

Tŷ Afon, Ffordd Bedwas  
Bedwas, Caerffili,  
CF83 8WT  
029 2085 9696

Tŷ Afon, Bedwas Road  
Bedwas, Caerphilly  
CF83 8WT  
[www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk)

Cyngor Cyllico Addysg  
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# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## National measures for higher education performance from 2018/19

**Date:** 23 November 2018  
**Reference:** W18/30HE  
**To:** Heads of regulated and funded institutions in Wales and other interested parties  
**Response by:** No response required  
**Contact:** Name: Celia Hunt  
Telephone: 029 2085 9730  
Email: [celia.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:celia.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk)

This circular provides a set of national measures for higher education performance to be implemented in 2018/19.

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. This circular provides a set of national measures for higher education performance to be implemented in 2018/19.
2. The measures have been developed through extensive consultation with HE providers and other interested parties, including via HEFCW circulars
  - W17/37HE [National measures for higher education performance](#) and
  - W18/15HE [National measures for higher education performance 2](#)
3. These are measures, and not targets, and will help in the monitoring of trends and progress over time. The measures will develop and evolve, in consultation with providers and other interested parties, in response to changing circumstances. A more fundamental review is likely to be required on the establishment of the new Post-Compulsory Education and Training body proposed in Public Good and a Prosperous Wales – the Next Steps (June 2018). Such a review is likely to include reference to [Maximising the Contribution of the Post-Compulsory Education and Training System to the Achievement of Welsh National Goals](#) (Weingarten, 2018), as referenced in W18/15HE paragraph 6.

## **Background**

4. HEFCW's previous [Corporate Strategy 2013-17](#) included seventeen sector-focused targets covering five strategic and two enabling themes (excluding organisational effectiveness, where we had our own group of measures). Under each strategic theme, we included one or more target outcomes and in addition, we noted qualitative and quantitative aspects which we would monitor.
5. Following consultation with the sector ([W17/17HE](#)), HEFCW has agreed a new corporate strategy format focused on what we do: we fund; we regulate; we influence; we work in partnership with students; and we operate effectively. Given the reduction in funding drivers available to HEFCW, we were keen to move away from target outcomes for sector performance and to include only measures which we would monitor. As a result, we have now included twelve HEFCW performance outcomes in the [Corporate Strategy 2017-2020](#), which received approval from the Cabinet Secretary for Education earlier this year.
6. In addition, we have included an objective to 'develop measures by which to monitor the performance of higher education (HE) providers and monitor delivery'. Such measures would replace the seventeen targets included in the previous corporate strategy and would assist us in monitoring HEFCW regulated and/or funded HE providers in Wales.

## **Outcomes of the second consultation**

7. Proposals for measures in six ‘baskets’ were put forward in the June 2018 consultation. The baskets have been retained and they are:
  - A. Increasing Widening Access and Inclusion
  - B. Improving Student Experience
  - C. Strengthening Skills, Employability and Entrepreneurship
  - D. Broadening Innovation and Engagement
  - E. Increasing Internationally Excellent Research
  - F. Other measures
8. A summary of the responses to the consultation, together with HEFCW’s response to those views, is attached at **Annex A**. We have taken account of views where possible, particularly when voiced by multiple responses. Where this has not been possible, an explanation has been provided.
9. A list of the final measures is provided in **Annex B**, together with some notes on the data. Following publication of this circular, HEFCW’s Statistics Team will liaise further with data contacts in regulated/funded providers to provide further information on assumptions underlying data extraction and use.

## **Some notes on the measures**

10. The measures will be implemented in 2018/19, commencing with baseline data for 2016/17.
11. Whilst the measures will be considered at both national and institutional level, the objective is to reflect Welsh Government priorities at national level and thus there will be flexibility for institutional diversity and autonomy within this to respond to areas of strength. However, we are seeking general improvement in these measures, whatever the institution’s starting point, and for all regulated/funded institutions to contribute in some way to improvement in each basket.
12. Performance will be measured against the overall objective of HEFCW’s vision for *Sustainable, accessible, internationally excellent higher education in Wales*.
13. In developing measures further, the following principles will be adopted:
  - Maintain continuity with previous measures where this makes sense;
  - Use existing sources of data, particularly Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, where possible, to minimise burden;
  - Select measures which can be applied to all or most HE providers in Wales;
  - Take account of the areas of institutional key performance indicators, where available;

- Use benchmarked data or other comparative data where this is helpful;
- Adopt measures where HE providers can reasonably influence the outcomes;
- Recognise the extent to which measures are proxies (considering unintended consequences);

### **How measures might be used**

14. The measures will be used at both institutional and national level for different purposes:
  - Monitoring sector performance against priority areas, including annual reports to HEFCW Council;
  - Monitoring individual institutional performance against priority areas, including informing institutional risk assessments;
  - Publishing measures, some annually, at both institutional and sector level;
  - Informing institutional fee and access planning;
  - Developing policy.
15. We expect providers to take the measures into account when considering the areas they monitor. Our review of our monitoring methods (eg Institutional Risk Review, Fee and Access Planning, Strategic Planning and Engagement Document (SPED)), will also be informed by the measures. The same measures might be used to inform both institutional level action and sector level intervention. The following diagram sets out how the information might be used:

<b>How measures might be used: a single set of measures</b>	
<b>Institution level/ regulation/funding</b>	<b>Sector level/ policy/funding</b>
Institutional risk review ↓ Judgement ↓ Risk letter ↓ Funding/regulation intervention ↓ Improved institutional performance	Sector level performance ↓ Judgement ↓ Policy intervention ↓ Funding/regulation ↓ Improved sector performance

## **Further information / responses to**

16. For further information, contact Celia Hunt (029 2085 9730; [celia.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:celia.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk)).

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

17. We have carried out an impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We have 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.