

## Cylchlythyr | Circular

# Enhancing HE-FE collaboration in innovation and engagement activity

**Date:** 30 April 2018  
**Reference:** W18/06HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
cc Principals of further education colleges in Wales  
**Response by:** 25 May 2018  
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This circular invites proposals led by Universities in Wales for projects that enhance collaboration between HE and FE in innovation and engagement activities. Funding is available to pump-prime new activity or add value to existing activity.

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



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## Introduction

1. HEFCW's [revised FY 2017-18 remit letter](#) details an additional allocation of £3m to improve and increase collaboration between HE and FE, as reforms are progressed in the post-compulsory education and training sector. A further £0.5m is available from HEFCW's existing budget allocation for 2017-18, bringing the total funding available to £3.5m. This circular invites proposals led by Universities in Wales (including the Open University in Wales) for projects that can pump-prime new activity, or can add value to existing activity. This activity must demonstrate a legacy after the funding period.

## Background

2. The Welsh Government's consultation [Public Good and a Prosperous Wales](#) set out proposals for a new single authority to provide oversight, strategic direction and leadership for the post-compulsory education and training sector. The vision included the provision of opportunities for closer collaboration between HE and FE sectors in knowledge transfer activities. [The Welsh Government's Next Steps Technical Consultation](#) is also clear on the desirability of establishing mechanisms to encourage joint innovation activities between HE and FE. In this context, the allocation of additional funding to improve and increase collaboration between HE and FE as the Welsh Government progresses its reforms is welcome.
3. The Welsh Government has developed an action plan in line with its national strategy. [Prosperity for All: economic action plan](#) sets out a vision for empowering all regions of Wales to become more productive. Shaped by the seven wellbeing objectives and five ways of working established in the [Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act \(2015\)](#), the Plan provides a focus for the way in which some of the UK's best FE colleges, working in collaboration with universities undertaking ground-breaking research and development, can support a competitive Welsh economy and a competitive environment for businesses to expand.
4. HEFCW funding will therefore be used to enhance HE-FE collaboration in innovation and engagement activity. Activities should be framed around the following categories:
  - collaborative research and development
  - contract research and development
  - shared consultancy services
  - access to facilities and equipment
  - skills, high-level training and work-based learning
5. HEFCW's remit letter includes a condition of grant on regional coherence. The Welsh Government expects that, in the exercise of its functions to allocate funding to providers of higher education, HEFCW must have regard to regional coherence. Priority will therefore be given to proposals

that demonstrate that they can deliver a step change in HE-FE collaboration within a region, without overlapping existing or parallel activity. The Welsh Government has identified three regions within its economic action plan: North Wales, Mid and South West, South East Wales.

### **Proposals for funding**

6. A total of £3.5m is available to enhance collaboration between HE and FE in innovation and engagement activities. This circular invites proposals from Universities in Wales (including the OU in Wales) for projects that can pump-prime new activity, or can add value to existing activity.
7. We invite proposals from consortia comprising at least one university (one of which will be the project lead) and at least one FE institution. A university will be permitted to lead one proposal only, in consortium with its FE partners. We will give priority to proposals that aim to meet the needs of employers within a region. Proposals will need to demonstrate how either (i) new activity will add value at a regional level, or (ii) existing regional HE/FE provider activities will be enhanced and strengthened. Local partnerships must not cut across other provision or activity. Regional approaches/offers to employers must be seen to be seamless. In the case of dual sector partnerships, proposals will need to demonstrate how they build on and enhance existing arrangements.
8. HEFCW funding will be released to successful proposals from July 2018. We will request submission of a monitoring report in January 2019, with a further update requested up to 12 months later. Supported activities must demonstrate that there will be a clear legacy after the HEFCW funding period.
9. Proposals must be calibrated in line with the scale of the total funding available (£3.5m), i.e. at around £400,000 per consortium. We will reserve the right to fund projects on a partial basis.
10. The HEFCW funding can be used for both revenue and capital/equipment costs.
11. HEFCW will award funding to the HE lead: we will expect the institutional lead to disburse funding to its HE and FE partner/s as appropriate.
12. Proposals must be submitted to us by **25 May 2018** on the template provided at **Annex A**. Proposals must clearly identify the lead institution and include a cost breakdown and clearly defined deliverables, outcomes and impact. We may choose to highlight these as case studies to the Welsh Government.

## Criteria

13. The criteria we will use for our assessment of proposals are as follows:

### *Strategic fit:*

- Fit with the activity categories set out above
- Evidence of fit with the vision and mission of the regional partners
- Evidence of fit with the Welsh Government's *Prosperity for All: economic action plan*

### *Description of activity:*

- The extent to which the proposal evidences added value: e.g. is this new activity? Or will it create a step change in existing activity?
- A clear description of the legacy that the project will provide after the funding period

### *Partnerships:*

- Evidence of a partnership between HE and FE within a region
- Evidence that the proposal will strengthen and enhance existing and new regional partnerships
- Extent to which project involves collaboration with other (non HE or FE) external partners
- Evidence of alignment with partner priorities and the extent to which the proposal can respond to external demand
- Evidence that the proposal will not cut across other provision or activity
- Extent to which this funding is matched by university, FE college and/or partners contributions (either cash or in kind).
- Description of how the project will be managed to ensure involvement of all partners.

### *Other:*

- Confirmation that the proposal has been equality impact assessed;
- Confirmation that the proposal complies with the Welsh Language Standards 2018.
- Brief description of how the proposal will deliver against the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

## Timescales

HEFCW circular published	30 April 2018
Proposals submitted by:	25 May 2018
Decisions announced by:	By 29 June 2018
Funding to be allocated:	From July 2018
Initial monitoring report to be submitted by:	January 2019

## **Funding and reporting**

14. We will allocate funding in one or more tranches, depending on the size and nature of the project. Lead institutions will be expected to disburse funding to their partners (HE and FE) as appropriate.
15. We will require submission of a report in January 2019, with a further update requested up to 12 months later. We will report to the Welsh Government on the use of funding (including case studies) by the end of March 2019.

## **Briefing Session**

16. We have arranged a briefing session on Tuesday 8 May 2018 between 11am and 1pm at HEFCW's office in Bedwas. We have already invited universities and colleges to nominate a representative to attend this event.

## **Further information / submission of proposals to:**

17. Proposals should be submitted to Alyson Thomas (tel 029 2085 9711; email [alyson.thomas@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:alyson.thomas@hefcw.ac.uk)) and Emma Morris (tel 029 2085 9664; email [emma.morris@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:emma.morris@hefcw.ac.uk)).

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

18. 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. Contact [equality@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hefcw.ac.uk) for more information about impact assessments.