

Cylchlythyr | Circular

2020/21 Fee and access plan application guidance

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To: Governing bodies of institutions in Wales seeking regulation by HEFCW to become automatically designated for their full-time and PGCE (QTS) courses for 2020/21
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This guidance provides information on submitting 2020/21 fee and access plan applications.

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



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Annexes

The fee and access plan application form is provided in two annexes:

Annex A - Regulatory information and fee and access plan (a Word template)

Annex Ai - Table to map fee and access plan objectives against Welsh Government categories

Annex B - Investment, recruitment, and fee and access plan target information (an Excel template)

Introduction

1. This guidance provides information on submitting 2020/21 fee and access plan applications. Approved fee and access plans are the means by which institutions become regulated by HEFCW. All institutions regulated by HEFCW will have their full-time and PGCE (QTS) undergraduate courses automatically designated for student support.
2. Welsh Government's aim is for fee and access plans to make a significant and lasting contribution to widening access to higher education in Wales.
3. Fee and access plan applications can only be made by institutions in Wales that provide higher education and are charities. Institutions must provide sufficient information to evidence that they meet these criteria, as well as submitting information on the quality of their education, financial viability and the management of financial affairs.
4. Governing bodies of institutions applying for fee and access plans are responsible for the applications submitted to HEFCW and, if approved by HEFCW, for complying with the requirements of the regulatory system in Wales.¹
5. Approved fee and access plans must either specify the full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) fees that regulated institutions will charge in 2020/21 or provide for the determination of a fee for 2020/21. Fees cannot exceed the maximum fee limits set out by Welsh Government.²
6. Only regulated institutions will be able to add full-time undergraduate courses to the Student Loans Company's (SLC) Course Management System (CMS). Where higher education is provided on behalf of a regulated institution, the regulated institution is responsible for including these courses on the SLC's CMS.
7. This fee and access plan guidance includes information on the regulatory information that institutions must evidence, the requirements of a fee and access plan and the fee and access plan application process.
8. This guidance has been revised following a [review of the first three years of fee and access plans by Advance HE](#). Institutions should note the review findings and recommendations made for institutions. Advance HE has suggested that the review framework might be a helpful checklist for institutions to use in completing future plans. Changes from last year's guidance can be found at **Appendix 1**.
9. All institutions considering applying for a fee and access plan for the first time should contact HEFCW before applying.

¹ Obligations for regulated institutions are set out on our [website](#).

² [The Higher Education \(Amounts\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#)

Legislation and policy documents

10. This guidance is informed by:
- the [Higher Education \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (the 2015 Act), explanatory notes, and associated Regulations³
 - [Welsh Government Guidance on the preparation for delivery of the new regulatory system](#)
 - [Welsh Government guidance on the preparation for full implementation of the new regulatory system for higher education in Wales](#) and
 - [Welsh Government guidance to HEFCW on fee and access plans](#), provided on the [HEFCW website](#).
11. HEFCW's fee and access plan guidance has been developed taking account of:
- the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
 - the Welsh [Public Sector Equality Duty \(2011\)](#)
 - the [Welsh Language Standards Regulations \(2017\)](#)
 - the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act \(2015\)](#) and
 - [HEFCW's Well-being Statement \(2018\)](#).
12. Higher education providers applying for a fee and access plan should take account of the following HEFCW publications when completing their application:
- [Corporate Strategy](#)
 - [Remit letter](#) to HEFCW from the Welsh Government
 - [Strategic Equality Plan](#)
 - [HEFCW National Measures](#)
 - [Statement of Intervention](#)
 - [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#)
 - [Financial Management Code](#)
 - [Guidance on Partnership Arrangements for Franchise Education Provided on Behalf of Regulated Institutions in Wales](#) (referred to in this guidance as Guidance on Partnership Arrangements).

Timetable

13. The timetable for the 2020/21 fee and access plan process for those institutions intending to secure approval by July 2019 is provided in **Appendix 2**.

³ [The Higher Education \(Qualifying Courses Qualifying Persons and Supplementary Provision \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#); [The Higher Education \(Fee and Access Plans\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#); [The Higher Education \(Amounts\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#); [The Higher Education \(Designation of Providers of Higher Education\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#); [The Higher Education \(Fee and Access Plans\) \(Notices and Directions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#); [The Higher Education \(Fee and Access Plans\) \(Notices, Procedure and Publication\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#).

Prevent

14. Institutions that have a fee and access plan approved by HEFCW will be classified as a relevant higher education body and will immediately need to comply with Prevent Duty legislation, if they do not already. Institutions **that are headquartered in Wales come under HEFCW's monitoring authority unless they are already inspected by Estyn.**⁴ HEFCW's Monitoring Framework circular [W16/39HE](#) sets out how HEFCW monitors providers' implementation of the statutory Prevent Duty. Relevant higher education bodies need to follow this framework to demonstrate due regard to the duty. For more information please contact prevent@hefcw.ac.uk.
15. Further information about fee and access planning, including a glossary of terms is available on the HEFCW [website](#) and from the following email addresses: regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk or cyngorrheoleiddio@hefcw.ac.uk.

Designation of other courses

16. This guidance relates only to full-time and PGCE (QTS) student support. All publicly funded⁵ institutions in Wales are automatically designated for student support of part-time undergraduate, full-time and part-time postgraduate, and doctoral courses. This part-time provision is not regulated.
17. Higher education providers that either cannot, or choose not to, apply for a fee and access plan can apply for their full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) courses to be specifically designated for Welsh domiciled students on a 'course-by-course' basis. Additionally, providers that are not publicly funded and wish for their part-time or postgraduate courses to be designated for Welsh domiciled students can apply for them to be specifically designated on a 'course-by-course' basis. For further information on the specific designation process contact regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk. Institutions should discuss course designation arrangements for students domiciled in other parts of the UK with other UK administrations.

Equality and diversity and HEFCW's impact assessment

18. As a public authority, HEFCW has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to give due regard to equalities issues when developing and implementing its policies. In addition,

⁴ Providers that are not headquartered in Wales will be monitored by the relevant authority in that country.

⁵ A publicly funded institution means an institution in the United Kingdom maintained or assisted by recurrent grants out of funds provided by: (a) Parliament; (b) the Welsh Ministers; (c) the Scottish Ministers; (d) the Northern Ireland Executive, or from funds attributable to such funds.

HEFCW has duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) (Future Generations Act) and duties in relation to the Welsh language.⁶ HEFCW is not a regulator of institutions' compliance with legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, however we monitor performance and encourage institutions to go beyond compliance. The Welsh Government guidance to HEFCW on fee and access plans (paragraph 4.18) states that groups under-represented in higher education may include individuals who share protected characteristics,⁷ as defined by the Equality Act.

19. HEFCW included specific equality and diversity-related questions in its [consultation on the 2017/18 fee and access plan guidance](#), on which this guidance is based. HEFCW encouraged consultation responses to identify any potentially negative impacts on equality and diversity, the Welsh language and the well-being goals, as set out in the Future Generations Act. HEFCW annually monitors data and evidence on individuals with protected characteristics and the Welsh language to inform its policy implementation and practice. HEFCW continues to welcome additional evidence and/or advice to inform its fee and access plan policy development and implementation. Please email any additional evidence and/or advice to equality@hefcw.ac.uk.
20. HEFCW is committed to providing a high standard of service to the public in both Welsh and English. Our standards of service are set out in our [Compliance notice](#) and [Welsh Language Standards Implementation Plan](#). Further information is available on our [website](#).
21. Opportunities to study in Welsh are a distinctive and important part of higher education in Wales. HEFCW supports the development of Welsh medium higher education and encourages higher education providers to increase applications to, and enrolments on, Welsh medium courses. In developing fee and access plans, institutions should take account of Welsh medium provision.
22. HEFCW's [Well-being Statement](#) sets out our commitment to support the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), its goals and ways of working. We will deliver our well-being objectives through our Corporate Strategy. Fee and access planning processes contribute to most of Well-being of Future Generations goals, particularly, a prosperous Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of more cohesive communities and a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language. The delivery of our well-being objectives will be ongoing. Given the anticipated level of change for HEFCW and higher education, it is our intention initially to review our initial well-being objectives annually.

⁶ Welsh language standards regulations, which apply to HEFCW, were published in early 2017.

⁷ Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion and belief and non-belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Further information and advice

23. The 2015 Act enables HEFCW to provide information and advice to the governing body of a regulated institution and to prospective regulated institutions. HEFCW's aim is to ensure that all institutions are fully aware of their obligations before they become a regulated institution and to minimise administrative burdens on institutions and on HEFCW at all stages of the application process.
24. A separate HEFCW email address is available for queries about any aspect of the implementation of the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015, including fee and access plan queries. Please email queries to regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk.

Section One: Regulatory Information

25. This section provides guidance on information that institutions applying for a fee and access plan are required to submit to demonstrate that they are eligible to apply for a fee and access plan. This information should be submitted as part of **Annex A**, unless specified elsewhere.
26. We require evidence that demonstrates that institutions:
- are an institution
 - are located principally or wholly in Wales
 - provide higher education
 - are a charity
 - are financially viable
 - are financially well managed and
 - provide quality education.
27. Where HEFCW holds sufficient, up to date information, we will use it, subject to the governing body's permission to do so. Institutions can also submit new, additional or more recent information to inform our assessment processes. Where HEFCW does not have sufficient, up-to-date information or data, institutions are required to provide this in support of their applications. All data submitted as evidence should be the most current, verifiable data.
28. HEFCW reserves the right to visit institutions to better understand eligibility related to the organisation and management of financial affairs and the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of, institutions where information is unclear or insufficient.
29. Information submitted to HEFCW in this section is for our information only and we do not require institutions to publish it.

Criteria for being an institution

30. The 2015 Act does not specifically define the term 'institution'. Examples of organisations HEFCW regards as institutions include: universities formed by Royal Charter, Higher Education Corporations, Further Education Corporations and bodies that train members of the education workforce. These bodies should link to the documentation that evidences this information or submit this information if it is not publicly available.
31. Providers that wish to apply for a fee and access plan that do not fit the definition of an institution will need to provide information to demonstrate that they are an institution. Welsh Government can [designate an institution for purposes of the Act](#).

Criteria for being in Wales

32. HEFCW will consider institutions as being in Wales by taking account of a range of information. HEFCW's assessment of the location of institutions' activities will include the evidence provided in the application.

Applications should include:

- i. institutions' name
- ii. institutions' principal and legal addresses⁸
- iii. institutions' [UK provider registration number](#)
- iv. any other names under which institutions operates
- v. the locations of all learning and teaching activities where institutions has an interest including locations in Wales, the rest of the UK and overseas
- vi. links to institutions' webpages relating to institutions' learning and teaching activities and
- vii. details of where the majority of full-time equivalent (FTE) student numbers are located. The total FTE numbers attending courses delivered in Wales will be compared to the total number of all FTE students attending courses delivered outside Wales.

Criteria for providing higher education

33. HEFCW will consider institutions in Wales as providing higher education if their provision includes a higher education course or courses, regardless of mode, listed in [Schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1988](#). HEFCW will require applications to provide the following information to enable it to assess whether they are providing courses of higher education:

- i. a description of the higher education provided by institutions
- ii. a list of the qualifications delivered directly and on its behalf
- iii. the full-time equivalent (FTE) students that are taking the higher education courses at the date of application and the FTEs taking the higher education courses for three years previously
- iv. the location or locations of the higher education provision both provided direct and on its behalf and
- v. link to institutions' webpages relating to institutions' learning and teaching activities.

34. Institutions must have control of the qualifying courses that are within the scope of the fee and access plan. Institutions are deemed to be in control of the course if they provide the course directly. Institutions are deemed not to be in control of the course if the course is provided on their behalf, by another organisation, for example under a franchise agreement.

35. Factors in assessing control include whether institutions have responsibility for the overall content and delivery of the qualifying course(s), quality assessment arrangements and contractual

⁸ Case law suggests that the term 'principal office' means a place where the business of a body corporate is managed and controlled as a whole - case referred to in *Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales*, 4th ed., Vol 8, 1999 Reissue at page 366. HEFCW will normally use this meaning when referring to a principal address.

responsibilities to the student. HEFCW will take account of how both parties define this, but it is ultimately for HEFCW to determine whether the provision is provided by, or on behalf of, institutions.

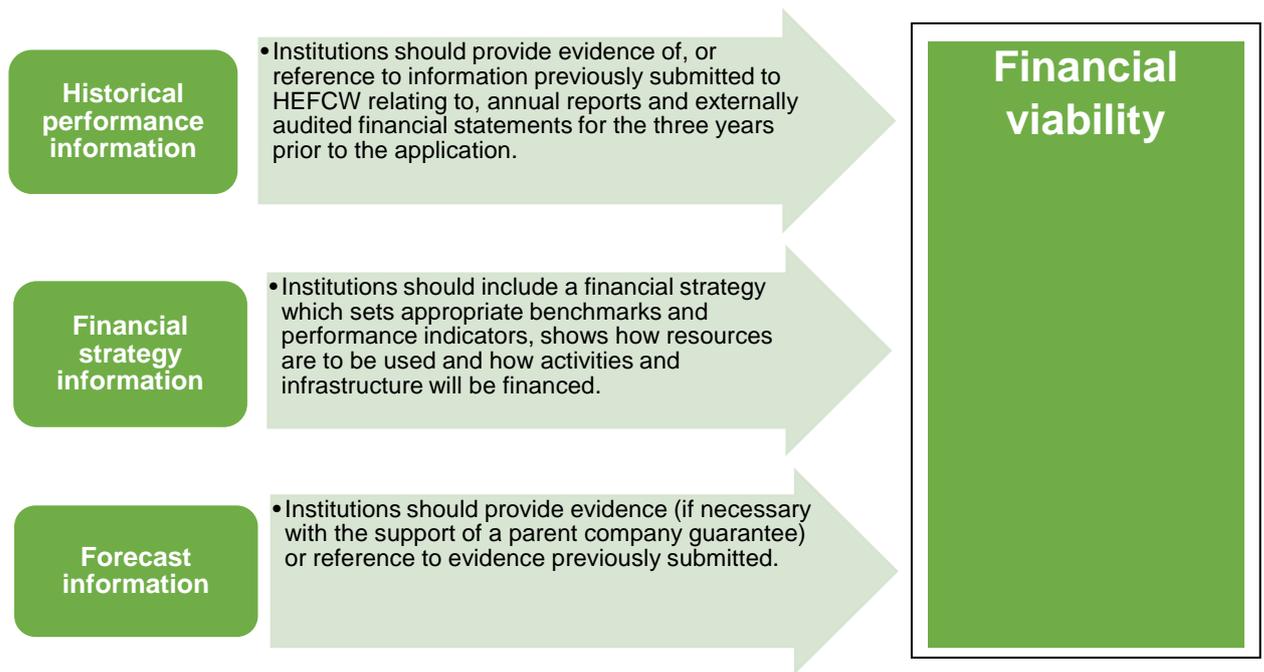
36. Normally, institutions that provide higher education under validation type arrangements will be deemed to be in control of the course. HEFCW requires the submission of copies of agreements with the awarding body to demonstrate that institutions have overall responsibility for the content and delivery of qualifying courses. All qualifications must be awarded by a [recognised body](#).
37. There will be situations where institutions provide higher education directly and provide higher education on behalf of another body. In these situations, only the courses they provide directly should be included in a fee and access plan, not the courses they provide under franchise arrangements (which are the responsibility of the franchisor and set out in the franchisor's plan).
38. Some institutions will have full-time undergraduate courses provided on their behalf. These courses should be included in institutions' fee and access plans.
39. Where a partner body is providing higher education on behalf of institutions, the partner must be a separate legal entity and a charity in order for the provision to be eligible for student support. The partner will not have responsibility for the overall content and delivery of the qualifying course.
40. Subsidiaries of institutions applying for fee and access plans that are separate legal entities will not automatically come within the scope of parent institutions' applications. If institutions want courses delivered at subsidiaries to come within the scope of their fee and access plan, they will need to confirm that they have agreements for subsidiaries to deliver education on their behalf.
41. Institutions that are subsidiaries and separate legal entities will need to evidence that they are in control of the courses by submitting to HEFCW agreements with recognised bodies. Such institutions will be assessed as separate institutions and must meet all other regulatory requirements in their own right.

