertise that exists in Wales' universities. It will become a key source of information to interested parties and will help to ensure universities and employers across Wales share and build upon good practice, establishing ever more ambitious and innovative new activities. With that in mind the Action Plan for Wales will necessarily be an evolving document reflecting changes to activity and projects across Wales over time.

Content of institutional Skills and Employability Action Plans (SEAPs)

9. Institutional SEAPs must be drafted with reference to the three priority Agreement areas listed above. Institutions may wish to spread activity equally across the three areas, or depending on their institutional priorities, may wish to focus more activity in one or two areas. We expect that institutions will provide information about current ongoing activity but also new and innovative activity which is planned that helps justify the higher fees being charged for full time provision. Higher fees mean higher expectations, and in difficult economic times students will expect that institutions are doing their utmost to support the future employability of Welsh graduates. The information contained in these plans will help make that case.
10. Institutions must submit their SEAP using the pro-forma at **Annex B**. In order to complete the pro-forma we will require a narrative on the activity, including a rationale, alongside measurable targets which will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Statement process. Targets must be ambitious, SMART and include baselines. The SEAP should include activities aimed at enhancing the employability and skills of all students at your institution including, full-time, part-time, franchised students or distance learners. Examples of the types of activities institutions should include in their SEAP are listed for each Agreement priority area on the pro-forma.

11. When providing targets and baselines institutions should reference where the target information will be derived from e.g. HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency), HEIDI (Higher Education Information Database for Institutions), NSS (National Student Survey), DLHE (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education, HEBCIS (Higher Education Business and Communities Interactive Survey) or other sources including internally available data that can be audited. Ultimately your plan should be able to demonstrate how your students have been encouraged and enabled to become more employable during the course of their studies.

Skills and Employability Action Plan Funding 2012/13 & 2013/14

12. Institutions may aspire to establish new and innovative activities or establish pilot programmes which will enhance skills and employability. In December 2012 the Council agreed to provide £1 million of one-off SEAP funding to support such initiatives in 2012/13 and 2013/14.
13. In order to secure funding initiatives should be sustainable and collaborative and should show that consideration has been given to widening access aims. Collaborative partnerships might involve working with other higher/further education institutions but we are particularly keen to see institutions working in a coordinated way with employers and students/student unions.

Skills and Employability Action Plan Funding Allocations

14. SEAP funding has been provided to increase the employability prospects of graduates from Welsh institutions. The allocation formula therefore takes account of graduate numbers, including those from Communities First areas, alongside achievement in graduate employability.
15. Of the funding available £250k (25%) has been divided and allocated equally across the institutions to ensure each HEI has a sufficient basic level of funding to enable the submission of a viable proposal. In order to account for institutional performance on graduate employability 15% (£150k) of funding has been allocated based on the proportion of UK leavers obtaining an undergraduate qualification who were employed, studying or both six months after leaving, derived from HESA employment performance indicators⁴. Institutional performance has been banded with extra weight given to those institutions who are performing well in this indicator.
16. A further 45% (£450k) of funding has been allocated pro-rata to numbers of students graduating with an undergraduate qualification⁵, with the remaining 15% (£150k) allocated pro-rata to the proportion of students

⁴ Relates to 2010/11 graduates from full-time or part-time undergraduate courses, with the OU figure recalculated for Wales.

⁵ HESA undergraduate qualifications obtained 2011/12.

graduating with an undergraduate qualification who are from Communities First areas⁶.

17. Institutions who wish to submit a funding proposal must complete the pro-forma at **Annex C**. We will require information about the project, measurable targets, a breakdown of expenditure and payment profile.

Timing of Payments

18. Subject to the submission of an acceptable Skills and Employability Action Plan and associated funding pro-forma, the 2012/13 allocation will be paid in April 2013. Payment in 2013/14 will be made in two tranches in September 2013 and March 2014. Funding can be split between years as deemed most appropriate for institutional requirements.
19. The allocations are shown at **Annex A**.

Monitoring of SEAPs and Project Funding

20. SEAPs and activities financed through SEAP funding will be monitored via the Strategic Engagement processes which includes the Annual Monitoring Statement process. The circular requesting this information will be published annually in May, with AMS returns due to be submitted to us in October.

Equality

21. We are committed to making equality a core issue in developing and implementing policies and services, and evaluating and refining them to advance the equality agenda. We have a legal responsibility to assess the impact of our policies on equality groups, and to set out how we will monitor or address any possibly negative impact.
22. We have conducted an equality impact assessment (EIA) on the proposals set out in this circular to ensure that we do not discriminate and that we are doing all we can to promote equality and good relations between groups. The outcome of this EIA is available on request.
23. Institutions are responsible for equality impact assessing their SEAP and funding proposal for students or graduates with protected characteristics.

⁶ As defined for HEFCW Corporate Strategy measure 1 – proportion of Communities First students.

Further information / responses to

24. Institutions should submit their Skills and Employability Action Plan, plus any application for SEAP funding to HEFCW by **4 March 2013**. They should be submitted electronically to Craig Brett (craig.brett@hefcw.ac.uk; 029 2068 2279).
25. Any queries arising from this circular should be directed to Emma Morris (emma.morris@hefcw.ac.uk; 029 2068 2292).

**SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY ACTION PLAN FUNDING
2012/13 AND 2013/14**

INSTITUTION	£
University of Glamorgan	149,370
Aberystwyth University	82,110
Bangor University	82,794
Cardiff University	124,055
University of Wales Trinity Saint David ⁷	100,295
Swansea University	106,644
Cardiff Metropolitan University	90,594
University of Wales, Newport	101,483
Glyndŵr University	82,640
The Open University in Wales	80,016
Total	£1,000,000

⁷ Swansea Metropolitan University included within University of Wales Trinity Saint David allocation