Criteria on being a charity

42. All institutions applying for a fee and access plan must be charities. All Chartered Universities in Wales and all Higher Education Corporations in Wales are registered charities. All Further Education Corporations are exempt charities. Other institutions will need to provide their charity registration number and the name and address of their registered charity regulator. If institutions are not registered with a charity regulator, they must provide reasons for this, together with a copy of their governing document.

Financial viability

43. Institutions must provide information to HEFCW about their financial viability, including evidence that they are sustainable over the medium-term. The evidence should be sufficient to give HEFCW reasonable confidence that students will not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.
44. Institutions should provide full details of their corporate group structure, including details of all group companies or organisations, including subsidiaries, parent/holding companies and associate or joint ventures.
45. As appropriate, the assessment of financial viability may take into account the financial arrangements of any group structure (including subsidiaries, parent/holding companies, or associate and/or joint ventures) where it is considered relevant to financial viability.
46. Institutions must provide information, which illustrates:
 - i. **Historical performance** - a track record of financial performance evidenced by annual reports and externally-audited financial statements for the three years prior to the application. The accounts must be audited each year by a registered auditor. This must not be the same firm and/or individual that prepared the accounts, to ensure that HEFCW can have full confidence in the audit. The basis of the accounts will be Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in the UK (UK GAAP) (or successor requirements) or International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), if appropriate.
 - ii. **Financial strategy** - a financial strategy that reflects the overall strategic plan available at the point of submitting an application for a fee and access plan, sets appropriate benchmarks and performance indicators, shows how resources are to be used, and how activities and infrastructure will be financed. This should include how institutions assess and review their sustainability, including the use of sustainability assessments.
 - iii. **Forecasts - institutions must be able to provide evidence, if necessary with the support of a parent company guarantee, that they have:**
 - adequate cash flow to remain solvent, that is, sufficient liquidity to pay debts as they fall due and
 - an adequate balance sheet that maintains a net total assets position such that they would not incur deficits if these would result in a net total liabilities position.



47. Institutions should submit links to their current strategic plan plus full financial forecasts for the current year (2018/19) and the following three years. The evidence should include a commentary on the assumptions being made and how any financial risks are being managed. Where institutions have submitted forecasts to HEFCW in July 2018 HEFCW may use these, with the governing body's permission to do so. However, where HEFCW is permitted to use these forecasts, institutions will need to:
- confirm that, given any changes in financial assumptions, both the 'adjusted operating cash flow' and 'surplus/(deficit) for the year' figures for all years of the forecast remain materially unchanged or
 - provide a detailed explanation of the changes in assumptions since the forecasts were submitted, including key figures (e.g. changes resulting from 2018/19 actual recruitment and indicators of 2019/20 recruitment, reductions in HEFCW funding, changes in grant income, changes in operating costs etc.) or
 - submit a revised financial forecast return, based on circular [W18/12HE](#). (Note that this return should update the forecast figures, but we do not necessarily need the full forecast narrative, provided that a detailed summary of the main movements is supplied.)
48. Financial tables and guidance on the completion of the forecast information is available in the HEFCW Requests for Forecasts 2018 circular [W18/12HE](#). Institutions who have not previously completed HEFCW's forecast model may request the Microsoft Excel model by emailing assurance@hefcw.ac.uk.
49. HEFCW's assessment of institutions' financial performance and sustainability will not be used in isolation to determine whether it meets this requirement. The financial sustainability assessment will be an

overall judgement that also takes into account the context of the institutions' financial position and their strategic plan.

The organisation and management of financial affairs

50. Institutions will need to provide evidence that they are well-managed with sound management practice in place and the capacity to develop in line with their strategic plan and the financial strategy that supports their fee and access plan.
51. Institutions must provide information to illustrate that they:
- i. have financial management processes that are well-governed and controlled adequately and effectively
 - ii. plans and manages activities to remain viable
 - iii. have robust and comprehensive systems of risk management and internal control
 - iv. have effective arrangements for the management and quality assurance of data used for internal decision making
 - v. have regular, reliable, timely and adequate information to monitor operational and financial performance
 - vi. report information regularly, comprehensively and correctly to appropriate senior management and those charged with governance
 - vii. manage their its estate in a sustainable way in line with an estates strategy
 - viii. are able to meet all the necessary data capture and reporting requirements for HEFCW including those administered by HESA and other bodies as required by HEFCW. Examples include:
 - the latest external data audit
 - the annual HESES survey
 - student, student destination, staff, estates, finance, and business and community interaction data provided to HESA and
 - the annual assurance return.
52. In assessing the data management capabilities consideration will be given, where applicable, to institutions' track records in submitting data to HEFCW or other bodies including HESA, the Welsh Government and the Student Loans Company and their compliance with the code of practice for [higher education data collections](#) in preparing data for submission.
53. Institutions must provide evidence that they can comply with the principles of the Higher Education Code of Governance⁹ (Committee of University Chairs, December 2014) unless adherence to alternative, equally robust governance principles can be evidenced. HEFCW recognises that the Code is voluntary and institutions may be able to apply alternative governance practices to achieve similar outcomes. However, HEFCW considers that the principles and intended outcomes (referred to as 'the Elements') of the Code are sound. Where it is not possible to evidence compliance with the Code, HEFCW will require an

⁹ [Higher Education Code of Governance \(Committee of University Chairs\) December 2014](#)

explanation that describes equally robust alternative arrangements that are in place or demonstrates that there are appropriate and reasonable grounds for non-adherence.

54. If institutions do not already comply with the Higher Education Code of Governance, they should discuss with HEFCW, before applying for a fee and access plan, how they might provide evidence of equally robust alternative arrangements.
55. Institutions will need to take account of all relevant guidance on the responsibilities of trustees and effective trusteeship. This [guidance](#) is available on the [Charity Commission website](#).
56. Institutions must provide evidence that they:
 - i. comply with the statutory requirements relating to external audit; and
 - ii. are owned, managed and run by 'fit and proper persons' by providing:
 - evidence of their organisation's identity and that of key individuals (for example, the Governing Body, Vice Chancellor, Principal, directors, shareholders, trustees), along with their skills and experience and
 - confirmation that directors / trustees (as relevant) are eligible to act as either directors or trustees and have not been disqualified from acting as directors or trustees.

Quality of education provided by, or on behalf of, an institution

57. HEFCW is responsible for assessing or making arrangements for the assessment of the quality of all education provided, both by regulated institutions and on behalf of regulated institutions. Education provided outside Wales is considered to be provided in Wales if it is provided as part of a course that is provided principally in Wales. Institutions will need to evidence that the quality of education is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving the education or undertaking the course.
58. Currently, the reasonable needs for the quality of higher education are considered to be met if providers obtain satisfactory judgements in an external quality assurance review.¹⁰ These judgements ensures quality assessment is rigorous. In every case, institutions obtaining unsatisfactory judgements will be deemed to have, or to be at risk of having, inadequate quality. The reasonable needs for non-higher education provision are considered to be met if providers have a successful review/inspection by the appropriate body responsible for the quality standards of that provision (e.g. [Estyn](#), [Pearson](#), etc). External review evidence will also need to be supplemented by additional information that provides ongoing assurances that the quality of education remains adequate, as set out in para 59.

¹⁰ See information provided on HEFCW's [quality assessment framework webpages](#)

59. For 2020/21 fee and access plan applications, institutions must provide *all* of the following:
- i. confirmation that they have internal quality assessment procedures in place for all of their education provision– whether such provision is by institutions or on their behalf. This includes higher education provision, and non-higher education provision, e.g. school, further or professional education. It covers education institutions provide directly or via other providers under sub-contractual agreements.
 - ii. confirmation and evidence that all of their higher education provision, including higher education provided on their behalf (eg franchise provision), has obtained satisfactory judgements in a relevant external quality assurance review. Institutions that are looking to become regulated for the first time must demonstrate that they have successfully undergone two QAA reviews at four yearly intervals, with the most recent being a [Gateway Quality Review – Wales](#). Institutions that are currently regulated must demonstrate that they have successfully undergone a, *Higher Education Review: Wales*, [Quality Enhancement Review](#) or equivalent external quality assessment review process within the past six years. In the year immediately following a review, if existing regulated institutions are in the process of working through a review outcome to address issues identified, in accordance with normal procedures, we would expect them to set out in detail how they were addressing or planning to address those outcomes. We would expect these actions to be completed within 12 months.
 - iii. confirmation and evidence that all of their non-higher education provision, and any non-higher education provided on their behalf, has successfully undergone a review/inspection by the appropriate body responsible for the quality standards of that provision. In the year immediately following a review/inspection, if existing regulated institutions are in the process of working through a review/inspection outcome to address issues identified, in accordance with normal procedures, we would expect them to set out in detail how they were addressing or planning to address those outcomes. We would expect these actions to be completed within 12 months.
 - iv. confirmation that the governing body has been able to sign off the quality assurance statements requested annually:
 - 1 The governing body has received a report taking account of the external quality assurance review, and an action plan has been put in place and implemented as appropriate, in partnership with the student body.
 - 2 The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.
 - i. For providers with degree awarding powers: The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained

- ii. For providers without degree awarding powers: The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately maintained.
 - 3 The governing body has considered a report on the annual dialogue between the institution and the student union or equivalent, scrutinised student survey outcomes and confirmed that action plans had been put in place and implemented, in partnership with the student body.
 - 4 The governing body has received a copy of the relationship agreement between the institution and the student union or equivalent, and a copy of the student charter, both of which have been reviewed within the past year.
- v. a list of all courses delivered on behalf of institutions together with partnership course information, and confirmation that the agreements were signed after 1 September 2015 (or have an addendum added after 1 September 2015) to confirm the arrangements fall under the 2015 Act.¹¹ HEFCW may request evidence of the partnership agreements.

¹¹ As noted above in the section relating to criteria on being an institution in Wales providing higher education, HEFCW reserves the right to require copies of the relevant agreements. HEFCW will keep requirements regarding quality under review, and so may update these in future years.

Section Two: Fee and Access Plans

60. This section provides guidance on what should be included in a fee and access plan to evidence adequate support for equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education. Section Two has been revised to take account fully of the Welsh Government's requirements that plans make a significant and lasting contribution to widening access to higher education in Wales and that fee and access plans should be strengthened.¹² This guidance takes account of the findings and recommendations of the [Advance HE review of fee and access plans](#). Advance HE recommendations will be phased into our guidance over several years given the number and detail of the recommendations.
61. The fee and access plan enables institutions to demonstrate to HEFCW and wider audiences their commitment to widening access in Wales through improving equality of opportunity and promoting higher education in Wales.
62. A draft fee and access plan template has been included at **Annex A**. Institutions can provide additional sections or present the plan the required information in a different/corporate format. Headings and contents pages are helpful and aid accessibility.
63. Plans should have a strong and coherent narrative to enable HEFCW and other interested parties to understand the direction of travel, anticipated pace of change and progress to be made.
64. Fee and access plans must include information under the following headings:
- contents page
 - executive summary
 - duration of the fee and access plan
 - fee levels
 - student partnership
 - strategic review
 - groups identified as under-represented in higher education
 - objectives, activities, and targets
 - fee and access plan investment
 - monitoring and
 - evaluating fee and access plans.
65. The HE Act sets out the general requirements of a fee and access plan. Those general requirements are to:
- take, or to secure the taking of, measures to attract applications from prospective students who are members of under-represented groups;

¹² [HEFCW remit letter 2017-18](#)

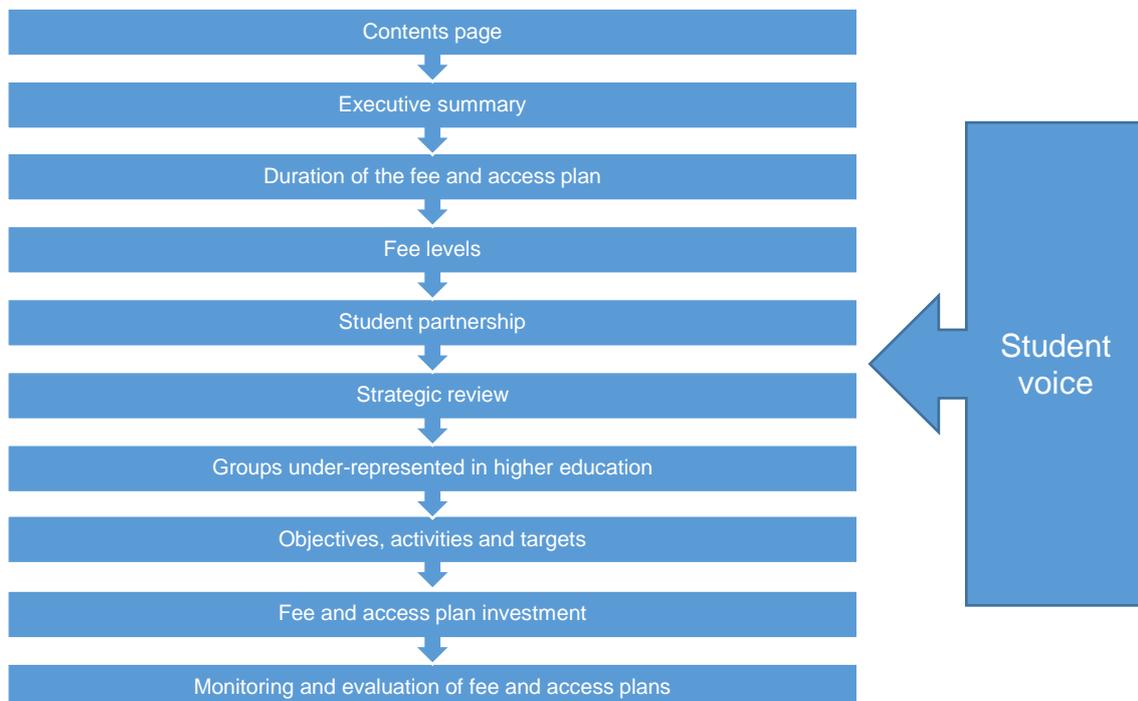
- take, or to secure the taking of, measures to retain students who are members of under-represented groups;
- provide, or to secure the provision of, financial assistance to students;
- make available to students or prospective students information about financial assistance available to students from any source, or to secure that such information is made available;
- inform any prospective student, before the student commits to undertaking a course, of the aggregate amount of fees that the institution will charge for the completion of the course, or to secure that any prospective student is so informed;
- monitor compliance with the provisions of the plan; and
- monitor progress in achieving the objectives set out in the plan.

We have set out in this section where we expect those general requirements to be evidenced in plans.

66. Plans should be linked to institutions' strategic objectives and explain how they align with, and contributes to, these strategies, including its institutional strategy, Widening Access strategy and Strategic Equality Plan. Lists of strategic documents alone are unhelpful in explaining strategic coherence.
67. Institutions should take account of the Welsh Government's widening-access and other related expectations, including: the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) (2015), its goals and ways of working; the [Equality Act](#) (2010); [the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act](#) (2015), [Strategy 2016-21](#) and [Delivery Framework 2018-21](#); [Nation of Sanctuary - Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan \(2018\)](#); the prioritisation of civic mission and engagement; anti-poverty agendas; Welsh medium targets to achieve [one million Welsh speakers by 2050](#); the Welsh Government's [economic](#) and [employability](#) plans; and other requirements as set out in HEFCW remit letters.
68. Additionally consideration should be taken of HEFCW's corporate documents including its [Corporate Strategy](#), [National Measures](#), [Strategic Equality Plan and objectives](#), and [Well-being Statement and objectives](#), as well as the [Advance HE review of fee and access plans \(2018\)](#).
69. The Welsh Government expects HEFCW to strengthen fee and access plans¹³ and to secure continuous improvement in plans' commitments to students, equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education. HEFCW's analysis and monitoring of plans contributes to strengthening plans. In analysing 2020/21 plans we will pay particular attention to:
 - how institutions have taken account of HEFCW feedback provided in 2019/20 fee and access plan approval letters sent to plan contacts in August 2018

¹³ [HEFCW remit letter 2017-18](#)

- how institutions have taken account of the [Advance HE review recommendations](#)
- evidence-informed plans setting out clearly how equality of opportunity activities are likely to improve access to, and success in and beyond, higher education for students and potential students under-represented in higher education
- the extent of an institution's ambition and performance to date
- how institutions have taken account of lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation of previous plans
- how institutions take account of the student voice throughout the fee and access planning cycle from developing to monitoring plans;
- the evidence provided to justify where under-represented groups do not include widening access groups identified in [HEFCW National Measures](#) ¹⁴
- where only limited data and information was provided in previous plan submissions to evidence and identify under-representation, we expect to see that this has been updated and improved
- commitments, including activities and continued levels of investment to support the Reaching Wider Programme and ongoing alignment with regional Reaching Wider Partnerships' strategies
- the relationship between under-represented groups, levels of investment, including student support, objectives, activities. Welsh Government categories and targets provided to indicate progress and performance and
- SMART targets that are sufficiently clear and ambitious enabling governing bodies and HEFCW to assess the direction and pace of travel and progress to be made.



¹⁴ For example WIMD40, participation, retention, part-time, diversity of the student population.

Contents page

70. In line with Advance HE's review recommendations, we would expect all fee and access plans to include a contents page to assist readers to navigate the plan.

Executive summary

71. Fee and access plans should include an executive summary setting out the main features of the plan and highlighting key priorities. Executive summaries must provide a clear and succinct overview of the contents of the plan to provide a strategic overview. We expect executive summaries to include:
- the strategic objectives of the plan
 - the groups under-represented in higher education
 - examples of activities and services and the total fee income being invested to deliver the objectives.
72. Executive summaries should be accessible to a range of stakeholders, particularly students. Summaries should be accessible and informative and free of higher education jargon. HEFCW may use executive summaries in its reporting, including to the Welsh Government, as synopses of institutions' fee and access plan commitments. The executive summary should be no more than **1,000 words**.

Duration of the fee and access plan

73. A fee and access plan will be considered to be 'in force' from the date it is approved and it has 'effect' from the academic year to which the fee and access plan relates. For example, a 2020/21 plan will be in force from the date of HEFCW's approval, June/July 2019, and in effect in the academic year 2020/21.
74. Fee and access plans must specify the period when they will be in effect. HEFCW works to an academic and planning year for many purposes, including fee and access planning, which is 1 August until 31 July. Aligning fee and access planning with HEFCW's annual planning cycle enables higher education providers in Wales to be agile in responding to policies and students' needs and to publish fee levels at the same time as other UK higher education institutions.

Fee levels

75. Given the time between fee and access plan initial applications, approval and plans being in effect, we recognise the challenges of setting fee levels which might be affected by policy changes¹⁵. Therefore, fee and access plans must either:

¹⁵ At the time of writing, no fee maximum fee changes have been proposed in Wales.

- provide for the determination of a fee level or
 - specify each fee level that the institutions will charge in 2020/21.
76. Where an institution determines a fee level, the institution must be clear how the fee will be calculated. Institutions could make reference and link to the maximum fee amount as prescribed in HE Act regulations for example and state when the actual fee levels will be set and where this information will be found on its website, as well as confirming that the fee will not exceed the maximum amount permitted. Institutions will need to be assured that once a fee level has been set it is consistent with the way in which that fee level has been determined in an approved fee and access plan.
77. Where institutions determine how a fee will be calculated they will need to provide more precise information in their forecasted fee income spreadsheets provided to HEFCW. This information will be used only by HEFCW to assess investment to improve equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education. Further information is included below in the section on fee income investment.
78. Where institutions specify full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) fee levels in a plan they should be clearly set out. The following must be set out separately:
- fee levels and courses provided by institutions directly including, where relevant, at each location
 - fee levels and courses provided on and institutions' behalf, at each named provider
 - fee levels that differ for different cohorts of students
 - final academic years of courses where that academic year is normally required to be completed after less than 15 weeks' attendance and a course of initial training of teachers, including an academic year during which any periods of full-time study are. in aggregate, less than 10 weeks
 - sandwich courses and
 - student and work placements overseas.
79. Fees cannot exceed the maximum fee limits in regulations. These are currently:
- £4,500 for the final academic years of courses where that academic year is normally required to be completed after less than 15 weeks attendance and a course of initial training of teachers including an academic year during which any periods of full time study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks
 - £1,800 for sandwich courses
 - £1,350 for student and work placements overseas and
 - £9,000 for all other courses.
80. Where institutions commit to specifying fee levels in plans, institutions must take into account the potential impact of maximum fee changes, following fee and access plan approvals. Any changes to maximum fee

limits will require a variation to a fee and access plan. When considering variations to fee and access plans, HEFCW will have regard for the fundamental principle that students know, before committing to a course, the aggregate amount of fees that the institution will charge for the duration of the course.

81. It is a general requirement that all regulated institutions must either:
- provide clear information to potential and current students about their aggregate fees for the completion of the course and the basis for any potential fee increases for the duration of their course or
 - confirm that there will be no fee increases for the duration of their course.

All fee and access plans must set out how institutions will communicate fee information and where information can be found.

82. We consider it good practice for institutions to publically commit to abiding by the [Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\) guidelines for higher education](#). Institutions must confirm that their processes for determining or specifying fee levels comply with these guidelines to provide further assurances about the general requirement set out in the paragraph above.

Student partnership

83. The student voice should be evident throughout the plan and how institutions take account of the student voice should be explained clearly under a heading of 'student partnership'.
84. Institutions must clearly explain the full extent of institutions' engagement with students, including students studying courses provided on their behalf. Information should include students' involvement in developing plans, for example how student partnership working has influenced objective setting, identification of under-represented groups, activities, etc and how students have been part of the monitoring and governance processes. To strengthen plans, institutions could provide specific instances where there will be student partnership working on fee and access plans.
85. Institutions' should demonstrate how they align with their Student Charter or equivalent commitments, the [Wise Wales statement on partnership for higher education](#) and the [Guide to providing information to prospective undergraduate students](#).

Strategic Review

86. Institutions must provide the evidence and data underpinning their plans. Where institutions have previously had fee and access plans, a critical review of these plans, plus an assessment of available data, including reference to regional, Wales or UK reports and/or other evidence, should inform applications. We want to understand how lessons learned and

evidence and data informs the 2020/21 plan including reference to demographics and the socio-economic status of the region it is located. Institutions should explain the relation between the plans and the evidence and data provided, rather than simply list data sources. Where limited data and information was provided in previous submissions, HEFCW will expect this to be updated and strengthened in 2020/21 applications. Monitoring and evaluation of previous plans should inform this review.

87. Institutions should take account of effective practice as evidenced by international, national or regional research and data to inform their strategic review
88. Plans should explain fully the nature and extent of the institutions' commitment to the Reaching Wider (RW) Programme. Plans should be explicit about:
 - i. activity and investment streams that support fee and access plan provision and under-represented groups more broadly
 - ii. activities and investment that supports the HEFCW-funded Reaching Wider Programme institutional plan embedded in the 2020/21 fee and access plan, including the RW priority groups and separately
 - iii. any contribute to regional Reaching Wider Partnership strategy work.
89. We want to understand clearly how institutions' plans and their work with Reaching Wider Partnerships add value to equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education regionally.

Identifying and evidencing groups under-represented in higher education

90. Institutions must set out clearly groups considered to be under-represented in higher education and provide evidence, including data, to demonstrate why those under-represented groups will be prioritised. The aim of widening access in Wales is to secure equality of opportunity, inclusion, progression and success in higher education to enable learners across all age ranges and backgrounds, who face the highest social and economic barriers, to fulfil their potential as students, lifelong learners, citizens and employees. HEFCW is committed to a widening access to higher education approach that is all age approach. Institutions should take account of HEFCW's widening access approach in developing their plans.
91. [HEFCW National Measures](#) identify the following widening access groups as under-represented in HE: people of all ages domiciled in the [Welsh Index of Multiple Index](#) bottom two quintiles (WIMD40 and separately WIMD20); participation (people of all ages from low participation neighbourhoods); part-time higher education students; and people with protected characteristics. National Measures relating to the student experience include Welsh medium students. Where these groups are not included in plans as under-represented, evidence should be provided and we will consider it.

92. We expect to see the [Reaching Wider \(RW\) Programme](#) priority groups for institutions identified as under-represented in HE or a strong case made for non-inclusion. The RW Programme priorities for institutions are people living WIMD40 areas that are: aged 16 years plus and adults without level 4 qualifications, and the following Wales-wide groups: carers, looked after children and care leavers.
93. HEFCW National Measures make reference to Welsh medium students and measuring the diversity of the student population.
94. Institutions' strategic equality plans and annual equality reports identify priorities, including how individuals with protected characteristics are under-represented in their institution or in Wales/UK higher education and require support. For example, data indicates that students with mental health require a range of support in higher education. Institutions should explain how their strategic equality plans' priorities and priority groups relate to, and are supported by their fee and access plans, including reflected in their definition of groups under-represented in higher education. If strategic equality plan priorities and groups are support from investment other than fee and access plan investment, institutions should confirm this.
95. All objectives, activities, investment and targets set by an institutions to improve equality of opportunity must relate only to those under-represented groups identified in the plan. Institutions should consider members of under-represented groups studying both at courses they delivers and courses delivered on their behalf.
96. We recognise that there are different ways of defining 'groups under-represented in higher education'. Definitions might include under-representation within the institution's student body, including students at partner institutions, as well as under-representation in the higher education system in Wales or the UK more generally. Individuals with protected characteristics, may also be under-represented in higher education.¹⁶
97. We expect the evidence to include previous fee and access plan monitoring and evaluation outcomes, institutions' strategic equality plans and impact assessment outcomes. We will ask for additional information or data to inform our understanding of how under-represented groups have been identified should we need clarification.
98. In identifying and prioritising under-representation, we encourage institutions to consider the number of groups that fee and access plan investment can reasonably support and where effective progress should, and can, be made. In previous years, some institutions identified a very small number of groups, while others identified a wide range of groups.

¹⁶ Protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sex.

Too precise targeting may require institutions to focus their fee and access plan provision and investment very narrowly, thereby limiting support for other priority groups, conversely too wide a focus may not provide key groups with sufficient support.

99. Not every individual within groups under-represented in higher education will face barriers in accessing, progressing and succeeding in higher education. Fee and access plan institutions should take this into account and target the most disadvantaged students and potential students. NUS Wales' campaigns to support these groups may inform institutions' priorities.
100. Prioritising people from under-represented groups in higher education, will include identifying 'hard to reach' learners. HEFCW considers that hard to reach learners would include people of all ages within the under-represented groups listed above, plus people:
 - living in bottom two quintiles of WIM40
 - living in UK low participation areas
 - young males from low participation areas
 - living in workless households
 - experiencing 'in work poverty'
 - refugees and asylum seekers
 - receiving an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
 - being eligible for free school meals
 - being the first in family to enter higher education
 - acting as carers
 - having a care background
 - being estranged from their families
 - some minority ethnic communities under-represented in higher education
 - some people with protected characteristics and
 - ex-offenders.
101. When considering fee and access plan applications, HEFCW will take into account overall approaches to supporting under-represented groups.

Objectives, activities and targets

102. Institutions must set out fee and access plan objectives as they relate to equality of opportunity and separately objectives to promote higher education. Equality of opportunity-related objectives must only focus on students and potential students from under-represented groups. When setting each fee and access plan objective institutions must identify clearly the activities and services being delivered to achieve their objectives and the targets that institutions will set to measure the success of their objectives.
103. Objectives should take account of all higher education learning, teaching or other activities made by the institutions, or on their behalf (e.g. through

partnership arrangements) which supports equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education.

Institution's objectives

104. When developing a fee and access plan, institutions must take into consideration the general requirements that all fee and access plans must demonstrate how they will:
- attract applications from students who are members of under-represented groups
 - retain students who are members of under-represented groups
 - make information on financial assistance available to students or prospective students.
105. We expect these requirements above to be evidenced by all plans setting out objectives in these three areas. Recognising that the definition and aim of widening access in Wales is “widening access to and through higher education”¹⁷ we also encourage institutions to include an objective related to progression.
106. The level of fee income that institutions expect to receive may have implications for the number of objectives against which they can make progress against.

Welsh Government categories

107. Welsh Government set out what it considers to fall within the terms of equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education and these are set out as categories below. The Advance HE review concluded that these categories are not useful as objectives in their own right.¹⁸ Where institutions have previously used these categories as objectives, we encourage them to set clearer objectives.
108. Welsh Government categories relating to equality of opportunity are:
- i. promoting and safeguarding fair access to higher education, including identifying individuals with the greatest potential from under-represented groups
 - ii. attracting students and potential students from under-represented groups
 - iii. retaining students from under-represented groups
 - iv. raising the educational aspirations and skills of people from under-represented groups in higher education
 - v. supporting and increasing progression and completion of people from under-represented groups
 - vi. improving the higher education experience for groups under-represented in higher education

¹⁷ As set out in HEFCW's draft Widening Access to Higher Education Strategic Approach and Widening Access Programme of Action to be published on [HEFCW's website](#).

¹⁸ Advance HE, *Review of Fee and Access Plans: 2017/18-2019/20*, (2018), p41

- vii. providing effective information to under-represented groups, before and during their studies
 - viii. providing high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education and
 - ix. supporting the progress to employment or further study of groups under-represented in higher education.
109. Welsh Government categories relating to the promotion of higher education:
- i. delivering more effective engagement with private, public or voluntary bodies and communities in Wales
 - ii. improving the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience
 - iii. strengthening the employability of Welsh graduates
 - iv. promoting Welsh higher education more effectively internationally;
 - v. delivering sustainable higher education and
 - vi. raising awareness of the value of higher education to potential students.
110. We expect all institutions to map their objectives against these categories in a table provided at **Annex Ai**. We recognise that one objective may meet more than one Welsh Government category.

Activities and services to support equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education

111. Institutions must set out the activities and services that they will deliver to achieve their objectives. We will need to understand clearly how the activities and services will contribute to achieving the objectives. We will request further information where this is unclear.
112. Where an objective relates to improving equality of opportunity, activities and services must relate only to under-represented groups. If activities and services are provided for all students, plans must explain clearly how under-represented students are particularly supported or these activities should be included in the promotion of HE section where activities and services can relate to all students. We will want to understand the level of investment dedicated to supporting equality of opportunity.
113. We will want to understand clearly how activities and services included in a fee and access plan are different from core institutional business which should be funded from different sources.
114. There is a general requirement that each fee and access plan must make financial assistance available to students. We expect these commitments to be set out in this section of the plan, including the types of financial assistance available for both under-represented groups and for all students. We expect institutions to set out what financial assistance will be provided to improve equality of opportunity and support the promotion of higher education.

115. We expect all activities and services detailed in a fee and access plan to be evaluated to ensure that institutions are confident that they meet the needs of students and potential students.
116. We are particularly interested in any new and innovative activities and services the institution will be delivering in 2020/21 to meet their fee and access plan objectives.
117. Activities and services at franchise partners should be reflected throughout the plans, including in the objectives, targets and investment.

Target setting

118. In order to measure the success of institutions' objectives, a fee and access plan should contain SMART¹⁹ institutional targets. Targets should be ambitious and demonstrate the pace of progress and distance to be travelled by institutions. Each objective must have at least one appropriate target. For further information on target setting can be found on our [website](#).
119. SMART targets should inform HEFCW's and governing bodies' assessment of proposed progress and account for investment levels. Institutions should set targets underpinned by the most recent data available to ensure that target baselines transparently articulate the distance to be travelled. Targets should be achievable within the period of the plan. Institutions should be able to report to HEFCW on the achievement of targets by December 2021. This reporting date may impact on target-setting.
120. HEFCW published its [national measures for higher education performance](#) in November 2018. We expect institutions to take account of relevant measures when setting targets to contribute to demonstrating how they are delivering for Wales.²⁰ Where institutions do not take account of these measures in target-setting, institutions should provide a strong case for this.
121. Where appropriate, plans may include collaborative targets. Collaborative targets may increase engagement with potential institutions, secure economies of scale, or avoid unnecessary duplication. HEFCW encourages the alignment of investment and planning underpinned by collaborative targets, including with the Reaching Wider Programme. Institutions should explain which activities and levels of investment each partner is contributing towards achieving collaborative targets.

¹⁹ specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound

²⁰ HEFCW considers relevant National Measures to be: Widening Access, Participation, Retention, Part-time, Diversity of the student population, National Student Survey, Welsh Medium, Student Mobility, Employment and Graduate Employment.

122. Targets should indicate levels of ambition and performance in areas where further progress should be made, as identified in the strategic review, not where performance is already strong.
123. It should be clear which objectives, under-represented groups, activities, investment and targets relate to equality of opportunity and separately to the promotion of higher education.
124. In setting Welsh medium targets, HEFCW strongly recommends institutions discuss targets with the [Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#) (the Coleg) as Welsh medium HE is a policy priority for Welsh Government. HEFCW will liaise with the Coleg to evaluate the appropriateness of these targets.
125. Improving equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education is a long-term agenda and we recognise the tension of balancing longer-term strategic intentions with a requirement to report progress annually. However, fee and access plan targets must be achievable within one year and some targets for 2020/21 may not be appropriate, including the most recent UK performance indicator benchmarking data, as they cannot be measured within the annual reporting timeframe.
126. In order to mitigate this tension we encourage institutions to set milestone targets in 2020/21 plans which span several academic years and contribute towards a longer-term target in future years. This enables us to understand the extent of intended progress in the longer-term. Additionally, we recommend institutions use targets that focus on outcomes, for example targets to increase and retain a specific group under-represented in higher education rather than output-related targets such as delivering a number of activities, events and conferences.
127. Institutions' targets must be derived from auditable sources. A clear data audit trail should be maintained to confirm data baseline methodology and progress against baselines for subsequent monitoring.
128. SMART targets contribute to providing to the Welsh Government, HEFCW, governing bodies and other interested parties an account of, and return on, the level of public investment underpinning the plan. HEFCW recognises that the level of public investment differs between institutions, as will the quantity of objectives, the volume of activity and associated targets. We will consider the reasonableness of institutions' aspirations, including targets, in our assessment of plans.
129. To strengthen plans, targets, their descriptors and indications of performance will be a key focus of our analysis this year. Institutions should ensure that target descriptors are clear and include numbers and/or percentage increases or decreases as appropriate, while providing both numbers and percentages to indicate performance. We understand that either the number or percentage will be provided as target data while the other information is provided as context.

Fee income investment

130. All fee and access plans must set out a proportion of fee income received from full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) courses that the institution will invest in order to achieve its fee and access plan objectives. As such, institutions should set out the proportion of fee income being invested to deliver each objective.
131. HEFCW expects all institutions that have previously had plans approved to invest at least the same proportion of total income in 2020/21. We do not expect the proportion of money invested in improving equality of opportunity to decrease.
132. Where institutions have either not fully achieved previous fee and access plan commitments or demonstrated insufficient ambition in rate of progress, HEFCW may set an expectation of higher rates of investment in future years, within a range of 15% to 20% of total fee income. This will be communicated to those institutions separately.
133. HEFCW will provide existing regulated institutions with individualised templates to enable comparison of investment levels year on year.
134. For institutions that have previously not had fee and access plans we expect an investment of between 14% and 17% of total fee income, to be agreed with us. This range of percentage investment has been established with all existing regulated institutions and is the reference point for dialogue with institutions.
135. In the excel document that supports a fee and access plan submission submitted to HEFCW and not published, the institution must set out the total anticipated fee income received from all qualifying courses and the intended total fee amount to be invested in achieving its objectives. We recognise that in the published section of the application, institutions might have only indicated how fees will be determined.
136. Investment should be presented against each fee and access plan objective not, as previously, against Welsh Government categories.
137. Welsh Government expects HEFCW to be robust in expecting more from regulated institutions whose record suggests insufficient progress towards improving equality of opportunity. This includes expectations that current regulated institutions maintain the same levels of investment in Reaching Wider partnerships.

Monitoring and evaluating fee and access plans

138. HEFCW has a duty, under the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015 to annually monitor compliance with fee limits and the general requirements of a fee and access plan, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of fee and access plans. Regulated institutions have a duty to provide information, assistance and access to HEFCW for this purpose. The outcomes of this

process will be included in our annual report to Welsh Ministers on how we have exercised our functions under the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015.

139. In November 2018, we invited regulated institutions to submit monitoring information for the first time.²¹ Our process may evolve as we seek to strengthen plans but currently the monitoring element focuses on compliance with fee limits and the general requirements of the plan and the evaluation element focuses on the effectiveness of the plan. We expect institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of their objectives including monitoring progress against targets to measure performance against the objectives and account for investment. We expect to monitor and evaluate 2020/21 plans in December 2021 reporting in March 2022.
140. Institutions should consider monitoring and evaluation processes at an early stage. As noted above, in the strategic review section, the development of a plan should be informed by the intelligence gathered by an institution as part of its monitoring and evaluation of previous plans.

Monitoring

141. This section must address two of the general requirements of a fee and access plan. All fee and access plans must set out both how the governing body intends to monitor compliance with the general requirements and fee levels of a fee and access plan as well as how the governing body will monitor performance against the objectives set out in the plan.

Evaluation

142. Given that institutions have a duty to provide information to HEFCW to carry out its monitoring and evaluation function, institutions may allocate fee and access plan investment in evaluating the effectiveness of their own fee and access plans.
143. If institutions allocate fee income to evaluating plans we would expect institutions' to set out their approaches to, and progress with, evaluation with reference to their evaluation frameworks. We requested evaluation frameworks be submitted to us with their 2017/18 fee and access plan compliance and effectiveness reports, recognising that the frameworks will be updated periodically to ensure they remain fit for purpose. We will continue to request evaluation framework updates to as part of our duty to evaluate the effectiveness of fee and access plans.

²¹www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2018/W18%2031HE%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20of%202017_18%20Fee%20and%20Access%20Plans.pdf

Section Three: HEFCW's 2020/21 fee and access plan process

144. This section provides information on the process for submitting a fee and access plan and the process for the approval.
145. Institutions must include the following information:
- regulatory information that demonstrates that institutions can evidence it can enter the regulated sector in Wales (information provided in Section one)
 - a fee and access plan which sets out its commitment to improving equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education (information provided in Section two)
 - evidence of governing body approval.
146. Institutions will be supplied with three templates for: the regulatory information and the fee and access plan, including a governing body approval form; an excel document to supplement both the regulatory information and the fee and access plan; and a table that sets out how objectives align with Welsh Government categories. For institutions that are currently regulated HEFCW will pre-populate the templates where it holds the relevant data. For institutions applying for a fee and access plan for the first time, HEFCW will provide a standard template, without investment information, on request from regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk.

Submission

147. Institutions seeking HEFCW approval of a 2020/21 fee and access plan by late July/early August 2019 must submit plans by **Friday 22 March 2019**. Fee and access plans submitted later may not be approved by late July/early August 2019. If institutions intend to make submissions outside this timeframe, they should contact HEFCW to agree a timeline for their submission.
148. The governing body of an institution is responsible for a fee and access plan and must approve applications to HEFCW. All fee and access plan submissions to HEFCW must include an institutional process of student engagement. HEFCW will require a governing body to approve the final re-submission of a plan, where the application has been revised following discussions between HEFCW and the institution. Delays in the governing body confirming its approval at the final stages of the process may impact on HEFCW's ability to approve a fee and access plan. Institutions may wish to secure delegated authority from their governing bodies, if appropriate.
149. Completed fee and access plan applications should be uploaded to our secure site at www.hefcw.ac.uk/uploadfap.aspx by **Friday 22 March 2019**. All file names should be clearly labelled with the institutions name, a description of the file and the date of submission. Please note that there is a maximum file name length of 255 characters. Please submit **Annex**

A and **Annex Ai** in Word format and **Annex B** in Excel format. The governing body sign off should be submitted in PDF format.

HEFCW's assessment of fee and access plans

150. HEFCW's initial analysis of fee and access plans will be considered with HEFCW's new Regulation Committee.²² HEFCW will provide initial feedback to institutions, taking account of the Committee's advice. HEFCW initial feedback will be sent to institutions within eight weeks of the submissions.
151. HEFCW will use the following criteria to assess fee and access plan applications:

The robustness of evidence as it relates to:

Regulatory information

- i. being an institution in Wales
- ii. providing higher education
- iii. being a charity
- iv. financial viability
- v. effective organisation and management of financial affairs
- vi. the quality of the education provided or provided on its behalf and
- vii. the fee limits not exceeding the maximum applicable fee limit specified in the legislation.

The robustness of evidence as it relates to:

Fee and access plans

- i. the clarity of information provided on fee levels determined or specified in the plan
- ii. addressing how institutions will provide clear information to potential and current students about their aggregate fees for the completion of their course
- iii. explaining how student partnership has informed the development of the fee and access plan
- iv. how the strategic review builds on an evaluation of relevant practice, explains lessons learned from previous plans, highlights areas for improvement, explains alignment with the strategic objectives of the institution and responds to relevant Welsh Government, HEFCW, regional and national priorities
- v. the strength of the data and evidence-base underpinning the selection of under-represented groups in higher education
- vi. the clarity of the objectives and the extent to which they demonstrate sufficiently the institution's intentions to improve equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education
- vii. how activities and services will contribute to delivering the objectives, how they are focused on under-represented groups and how they detail the types of financial services being made available
- viii. target-setting which demonstrates to HEFCW the level of ambition and the pace of improvement to be made

²² www.hefcw.ac.uk/council_and_committees/committees/regulation_committee.aspx

- ix. an appropriate proportion of fee income being invested to improve equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education
- x. detailing governance arrangements, including how the institution will monitor and evaluate the 2020/21 fee and access plan.

We will also take account of the following to inform our considerations of the strength of plans and whether, and if so what, more could be done to improve performance, demonstrate ambition and widening access to higher education:

- i. the executive summary providing a clear and succinct overview of the contents of the plan
- ii. commitments to alignment with the Competition and Markets Authority guidelines for higher education
- iii. the extent to which Welsh Government priorities, including as outlined in HEFCW remit letters are reflected in the plan
- iv. the extent to which the objectives support the progression and success of students from under-represented groups through higher education
- v. the mapping of objectives to Welsh Government categories
- vi. the extent to which targets take account of HEFCW's National Measures for Higher Education performance
- vii. the use of milestone targets which contribute to longer-term targets.

HEFCW's fee and access plan approval and rejection process

- 152. Once HEFCW's fee and access plan analysis and iteration processes with institutions have been completed, HEFCW will approve or reject plans.
- 153. HEFCW cannot approve fee and access plans unless it is satisfied that institutions have both provided sufficient regulatory information and demonstrated satisfactorily their commitment to improving equality of opportunity and promoting higher education.

Approval and publication

- 154. HEFCW will confirm fee and access plan approval by writing to an institution's governing body.
- 155. Successful institutions must publish their approved plans on their websites, including the date of HEFCW approval and the date of publication.²³ We expect plans to be published on the same web page that tuition fees are advertised. The plans can be linked to other webpages as necessary. It would be good practice to include a summary of the plan on the webpage with the link. The link to the published fee and access plan must be shared with HEFCW within 14 days of approval, allowing for providers to publish plans bilingually. Any changes to the link must be communicated to HEFCW within 7 days.

²³ This guidance indicates that the regulatory information (section one) of the fee and access plan is for HEFCW and not for publication.

156. Fee and access plan applications can be submitted to HEFCW in an institution's corporate style, recognising that the approved version will be published and forms part of the institution's corporate documentation. However, the published text **must** not vary in any way from the text in the plan approved by HEFCW.
157. There is no need to publish any HEFCW guidance notes, including those which form part of the template.
158. HEFCW will notify the Student Loans Company of approved fee and access plans and full-time undergraduate fee limits for 2020/21 as agreed in the fee and access plan. Additionally, HEFCW will confirm the full-time undergraduate courses being delivered on behalf of regulated institutions with the SLC.

Rejection

159. Any institution that does not have a fee and access plan approved following HEFCW's approval process as set out above, may continue its dialogue with HEFCW and/or be subject to the processes set out below, and described in the diagram in **Appendix C**, relating to HEFCW's processes for intending to reject a plan.
160. If HEFCW is not satisfied that institutions meets its criteria for approving a plan after reasonable iteration is complete, it will write to governing bodies (sent to the Chair and the Clerk of the governing body and copied to the Accountable Officer) to set out the reasons for its proposed intention to reject plans.
161. HEFCW will not approve a fee and access plan where:
 - i. regulatory information provided by the institutions is considered to be inadequate²⁴;
 - ii. institutions' fee limits exceed the maximum applicable fee limit specified in the legislation²⁵; or
 - iii. institutions' governing body has not confirmed its approval of the plan.
162. HEFCW may not approve a fee and access plan where it considers HEFCW's criteria for the assessment of the fee and access plans are not satisfactorily met.
163. If HEFCW intends to reject a fee and access plan it must provide the institutions' governing body with a warning notice. The diagram in **Appendix C** sets out the stages of the notice process.

²⁴ Information regarding being an institution in Wales, providing higher education and being a charity that is financially viable with sound arrangements for the organisation and management of its financial affairs and quality of all the education provided by, or on behalf of, it.

²⁵ The Higher Education (Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015

Exit from the regulatory system

164. There are three ways in which a regulated institution can exit the regulatory system including:
- i. not applying for a fee and access plan to be approved²⁶
 - ii. not having an application for a plan approved or
 - iii. having an approved plan withdrawn.
165. HEFCW has a statutory duty to withdraw approval of a fee and access plan where it is no longer satisfied that an institution meets the definition of a regulated institution. HEFCW has powers to withdraw its approval of a fee and access plan in other circumstances.²⁷
166. Where a regulated institution exits the system:
- i. HEFCW's powers in relation to the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of, the institution continue to apply in relation to the institution's designated courses
 - ii. HEFCW may give the governing body of an institution a direction to take (or not take) specific steps for the purpose of dealing with or preventing a failure to comply with a general requirement of an approved fee and access plan if at the time of the failure the fee and access plan was in force
 - iii. the institution's governing body will be required to ensure that fees, for academic years starting within the period to which its fee plan related, continue to comply with the applicable fee limit and
 - iv. the institution's governing body is required to ensure that students do not lose fee protection and that fees, for academic years starting within the period of its most recent fee and access plan, continue to comply with the relevant fee limit for the duration of a student's course.

Variation of a fee and access plan

167. While fee and access plans are in force²⁸, regulated institutions are required to inform HEFCW immediately of any changes to their charitable status, principal location or activities that may impact on their ability to satisfy the criteria under Section 2(3) of the 2015 Act.
168. Where there are any changes to approved fee and access plans and their commitments, regulated institutions should discuss the implications of these changes with HEFCW and their student representatives at the earliest opportunity and in advance of any changes being made. Such changes may include, but are not limited to:

²⁶ HEFCW will invite fee and access plans annually, until further notice.

²⁷ HEFCW's powers for intervention are set out in its [Statement of Intervention](#).

²⁸ The period in which a plan is "in force" is the period beginning with the day on which it is approved and ending: either the day on which the period to which the plan relates expires (i.e. the end of the academic year in respect of which the plan has effect); or the date of a withdrawal notice under section 38 or 39, whichever of those occurrences is the earlier.

- changes to tuition fees
- provision at new locations
- new or revised arrangements for higher education provided on behalf of institutions or
- where a body providing learning and teaching on behalf of institutions ceases to be a charity while the fee and access plan is in force.

Variations to fee and access plans will require HEFCW agreement.

169. Any financial commitments to students made in plans approved by HEFCW, must be honoured.
170. Where a published plan is varied with HEFCW approval, institutions must publish its revised plan and include the revised date of HEFCW's approval and the revised date of publication. Where a variation to a plan is not approved by HEFCW the existing published plan will stand.
171. Detailed guidance on varying a fee and access plan is provided on the [HEFCW website](#). HEFCW will, at two points in the 2019/20 academic year, invite variations for the 2020/21 academic year, should institutions wish to do so. We expect to invite variations around November/December 2019 and June/July 2020. These dates may change, including if there are policy changes impacting on fee and access plans.
172. Variations that include changes to fee levels should be made before students are accepted on to a course. Where institutions are seeking a variation to add a new course students must not be accepted on to the course until the variation is approved by HEFCW and the agreed course and fee is confirmed. Institutions must ensure that commitments to students about their fees are honoured and comply with CMA guidelines.

Section Four: Notes for completing Tables A to G in Annex B

Notes for completing the Tables in Annex B

173. These notes should be read when completing **Tables A to G** of Annex B. The notes give guidance on information that should be returned as part of the fee and access plan application. In completing the tables, institutions should take account of section two of the guidance on fee and access plans, in particular paragraphs 34-41 relating to course control.
174. The tables collect information as follows:
- **Tables A, B, C and D** collect information about *provision under the current fee regime* as defined in the glossary on the [HEFCW website](#), that is *controlled by institutions*
 - **Table E** collects information about *partnerships that are not under the current fee regime* plus information about *courses that institutions validates but does not control* whether or not they are under the current fee regime
 - **Table F** collects information about *partnerships with non-UK partners and campuses* that are based outside the UK
 - **Table G** collects target information, by objective.

More detail is provided in paragraphs 183-214 below for each table and in the text in the template. Definitions of terms used in this section are contained in the glossary.

175. Examples of how to complete the tables can be found on our [website](#).
176. The tables published in this circular are sample tables only. Institutions must complete an electronic version of the tables. An individualised fee and access plan template, in Excel format containing the tables to complete, will be sent to currently regulated institutions. This will be pre-populated by us with information from the 2019/20 fee and access plan in **Tables A and B** relating to the amount that was expected to be invested in equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education, evaluation, forecast expenditure, reaching wider and student financial support. Institutions not regulated currently should contact regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk for a copy of the template for completion.
177. Where partnerships are expected to be in place for the 2020/21 academic year but will not be finalised at the time of submitting the 2020/21 fee and access plan application to us in March, institutions should exclude them from the submission. This applies to all tables (**Tables D, E and F**) collecting information about partnership agreements. If a new partnership is finalised in 2020/21 and relates to a full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) course requiring student support then a variation to the plan will be required.

178. The tables to be completed contain a number of validation checks. These are included to ensure that data are consistent between tables where appropriate and to flag where levels of investment or forecast expenditure are not as expected. Details of the checks and an indication of whether a check has been passed are contained in the first worksheet of the Excel template, labelled '**Validation**'. Where percentage of total income forecast to be invested is lower than in 2019/20, or the percentage of expenditure on student support is lower than in 2019/20, you will be prompted to explain the reason why it is lower on the worksheet.
179. In addition to the validation worksheet, there are eight other worksheets in Annex B. One worksheet each for **Tables A to G** and a worksheet containing lookup lists for the other worksheets, labelled '**Lists**'. This worksheet is for reference only and no information should be entered in the worksheet or deleted from it.
180. **Information should only be entered in the tables in the cells shaded in yellow.** Other cells in the worksheet should not be amended in any way. This is to maintain formulae such as those used to calculate totals and to ensure validation checks and comparisons can be carried out.
181. If you have any questions about the workbook or have any technical difficulties with it, please contact the Statistics and Funding Team at hestats@hefcw.ac.uk.

Audit of data returned on Annex B

182. Processes and data used in the completion of the tables in Annex B are included in the scope of the external audit of higher education data. We expect the annual internal audits of higher education systems and processes to cover data included in Annex B. HEFCW may request further detail on how targets included on **Table G** of Annex B were calculated and we may commission an external audit that focuses on the processes and data used in the calculation of the targets.

Table A - Fee levels and fee income and investment, 2020/21

183. **Table A** should be completed with data about fee income and fee levels relating to full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) provision that the institutions applying for a fee and access plan control.
184. Institutions that have specified fee levels in their fee and access plan will need to replicate those fee levels in this table. Institutions that have determined the basis on which they will calculate their fee levels will need to set out their forecasted fee income for 2020/21. This document is not public and HEFCW will not be holding institutions to those fee levels being forecast for 2020/21.
185. Where not all proposed fees charged are the same, average fees are requested in total and for full-time undergraduate provision and PGCE (QTS) provision separately. The averages should match exactly with averages

calculated from data returned on **Tables C and D**. Institutions providing courses that have a year out, such as a year out on an industrial placement, or a year abroad, and different fee levels are charged for these years, then this should be taken account of in calculating the average fee and the total fee income returned on **Table A**.

186. The section *Levels of fee income and Investment* (paragraphs 75 to 82) provides information on the level of fee income expected to be invested in equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education.
187. Fee income from the current fee regime, split into that from full-time undergraduate provision and that from PGCE (QTS) provision, is collected. The amount of the total to be invested in equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education is requested and the percentage this represents of the total is calculated automatically in the table. HEFCW expects that the proportion of income invested in equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education in 2020/21 in total for the whole plan is at least the proportion invested in 2019/20. If this is not the case, this will be flagged up in the table and an explanation must be entered in the box below the table.

Table B - Fee and access plan income forecast expenditure, 2020/21

188. **Table B** should be completed with a breakdown of the forecast expenditure of the income to be invested returned on **Table A**. Expenditure should be recorded against each of the fee and access plan objectives (paragraphs 104-110 refer). Where expenditure relates to more than one objective it should be split across the objectives. All objectives must have expenditure returned against them. The same total investment for equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education and the percentage of expenditure in each of the two groups of objectives is shown in the table for information.
189. We collect the forecast expenditure on student financial support and the anticipated numbers of students supported. The student support figure as a percentage of total forecast expenditure is shown in the table along with the expenditure, percentage and students numbers from 2019/20. Where the proportion to be spent on student financial support is lower than in 2019/20, this is flagged up in the table and an explanation must be given in the box below the table.
190. We will also be collecting forecast expenditure on evaluations of the effectiveness of fee and access plans and income being spent on Reaching Wider.

Table C - Fee levels and fee income for full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) students under the current fee regime, 2020/21

191. **Table C** asks for the fee levels either specified in the fee and access plan or forecast for 2020/21. Institutions that have specified fee levels in their fee and access plan will need to replicate those fee levels in this table. Institutions that have determined the basis on which they will calculate their fee levels will

need to set out their forecasted fee income for 2020/21. This document is not public and HEFCW will not be holding institutions to those fee levels being forecast for 2020/21. For further information refer to paragraphs 75-82.

192. Only information relation to courses that institutions provide directly should be included on this table such as courses:
 - provided directly and validated by the institution applying for the fee and access plan
 - provided directly and validated by another body but are not part of a franchise arrangement (could include a subsidiary of a validated body).
193. Institutions providing courses that have a year out, such as a year out on an industrial placement, or a year abroad, and different fee levels are charged for these years, then they should return data on **Table C** to reflect the different fee levels charged.
194. If institutions charge the same fee for all courses or cohorts but have provision that they do not validate, they should include all their full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) provision under the current fee regime on **Table C**. A row of data should be included for each validating body plus a row of data for any provision that they validate.
195. **Table C** requests information on the proposed fee, the qualification aim and subject (or an alternative grouping can be used where this is more appropriate). The year(s) of the course that the fee level applies to and also whether the provision is PGCE (QTS) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) is required. The forecast student numbers used in the calculation of the average fee returned on **Table A** are also collected. If institutions are completing this table because they have provision they do not validate, they should provide details of the validation body. The total expected income is calculated automatically in the table using the student numbers and the proposed fee.
196. Forecast student numbers should be based on the latest available information. In analysing applications, we will make comparisons between the student and financial forecasts supplied to us in July 2018, and any updates supplied, including data returned on **Tables C and D**. We will not expect an exact match between the figures. Student forecast data collected in July will have been based on assumed completions and may have been updated with more current information. Fee income forecasts will also be different, due to non-completions and fee waivers, for example. Where differences are significant we may request some commentary to explain the differences seen.

Table D - Fee levels and fee income for full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) students under the current fee regime for partnership provision based in the UK, 2020/21

197. **Table D** asks for details about the courses institutions include in **Table A**, that are delivered on their behalf as part of a franchise arrangement, or delivered by a subsidiary. If they charge different fee levels for different types of

provision, or have provision that they do not validate, the information returned here plus the information returned on **Table C** will give the same average fee levels returned on **Table A**. If fee levels are the same for all provision, and institutions validate all the provision, they should still include details of partnerships on **Table D**, even though they did not complete **Table C**.

Returned on this table is information relating to courses that:

- are franchised out to another charitable provider
- are delivered by a charitable subsidiary, where the institutions applying for the fee and access plan are the parent of that subsidiary, and the subsidiary is not submitting its own fee and access plan.

198. Collected on this table are the name and address of the partner, confirmation that the partner is a charity, the date of the partnership agreement and confirmation, if the date of the agreement is before 1 September 2015, that there is an addendum to say that the provision is covered under the HE Act. **If no such addendum exists, institutions must submit an explanation with the completed annex.**
199. Collected in the table are details of the qualification aim and the course title of the provision, the year(s) of the course that the information relates to, the forecast number of students and the proposed fee. See paragraph 196 above relating to the return of student numbers. The total expected income is calculated automatically in the table using the student numbers and the proposed fee.
200. HEFCW reserves the right to require copies of the partnership agreements returned on this table.

Table E - Partnership arrangements and fee income for students of *all modes and levels*, including further education and below, for partnership provision based in the UK that is not already included on Table D, 2020/21

201. **Table E** asks for details of all partnership arrangements with charitable or non-charitable providers that are in the UK where the students are based in the UK and **have not already been included on Table D**. This includes franchise and subsidiary arrangements that are not part of the current fee regime and validation arrangements, whether under the current fee regime or not, that institutions have with other providers, where the other provider controls the courses. This includes provision delivered at other levels of study where institutions that are not awarding bodies are delivering courses under validation arrangements.
202. Where institutions have other types of provision they deliver in collaboration with a partner, those arrangements should be included here also. Returned on this table is information relating to courses that:
- institutions franchise out to another charitable or non-charitable provider
 - are delivered by a charitable subsidiary, where institutions are the parent of that subsidiary, and the subsidiary is submitting their own fee and access plan

- are delivered by a non-charitable subsidiary, where institutions are the parent of that subsidiary
 - are delivered in collaboration with a partner
 - institutions do not provide and that you validate only, whether or not the provider is a charity.
203. Collected on this table are the type of partnership arrangement, chosen from a drop down list, the name and address of the partner, the date of the partnership agreement and confirmation that if the date of the agreement is before 1 September 2015, whether there is an addendum to say that the provision is covered under the HE Act. Also collected are the forecast number of students and the forecast total income from the arrangement. See paragraph 196 above relating to the return of student numbers.
204. HEFCW reserves the right to require copies of the partnership agreements returned on this table.

Table F – Partnership and campus arrangements and fee income for students of all modes and levels, including further education and below, for partnership and campus provision based outside the UK, 2020/21

205. **Table F** collects information about partnerships with partners that are not in the UK, or campuses outside the UK, where the students are based outside the UK. Campuses and all types of partnerships should be included in this table, including a physical presence (e.g. a campus of the institutions), a local partnership (e.g. a franchise arrangement or a validation arrangement) and distance learning only where the student is based outside the UK and the course is provided in partnership with a non-UK partner. All modes and levels of study, including all modes and levels of study in further education and below, should be included. This includes provision delivered at other levels of study where institutions that are not awarding bodies are delivering courses under validation arrangements.
206. The type of partnership or campus arrangement is collected in the first column. Six types of provision are included in the drop down list with an additional category of 'Other' in case there are circumstances which do not fit into those types. The types match those used in the in-year TNE survey carried out by HEFCW in 2015. They are:
- campus-based provision: includes provision at an International Branch Campus
 - provision delivered at a partner institution – franchise programme: includes franchised programmes, 'Flying Faculty' and 'Outreach' arrangement
 - provision delivered at a partner institution – other collaborative programme: includes joint venture, independent overseas HEI (bearing a UK recognised body's name) and double/dual/joint degree/award
 - distance learning provision: includes flexible/distributed learning/e-learning
 - validation programmes: includes quality assurance arrangements

- any combination of the above types of provision: includes blended learning and any other combination of the above types.
207. Also collected on this table are the name and address of the partner, including the country, the date of the partnership agreement or campus commencement date and confirmation that if the date of the partnership agreement is before 1 September 2015 there is an addendum to say that the provision is covered under the HE Act. Also collected are the forecast total number of students and the forecast total income from the arrangement. See paragraph 196 above relating to the return of student numbers.
208. HEFCW reserves the right to require copies of the partnership agreements returned on this table.

Table G - Targets

209. **Table G** collects data about targets and objectives set by the institutions. Further information can be found in paragraphs 102 to 129.
210. A description of the target, that is what the target aims to achieve, should be given in the first column of the table, including, where the target descriptor is numerical, providing either a percentage or a number or both. The second column asks for the objective, and must correspond to those listed in Table B relating to equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education. All objectives must have at least one target included against that category in **Table G**.
211. The third column (split into two sub-columns) requests information about whether the target is the responsibility of more than one fee and access plan institutions. The fourth column asks for the baseline year which will normally be the year for which the most recent data are available, or if this is not the case, an explanation should be provided in the commentary column. The fifth column asks for the baseline data, for targets based on numbers and/or percentages. We want both number and percentage for context, regardless of whether the target descriptor includes only a number or percentage.
212. The seventh column asks for the target achievement that the institution is aiming towards. A percentage, a number, or both where possible, must be included. Where only a number or only a percentage is given, contextual information should be included in the next column. For numerical targets, contextual information or assumptions used to calculate the target should be included where these have not been included as the target. For example, if the percentage increase of students from a particular group is a target, you should include in the contextual information the expected number increase of this group and/or the expected population of students that the percentage is based on. Population numbers should be consistent with other information provided in this Annex and your latest student number forecasts, i.e. those returned to HEFCW in July 2018 or updated figures. This is only required for the 2020/21 milestone targets and the baseline data and not for future targets.

213. The contextual data provides information about how the target was calculated, the scale of the activity and the level of performance. It will enable an assessment of the extent of the ambition and progress to be made by HEFCW and the board of governors. The contextual information will be used to understand more fully whether any increases or decreases in the target translate to significant differences in numbers of students where percentages are given or in percentages where numbers are given.
214. Some points to note in completing Table G:
- Targets should be sufficient in number, and at the right level, to inform monitoring. Some targets, where they are not sufficiently SMART, may be better placed and articulated in the narrative provision section of plans, this includes targets that are without data or baselines. Targets should enable HEFCW, and the governing body, to account for progress and investment.
 - The Communities First programme was phased out in March 2018. Fee and access plan targets based on Communities First data will therefore be difficult to monitor.
 - For targets based on destinations that relate to outcomes from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, baseline data should be based on the HESA destination of leavers from higher education (DLHE) survey. Targets may therefore need to be more ambitious than when both the baseline and target were based on the DLHE to take account of the extended time period for the new survey.
 - We recognise that in reviewing targets, including taking account of HEFCW National Measures to focus target setting that some institutions may wish to change previous targets. Where this is the case, please provide a full explanation for target changes, particularly where targets are not continued in 2020/21.
 - Plans must include targets that are achievable by the end of academic year 2020/21, or they must include 2020/21 milestone targets that contribute towards a longer-term target, to enable progress to be reported by December 2021. For example, targets measured by achievement against UK performance indicator benchmarks should set targets indicating progress against HESA's 2019/20 performance indicators for HEFCW to analyse targets against benchmark data available by December 2021.
 - Where the target is measureable by the end of 2021 but does not relate to 2020/21 data, a note should be made in the commentary box to explain the data used.

Fee and access plan template 2020/21 Annex B return grid

Template illustrating which Higher Education Provider returns provision on a fee and access plan and on which table

Situation	Level of provision	Provider (franchisor)	Provider (franchisee)	Provider (validating body)	Provider (with provision validated by another body)	Provider (parent of subsidiary)	Provider (subsidiary of parent)
Own provision at provider, controlled and validated by that provider	Higher education			Table C (where current fee regime fee levels differ)			
Own provision at provider, controlled by the provider but validated by another body				Table E	Table C (whether current fee regime fee levels differ or not)		
Provision at a subsidiary body of a parent provider, validated by the parent provider or another body						Table D and/or Table E [if provision is controlled by the parent and is submitted on behalf of a subsidiary]	Table C (whether current fee regime fee levels differ or not) [if provision is controlled by the subsidiary and they submit their own fee and access plan]
Provision at subsidiary body of a parent provider, validated by the subsidiary body						Table D and/or Table E [if provision is controlled by the parent and is submitted on behalf of a subsidiary]	Table C (where current fee regime fee levels differ) [if provision is controlled by the subsidiary and they submit their own fee and access plan]

Fee and access plan template 2020/21 Annex B return grid (continued)

Who returns the provision on their fee plan, on which table

Situation	Level of provision	Provider (franchisor)	Provider (franchisee)	Provider (validating body)	Provider (with provision validated by another body)	Provider (parent of subsidiary)	Provider (subsidiary of parent)	
Franchised provision, validated by the Welsh franchisor	Higher Education	Tables D and/or E						
Franchised provision, validated by a Welsh body other than the Welsh franchisor		Tables D and/or E						
Franchised provision, validated by a Welsh body other than the non-Welsh franchisor		Will not be returned as the franchisor is not Welsh						
Franchised provision, validated by the non-Welsh franchisor		Will not be returned as the franchisor is not Welsh						
Franchised provision, validated by a non-Welsh body other than the Welsh franchisor		Tables D and/or E						
Franchised provision, validated by a non-Welsh body other than the non-Welsh franchisor		Will not be returned as the franchisor is not Welsh						
Provision at all levels at non-UK campuses and partners (all types)	All	Table F		Table F		Table F		
Own provision at below HE level at provider	FE and below	Will not be returned as the provision is below HE level and is not part of a partnership arrangement						
Franchised provision at below HE level to schools and FEIs (franchised out from Welsh franchisor)	FE and below	Table E						

Franchisor = the provider that franchises out the provision to another provider as part of a franchise agreement and who is in control of that provision

Franchisee = the provider that provides the provision on behalf of the franchisor

In the above grid, providers and subsidiaries are assumed to be charitable where necessary for the return of data in the specified table.

Appendix 1: Summary of key changes made to the 2020/21 fee and access plan guidance

1. The 2020/21 fee and access plan guidance has been amended, including to take account of the findings and recommendations of the Advance HE's review of the first three years of fee and access plans under the 2015 Act. The new Regulation Committee's advice has been taken into account. There have been some key changes as set out below, including:
 - taking account of HEFCW remit letter requirements²⁹ and Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student finance Arrangements (the Diamond Review)³⁰ recommendations on strengthening fee and access plans and considering institutions' match funding of collaborative widening access initiatives respectively
 - updating the guidance to make clearer reference to the general requirements of a fee and access plan
 - clarifying guidance for fee levels, recognising the potential for changes to tuition fees in light of the Augar review in England³¹
 - revising the fee and access plan section to encourage improved objective-setting and clarifying our expectations about activities or services, targets and investment
 - adapting **Table B** of the Annex so that investment is set out against objectives rather than Welsh Government categories
 - setting out aspects of fee and access plan submissions that will be the subject of increased HEFCW scrutiny in 2020/21
 - setting clearer expectations around monitoring and evaluation of fee and access plans.

Our new [Regulation Committee](#) will review the fee and access plan guidance at its autumn 2019 meeting, in the light of its assessment of 2020/21 fee and access plan applications. This review may result in further changes to the 2021/22 guidance. Any further changes will be discussed at the seminar for regulated institutions to be arranged later in the year.

²⁹ [2017-18 HEFCW remit letter](#) paragraph 4.6 on 'implementing the Diamond package'.

³⁰ [Diamond Review](#) paragraph 9:13.2 'we are clear that, while our proposals will impact very positively on the economics of widening access there is a strong case for funding, probably on a joint basis with HE provider or consortia of HE provider, to promote and incentivise aspiration-raising and the social aspects of widening access.'

³¹ www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-launches-major-review-of-post-18-education

Appendix 2: Timetable for the 2020/21 fee and access plan process for those institutions intending to secure approval by June/July 2019

Activity	Indicative date ³²
Institutions to submit fee and access plan applications.	Friday 22 March 2019
HEFCW/institutions dialogue on fee and access plan applications.	26 March – 31 July 2019
Regulation Committee to consider applications	Early May 2019
HEFCW to send initial feedback to individual institutions on their applications.	Week ending 17 May 2019
Institutions to submit revised fee and access plan applications following HEFCW feedback.	Week ending 28 June 2019
HEFCW to send feedback to institutions on their revised fee and access plan application.	Week ending 5 July 2019
Institutions to submit revised fee and access plan applications following HEFCW feedback	Week ending 19 July 2019
HEFCW to inform institutions of the outcome of their fee and access plan application.	Late July/early August 2019
Institutions publish approved plans online. HEFCW expects this to be within two weeks of approval.	August 2019
Fee and access plan appeals process begins.	August 2019
Institutions compliance and effectiveness reports on the 2020/21 fee and access plan to be submitted to HEFCW.	December 2021

HEFCW is required to provide an annual report to the Welsh Ministers on how HEFCW has exercised its functions by virtue of the Act, including fee and access plan monitoring by March 2022.

³² Please note dates may vary slightly to ensure HEFCW is able to implement fully the fee and access process for 2020/21 fee and access plans, including sufficient dialogue with institutions.

2020/21 Fee and Access Plan Application Template

Institution name:	
Institution address:	

	Main contact	Alternate contact
Contact name:		
Job title:		
Telephone number:		
Email address:		

Fee and access plan - guidance note

HEFCW requires fee and access plan institutions to provide relevant, recent information and verifiable data. If the information and data provided are not sufficiently clear, or it is difficult for HEFCW to reconcile with other information it holds, HEFCW will contact institutions for further information and/or clarification to enable us to understand the application more fully.

Institutions applying for a fee and access plan should complete both this template and Annex B, which contains Tables A to G in an Excel workbook.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Institution name:	
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2020/21 Fee and Access Plan Application Template

Section 1. Regulatory Information

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Regulatory information to be provided to HEFCW - guidance note

1. This section provides guidance on information that institutions applying for a fee and access plan are required to submit to demonstrate that they are eligible to apply for a fee and access plan.
2. Where HEFCW has information and/or data already submitted to us we will use it to evidence the institution's ability to meet the fee and access plan regulatory requirements where we have the governing body's approval. We will use the most up-to-date information, where we have the permission of institutions. We have indicated in the application template the information we propose to use for currently regulated institutions. The application template includes a set of statements, which institutions' governing bodies should sign up to in submitting applications, including confirming HEFCW's use of currently held information. Additionally, institutions can submit new, additional or more recent information to inform HEFCW's assessment of the fee and access plan. Working with regulated institutions and other interested parties, HEFCW has reconsidered information and data requirements for fee and access applications in 2020/21 following its review of the 2018/19 fee and access plan process and they remain largely as in 2018/19.
3. HEFCW will approve a fee and access plan only if institutions meets all criteria relating to being an institution in Wales that provides higher education and is a charity and that there is sufficient evidence of the institutions' financial viability, organisation and management of financial affairs and quality of the education provided by it or on its behalf.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Table 1: Criteria for being an institution

Examples of organisations HEFCW regards as institutions include: universities formed by Royal Charter, Higher Education Corporations and Further Education Corporations and bodies that train members of the education workforce. A provider which is a charity providing HE in Wales but which is not otherwise regarded as an institution must apply to the Welsh Government to be designated as an institution before it submits a fee and access plan application to HEFCW and it must provide evidence to HEFCW of Welsh Government's confirmation of its status as an institution.

Institutions must provide the following information:

Evidence of the organisation's status, as outlined in the paragraph above and, where appropriate, evidence of the Welsh Government's confirmation of the organisation's status as an institution.

[Regulated institutions with approved fee and access plans do not have to provide this information. Evidence of the Welsh Government's confirmation of institutions' status as an institution is required where HEFCW does not already have this.]

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Table 2: Criteria for being in Wales

HEFCW will regard an institution as being in Wales by taking account of a range of information, including the extent to which its learning and teaching activities are either wholly or principally carried out in Wales and where its full-time equivalent (FTE) student numbers are located: see Section 57(3) (a) of the 2015 Act.

Institutions' must provide the following information:

<i>Institutions' name</i>	
<i>Principal address and legal address where different</i>	[for regulated institutions with approved fee and access plans this should be provided only where addresses are different from information provided in 2018/19 approved plans]
<i>UK provider registration number</i>	[for regulated institutions with approved fee and access plans this information should be provided only where information is different from that provided in the 2018/19 approved plans]
<i>Any other names under which institutions' operates</i>	[for regulated institutions with approved fee and access plans this information should be provided only where information is different from that provided in the 2018/19 approved plans]
<i>Where the learning and teaching activities are located¹ (see information provided in HEFCW</i>	[For institutions that subscribe to HESA, we will use data returned on the HESA student record and aggregate offshore record (AOR). Where the

¹ We will determine the location of the student as follows. For students recorded on the HESA student record: if a student is distance learning, they will be counted at the location of their home address; if they are franchised to another institution, they will be counted at the location of the other institution; if they are attending a subsidiary, they will be counted at the location of the subsidiary; otherwise they will be counted at the location of the campus they are recorded as attending. The counting will be done in the order listed. This means that a distance learner who is franchised out will be counted at the location of their home address, not the location of the franchise. All students returned on the HESA aggregate offshore record (AOR) will be counted as being outside Wales. For information on the AOR see footnote 3 below. This definition is consistent with where distance learning students are counted for the purposes of determining fundability status in the [HESES survey, Annex C](#).

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

<p><i>2020/21 fee and access plan guidance: Criteria on being an institution in Wales)</i></p>	<p>subscription type does not include return of the AOR to HESA, information about any provision taking place outside the UK should be provided here]</p>	
<p><i>A link to institutions' webpages relating to institutions' learning and teaching activities</i></p>		
<p><i>Where the majority of full-time equivalent (FTE) students are located. Institutions must state the total number of <u>all</u> FTE students attending courses delivered in Wales compared to the total number of <u>all</u>² FTE students including those attending courses delivered outside Wales.</i></p> <p>Where data are provided in this section, HEFCW reserves the right to undertake a visit to institutions to examine and understand the data and information provided.</p>	<p>The FTE total number of <u>all</u> students attending courses delivered in Wales:</p> <p>The FTE total number of <u>all</u> students including those attending courses delivered outside Wales:</p>	<p>[For institutions that subscribe to HESA we will use the student record and the aggregate offshore record (AOR)³ 2016/17 to calculate FTE by location. Where the subscription type does not include return of the AOR to HESA, the FTE of any provision taking place outside the UK should be provided here.]</p>

² 'All FTE students' includes all Welsh, home, EU and overseas students. 'Outside Wales' includes all students located in the rest of the UK, the EU and overseas.

³ The HESA AOR data provide student number counts, not FTE, and do not provide details of mode of study. In using the AOR data, we will assume the headcount number is equivalent to the FTE number. Where a provider has part-time transnational education (TNE) provision, this will lead to an inflated FTE outside Wales. Therefore, if using AOR data brings the percentage outside Wales to 50% or more, we will use data from other sources, such as an average FTE per student taken from the HESA student record, to supplement the calculation, to provide a more realistic estimate of the FTE outside Wales. For example, we will use the supplementary data to estimate the proportion of provision returned on the AOR that is part-time. We will consult with any provider where the revised calculation also results in a percentage outside Wales of 50% or more.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Criteria for being an institution in Wales providing higher education (HE) – guidance note

- Institutions with provision located in Wales validated by another body should list their qualifications in Wales, student numbers in Wales, locations in Wales and provide a list of higher education courses delivered in Wales as set out in their prospectus, with an electronic link to these courses whether in Wales or elsewhere.

Table 3: Criteria for providing higher education (HE)	
<p>HEFCW will regard an institution in Wales as providing higher education if the provision includes a higher education course/s regardless of mode, listed in in Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988 and set out in the Welsh Government guidance to HEFCW on Fee and Access Plans, paragraph 3.12.</p> <p>Institutions must provide the following information:</p>	
<p><i>A description of the higher education provided by institutions in Wales including the awards provided (see Welsh Government guidance 3.12 and 3.13).</i></p>	<p>[For institutions that subscribe to and return data to HESA, we will use that data]</p>
<p><i>The full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers of students in Wales that may be taking the higher education courses at the date of application and for three years previously.</i></p>	<p>[For institutions that subscribe to and return data to HESA, we will use that data, and where appropriate, LLWR data for previous years]</p>
<p><i>A list of the location/s of the higher education provision in Wales.</i></p>	<p>[Provide: (i) information about the locations of provision provided by institutions here and (ii) information about the location of partnership provision provided on behalf of institutions in the application in template Annex B]</p>
<p><i>Confirmation that the institution is in control of the course</i></p>	<p>[Institutions applying for a fee and access plan must provide documentation from the awarding body that confirm they are in control of the course]</p>

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Table 4: Criteria on being a charity

All Higher Education Corporations and Chartered Universities in Wales, which receive funding from HEFCW, are registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Institutions must provide the following information:

<i>Institutions' charity registration number and the name and address of the charity regulator registering institutions.</i>	[Regulated institutions with approved fee and access plans are charities and therefore no further information is required from them]
<i>Where institutions are not registered with a charity regulator, please provide the reasons for this together with a copy of any governing document</i>	

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Information on meeting the requirements of a regulated institution – guidance note

6. Institutions must provide information about their financial viability, the arrangements for the organisation and management of financial affairs, and the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of institutions. For further information on the detail required, refer to the requirements of a regulated institution sections within HEFCW's 2020/21 fee and access plan guidance: *currency and sufficiency of information to be provided to HEFCW evidencing eligibility financial viability; the organisation and management of financial affairs; and the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of institutions.*
7. Where HEFCW holds sufficient, up-to date, financial and/or quality information about currently regulated institutions, HEFCW will use it, subject to permission being given. Since the data proposed were originally provided for purposes other than regulation under the 2015 Act, we will require confirmation by institutions' governing bodies that it is acceptable for HEFCW to use them for these purposes. We have provided examples of the information we propose to use for currently regulated institutions. Institutions are welcome to submit new, additional or more recent information to inform HEFCW's assessment.
8. Institutions should include their current strategic plan or provide a web reference to it, where HEFCW has not already received it plus full financial forecasts for the current year and future three years. Further information on the required format of the forecast information is provided in the *financial viability* section of the HEFCW fee and access plan guidance. The evidence should include a commentary on the assumptions.

Table 5: Financial Viability Institutions must provide information to HEFCW about its financial viability and sustainability, including evidence that it has a low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium to long-term. In addition, HEFCW will expect institutions to confirm formally that it is at low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium to long-term. Institutions must provide information to illustrate:	
<i>Institutions' corporate group structure, including details of all group companies or organisations (including subsidiaries, parent/holding companies and associate or joint ventures).</i>	
Financial viability – historical performance information: institutions should provide evidence of, or reference to information previously submitted to HEFCW relating to, annual reports and externally audited financial statements for the three years prior to the application.	[For universities which are regulated institutions with an approved fee and access plan, we will use the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' audited financial statements • Last 3 years' external audit annual reports]
Financial viability - financial strategy information: institutions should include a financial strategy, or reference to information previously submitted to HEFCW relating to the overall strategic plan and/or information which sets appropriate benchmarks and performance indicators, shows how resources are to be used and how activities and infrastructure will be financed. Information should include how institutions assess and review their sustainability, including the use of sustainability assessments.	[For universities with an approved fee and access plan, we will use (subject to confirmation) the financial forecast submitted in July 2018. (Where institutions have confirmed that we can use the financial forecast submitted in July 2018, institutions will need to either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm that their financial strategy remains unchanged • or provide a detailed explanation of the changes in financial strategy since the forecasts were submitted). Plus: Regulated institutions will still need to submit evidence relating to financial strategy as described. Regulated institutions, which have prepared an

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

	<p>ASSUR report, may satisfy the requirement for sustainability by submitting such a report, should they wish.]</p>
<p>Financial viability – forecast information: institutions should provide evidence (if necessary with the support of a parent company guarantee) or reference to evidence previously submitted to HEFCW demonstrating that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adequate cash flow to remain solvent, that is, sufficient liquidity to pay debts as they fall due and • an adequate balance sheet, that is, that they maintain a net total assets position and would not incur deficits if these would result in a net total liabilities position. 	<p>[For universities with an approved fee and access plan, we will use (subject to confirmation) the financial forecast submitted in July 2018. (Where institutions have confirmed that we can use the financial forecast submitted in July 2018, institutions will need to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm that their financial forecast assumptions remain unchanged • or provide a detailed explanation of the changes since the forecasts were submitted, including the headline figures relating to the changes)].

Table 6: The organisation and management of financial affairs

Institutions will need to provide evidence that is well-managed with sound management practices in place and the capacity to develop in line with its strategic plan and the financial strategy that supports its fee and access plan.

Institutions must provide information to illustrate that it:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has financial management processes that are well governed and controlled adequately and effectively.</i> 	<p>[For universities which are regulated institutions, we will (subject to your confirmation) use the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' internal audit annual reports, giving assurance levels over core financial controls • Last 3 years' financial forecasts • Information obtained from our assurance processes relating to governance structures including audit committee, finance committee or equivalent]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>plans and manages activities to remain viable.</i> 	<p>[For regulated institutions, we will use (subject to your confirmation) the financial forecast submitted in July 2018. Plus: In addition to financial forecast information, regulated institutions will still need to provide information on the institution's budget setting and monitoring process, and the process for the production, distribution and monitoring of management accounts]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has robust and comprehensive systems of risk management and internal control.</i> 	<p>[For universities which are regulated institutions, we will (subject to your confirmation) use the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' internal audit annual reports, giving assurance levels over risk management processes • Last 3 years' internal audit annual reports, giving overall internal control opinion]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has effective arrangements for the management and quality of data and for the</i> 	<p>[For universities which are currently regulated institutions, we will (subject to your confirmation) use the following data:</p>

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

<p><i>assurance of data used for internal decision making.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' internal audit reports of HE data systems and processes • The latest external data audit]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has regular, reliable, timely and adequate management accounts or equally robust information to monitor operational and financial performance.</i> 	<p>[Institutions should provide a brief overview of the information typically contained within their management accounts, how often these are produced and with whom they are shared. If institutions do not prepare management accounts, describe any other relevant processes]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>reports information regularly, comprehensively and correctly to appropriate senior management and those charged with governance.</i> 	<p>[For universities which are regulated institutions, HEFCW will (subject to your confirmation) use the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' internal audit annual reports, giving assurance levels over governance processes • Last governance effectiveness review, if undertaken externally]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>manages its estate in a sustainable way in line with an estates strategy.</i> 	<p>[An estates strategy or equivalent, as well as information on the monitoring of estates performance would help to provide evidence of managing the estate in a sustainable way]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>is able to meet all the necessary data capture and reporting requirements for HEFCW including those administered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and other bodies as required by HEFCW.</i> 	<p>[For regulated institutions, we will use (subject to confirmation) the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 3 years' internal audit reports of HE data systems and processes • The latest external data audit • The annual HESES survey • Data provided to the LLWR • Student, student destination, staff, estates, finance and business and community interaction data provided to HESA and • The annual assurance return.]

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>can comply with the principles of the Higher Education Code of Governance (Committee of University Chairs, December 2014) unless adherence to alternative, equally robust arrangements can be evidenced.</i> 	<p>[Amend/delete the following statements <u>and</u> provide additional information, under (ii) below, where appropriate:</p> <p>(i) Institutions confirm that it complies/does not comply with the principles of the Higher Education Code of Governance (Committee of University Chairs (December 2014).</p> <p>(ii) Institutions adhere to alternative, equally robust governance arrangements and the following information sets out these arrangements.</p> <p>(iii) Institutions cannot demonstrate adherence to robust governance arrangements.]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>complies with the statutory requirements relating to external audit and is owned, managed and run by 'fit and proper persons' by providing:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>evidence of the institution's identity and that of key individuals (for example, the Governing Body, Vice Chancellor, Principal, directors, shareholders, trustees), along with their skills and experience and</i> • <i>confirmation that directors (if a company) or trustees (if a charity) are eligible to act as either directors or trustees and have not been disqualified from acting as directors or trustees.</i> 	<p>[For regulated institutions, we do not require this information</p> <p>In respect of the institution's identity other institutions should provide, for example a charter, certificate of incorporation, etc.</p> <p>In respect of individuals, other institutions should provide sufficient information on key individuals to allow searches to be made of both Companies House and Charity Commission records, including lists of disqualified directors/trustees.]</p>

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Quality of education provided by, or on behalf of, an institution – guidance note

9. Institutions should provide information relating to the quality of provision, or provision that is made on its behalf, regardless of the level and location of provision.

<p>Table 7: Quality of education provided by, or on behalf of, an institution</p> <p>HEFCW is responsible for the assessment of the quality of all education provided in Wales, both by institutions and on behalf of institutions.</p> <p>Institutions must provide:</p>	
<p><i>Confirmation that it has internal quality assurance procedures in place for all of its education provision. Confirmation from institutions that they have quality assessment procedures in place for <u>all</u> of its education provision in Wales – whether such provision is by institutions or on their behalf. This means higher education provision, and non-higher education provision, eg school, further or professional education. It also covers education institutions provide directly or via other providers. The institutions need to confirm that all of their provision, as described above, is quality assured by an appropriate body.</i></p>	<p>[Confirmation that there are internal quality assurance procedures in place for all education provision]</p>
<p><i>Confirmation and evidence that its higher education provision, and any higher education provided on its behalf (eg franchise provision), has successfully undergone an external quality assurance review, Quality Enhancement Review (QER), Higher Education Review: Wales (HERW), equivalent Quality Assurance Agency process within the past six years or has otherwise met the quality requirements (as in circular W17/40HE). Institutions that need to undergo a Quality Enhancement Review should contact the Quality Assurance Agency. (If an existing regulated institution is in the process of working through review outcomes</i></p>	<p>[A statement confirming that the organisation has successfully undergone a review of higher education (including higher education provided on its behalf). Include link to the report(s). If an organisation is working through review outcomes to address issues identified, please state this.]</p>

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

<p><i>to address issues identified, in accordance with normal procedures, they may apply for a fee and access plan)</i></p>	
<p><i>Confirmation and evidence that its non-higher education provision, and any non-higher education provided on its behalf, has successfully undergone a review/inspection by the appropriate body responsible for the quality standards of that provision. (If an existing regulated institution is in the process of working through review/inspection outcomes to address issues identified, in accordance with normal procedures, they may apply for a fee and access plan)</i></p>	<p>[A statement confirming that the organisation has successfully undergone a review/inspection(s) of its non-higher education (including non-higher education provided on its behalf). Include link to the report(s) and information on the date of the review/inspection. If an organisation is working through review/inspection outcomes to address issues identified, please state this.]</p>
<p><i>A list of external provider agreements together with partnership course information, date of each agreement (i.e. to confirm that the agreement has been re-signed since 1 September 2015, or alternatively date of an addendum added to confirm that the provision is agreed to come under the 2015 Act), and duration of the partnership arrangement. For a regulated institution that provides higher education under validation arrangements, please provide evidence that a validation arrangement is in place, regardless of its level and location. (See Table E provided separately in Annex B)</i></p>	<p>[Institutions will have set out this information in Application template Annex B Tables D, E and F.]</p>

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Confirmation that the governing body has been able to sign off the quality assurance statements requested annually. [In the case of new institutions, a signed copy of the statements must be submitted.]

Taken from the annual assurance return for existing regulated institutions

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Institution name:	
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Section 2. Fee and Access Plan

The information provided in this section is for HEFCW, students, prospective students and other interested parties and, once approved by HEFCW, it should be published on the institution's website within two weeks of approval.

Institutions may replace this cover sheet and format the headings provided, to reflect their own branding at an early stage in developing their applications and prior to submitting them to HEFCW for approval. The published text must not vary from the text in this section of the plan as approved by HEFCW.

Published fee and access plans must be easily accessible to students, prospective students and other interested parties.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Fee and access plans

Guidance note

10. Institutions should provide relevant, recent information and verifiable data for HEFCW, students and potential students and other interested parties.
11. The fee and access plan application should include the following information:
12. **A contents page:** This will assist readers navigating the document. *(paragraph 70 of the guidance)*
13. **An executive summary:** Institutions must provide an executive summary setting out the focus and contents of its fee and access plan. Please limit the executive summary to no more than 1000 words. *(paragraphs 98-99 of the guidance)*
14. **Duration of the fee and access plan:** Institutions should specify the dates between which the institution will operate its 2020/21 academic year. We would expect this to be 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021. *(paragraphs 73-74 of the guidance)*
15. **Fee levels:** Institutions must either specify or provide for the determination of a fee level. If institutions specify fee levels for 2020/21, each different fee must be specified. Plans must provide clear information to potential and current students about their aggregate fees for the completion of their course *(paragraphs 75-82 of the guidance)*
16. **Student partnership:** Institutions must explain the extent of institutions' engagement with their student body in developing, assessing and finalising the fee and access plan, including information about engagement with the student body where higher education is provided on behalf of institutions. They should also set out the extent to which fee and access plan applications reflect the principles of the [Wise Wales statement on Partnership](#) for higher education and the [Guide to providing information to prospective undergraduate students](#). *(paragraphs 83-85 of the guidance)*
17. **Strategic review:** Institutions must set out:
 - the justification for the fee and access plans to 'make the case' for the institution's approach to supporting equality of opportunity and the promotion of HE. Where institutions have had fee plans in place previously, a critical review/assessment of the outcomes of, and lessons learnt from, those plans must be taken into account. Information should include:
 - how the justification of the plan is evidenced-based and informs the identification of under-represented groups, objectives, provision, targets and investment levels
 - an explanation of how the plans are embedded at a strategic level across the institution

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- an explanation of how the plans align with institutions' mission and purpose and institutional strategic objectives
- an explanation of how the plans align with strategic equality plans or similar documents
- an explanation of how the plans align with Welsh language strategies or similar strategic commitments, Welsh language standards and/or Welsh language commitments
- an explanation of whether and, if so, how the plans support collaborative and/or regional coherence agendas, including, for example the Reaching Wider Programme. (*paragraphs 86-89 of the guidance*)

18. **Groups under-represented in higher education:** Institutions must include:
- the groups they regard as under-represented in higher education and the evidence for this position. Groups under-represented in higher education may be under-represented in higher education in general or specifically in individual institutions. (*paragraphs 90-101 of the guidance*)

19. **Objectives, activities and targets as they relate to equality of opportunity and the promotion of HE:** Institutions must set out clear objectives, activities and services that will be delivered to achieve their objectives and the targets they will set to measure progress against these objectives. They must demonstrate how the objectives fit with Welsh Government categories and this will be achieved through completion of the table at Annex Ai. Objectives, targets and activities must be clearly set out to support equality of opportunity and, separately, to promote higher education. The following must be evidenced:

- objectives that demonstrate how institutions attract applications from students from under-represented groups, retain students from under-represented groups and make information on financial assistance available to all students or prospective students;
- objectives relating to the promotion of higher education
- how activities and services will contribute to delivering the objectives, are focused on under-represented groups where they are underpinning objectives to improve equality of opportunity and detail the types of financial services available
- setting targets which demonstrate to HEFCW the institutions' ambition and the intended pace of improvement to be made.

We expect the following to be evidenced:

- the extent to which the objectives support the progression of students from under-represented groups
- the mapping of objectives to Welsh Government categories;
- activities, services and targets to support institutions' objectives
- activities that prioritise Reaching Wider Programme target groups
- the alignment of objectives and targets with HEFCW's National Measures for Higher Education performance
- the use of milestone targets which contribute to longer-term targets (where appropriate)

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

- the extent to which Welsh Government priorities outlined in HEFCW remit letters are reflected in the plans.
(*paragraphs 102-129 of the guidance*)

20. **Fee income investment:** Institutions must set out the proportion of the fee income investment that providers are planning to invest to improve equality of opportunity and promote higher education. This must also be broken down by objective and each activity. Institutions must identify, separately, the amount of institutional investment in the Reaching Wider Programme institutional provision which should be no less than in 2019/20 and be clear about the level of any contribution to the regional RW Partnership. (*paragraphs 135-137 of the guidance*).
21. **Monitoring fee and access plans:** access plans must set out both how the governing body intends to monitor compliance with the general requirements and fee levels of a fee and access plan as well as how the governing body will monitor performance and the effectiveness of its plan against the objectives. (*paragraphs 138-141 of the guidance*).
22. **Evaluation of the effectiveness of fee and access plans:** Institutions should set out their approach to evaluation and the proportion of fee income to be invested in the evaluation of fee and access plans. (*paragraphs 141-143 of the guidance*).

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Institution name:	
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Section 3 Authorisation of 2020/21 fee and access plan application

Information provided in this section is for HEFCW and not intended for publication.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Authorisation of a fee and access plan submission to HEFCW

Guidance note

23. 2020/21 fee and access plan applications require approval by institutions' governing bodies, following a process of engagement with students before being submitted to HEFCW.
24. HEFCW may not recommend for approval fee and access plan applications that have not been finally approved by a governing body.
25. 2020/21 fee and access plan applications must comprise:
 - Annex A
 - Section 1: regulatory information not for publication
 - Section 2: the fee and access plan which may be in institutions' own format and
 - Section 3: governing body approval of all submitted documents.
 - Annex Ai
 - A table to demonstrate how institutions' objectives align with the Welsh Government categories.
 - Annex B
 - An excel table to supplement information provided in Annex A.
26. The whole authorisation form must be submitted with the governing body sign off.
27. 2020/21 fee and access plan application does not need to include any HEFCW guidance on completing the application, including Section 4.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

Authorisation of the 2020/21 fee and access plan application for submission to HEFCW

In authorising fee and access plan applications to be submitted to HEFCW, governing bodies:

- i. confirm that the information provided in this 2020/21 fee and access plan application is accurate at the time of writing, and is based on verifiable data.
- ii. confirm that: **[delete one or more statements, as appropriate]**
 - a. it is acceptable for HEFCW to use financial, quality and/or other information/data that it holds about a currently regulated institution, regardless of whether the information/data was originally provided for purposes of regulation under the 2015 Act
 - b. it is not acceptable for HEFCW to use financial, quality and/or other information/data that it holds about a currently regulated institution for purposes of regulation under the 2015 Act and
 - c. it is submitting new, up-to-date, more recent information/data to inform HEFCW's assessment.
- iii. understand that HEFCW reserves the right to undertake a visit to institutions to better understand eligibility related to the organisation and management of financial affairs, the data submitted on fee and access plans and the quality of education provided on, or on behalf of, institutions.
- iv. understand that it must provide HEFCW and/or HEFCW's agent, with information, assistance and access to its facilities and the facilities of other bodies providing higher education on its behalf.
- v. understand that HEFCW may carry out, or arrange for an agent to carry out, a review relating to the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of the institutions, and governing bodies must take into account any advice given to it by HEFCW or the body appointed by HEFCW for this purpose.
- vi. confirm that all education provided by, or on its behalf, regardless of the level or location of the provision has been taken into account in this fee and access plan application.
- vii. confirm that the institution is at a low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium to long term.
- viii. confirm that the accounts are audited each year by a registered auditor and that the registered auditor is not the same firm and/or individual that prepared the accounts.
- ix. understand that the institution must comply with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines for higher education.
- x. understand that any financial commitments to students made in the original fee and access plan, as approved by HEFCW, must be honoured.

Please insert the fee and access applicant institution name here

2020/21 fee and access plan application submission to HEFCW⁴	
Date of Governing Body approval:	
Governing Body authorised signature:	
Date:	
Updated/Final 2020/21 fee and access plan submission (where applicable)	
Date of Governing Body approval:	
Governing Body authorised signature:	
Date:	

⁴ Fee and access plans published on institutions' websites must only include versions submitted approved by HEFCW.

Equality of Opportunity

		Objectives			
Welsh Government Category	Promoting and safeguarding fair access to higher education, including identifying individuals with the greatest potential from under-represented groups				
	Attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups				
	Raising the educational aspirations and skills of people from under-represented groups in higher education				
	Supporting and increasing progression and completion of people from under-represented groups				
	Improving the higher education experience for groups under-represented in higher education				
	Providing effective information to under-represented groups, before and during their studies				
	Providing high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education				
	Supporting the progress to employment or further study of groups under-represented in higher education				

Promotion of Higher Education

		Objectives			
Welsh Government Category	Delivering more effective engagement with private, public or voluntary bodies and communities in Wales.				
	Improving the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience				
	Strengthening the employability of Welsh graduates				
	Promoting Welsh higher education more effectively internationally				
	Delivering sustainable higher education				
	Raising awareness of the value of higher education to potential students				

Institutional fee and access plan 2020/21				
Table A: Fee levels and fee income and investment, 2020/21				
Institution name: <input type="text"/>				
Institution UKPRN: <input type="text"/>				
Data relating to FT UG and FT PGCE (QTS) courses that you have control of, that come under the current fee regime in 2020/21, are to be returned in this table.				
If you provide courses that have a year out, such as a year out on an industrial placement, or a year abroad, and different fee levels are charged for these years, this should be taken account of in calculating the average fee and the total fee income returned on this table.				
For further guidance and definitions used in this table, please see Section Four of the guidance.				
Have you specified a fee level in your fee and access plan?			Enter Yes or No	
Institutions that have not specified a fee level must complete this document using their forecasted fee income for 2020/21. We accept these figures are forecasts only and not a fee level commitment.				
a) What is your highest proposed fee level for:				
			£	
	Full-time undergraduate	<input type="text"/>		
	Full-time PGCE (QTS)	<input type="text"/>		
b) Will the proposed fees in a) (above) be charged for all full-time undergraduate higher education and PGCE (QTS) provision at your institution or provided on your behalf?				
			Enter Yes or No	
	Full-time undergraduate	<input type="text"/>		
	Full-time PGCE (QTS)	<input type="text"/>		
c) If no, what is your average (mean) fee per full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) student likely to be?				
			£	
	Full-time undergraduate	<input type="text"/>		
	Full-time PGCE (QTS)	<input type="text"/>		
	All FT UG/PGCE (QTS) students in plan	<input type="text"/>		
d) What current fee regime income do you expect to receive in 2020/21? You should include all fee income received per full-time undergraduate and PGCE (QTS) student.				
			£	
	Full-time undergraduate	<input type="text"/>		
	Full-time PGCE (QTS)	<input type="text"/>		
	Total	<input type="text"/>	0	
e) Please provide details of how much fee income you expect to invest in relation to equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education. Where higher education providers had 2019/20 plans the proportion of total income invested in 2020/21 must be at least the proportion invested in 2019/20. For those applicants, HEFCW has provided below the 2019/20 amount and percentage of total income.				
Total amount to be invested in:	2020/21		2019/20	
	£	% of total income	£	% of total income
Equality of opportunity	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Promotion of higher education	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total	0		0	
If the proportions are different please provide commentary below:				
<input type="text"/>				

Institutional fee and access plan 2020/21
Table B: Fee and access plan income forecast expenditure, 2020/21

Institution name:
 Institution UKPRN:

Forecast expenditure of the fee income returned in Table A, provided against your chosen objectives, is to be returned in this table.

Guidance note

This table sets out investment committed to achieve each objective, investment committed to evaluate fee and access plans, investment committed for reaching wider and financial support.

Please input your **chosen objectives** in the table below and the forecasted income for 2020/21 to be invested to deliver these objectives.

Those institutions that have not specified a fee should base this on the fees they expect to charge for 2020/21. This does not commit institutions to this fee.

Investment to deliver objectives to improve equality of opportunity must relate only to groups under-represented in higher education.

Student financial support activities will be a part of the applicant's total investment in objectives to support equality of opportunity and/or the promotion of higher education (as set out in Table B (a) and (b)). Table B (d) below asks an applicant to separately identify forecast investment in student financial support activities **already included** in (a) and (b). Applicants should set out their level of expenditure against each objective. All objectives will need to have expenditure returned against them.

Where expenditure is forecast against more than one objective, it should be split between objectives. Total expenditure against a) and b) should match the equivalent returned in Table A.

For further guidance and definitions used in this table, please see **Section Four** of the guidance.

2020/21 fee and access plan income forecast expenditure

a) Equality of opportunity

	2020/21	2019/20
Objectives to improve equality of opportunity	£	£
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
Total	0	0
Percentage of forecast expenditure to be spent on Equality of Opportunity		

b) Promotion of higher education

	2020/21	2019/20
Objectives to promote higher education	£	£
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
Total	0	0
Percentage of forecast expenditure to be spent on Promotion of higher education		

c) Evaluation

	2020/21	2019/20
1. Investment in evaluating the effectiveness of fee and access plans	£	£

d) Total forecast expenditure of 2020/21 fee and access plan income, a) + b) + c)

	2020/21	2019/20
	£	£
	0	0

e) Reaching Wider

	2020/21	2019/20
1. Investment to support Reaching Wider Partnership	£	£

f) Student financial support (already included in a) and b) above)

	2020/21		2019/20	
	£	Anticipated student numbers supported	£	Anticipated student numbers supported
Fee waivers				
Bursaries				
Scholarships				
Hardship funds				
Provision of financial management advice and skills				
Other financial support				
Total	0	0	0	0
Percentage of forecast expenditure to be spent on student financial support				

If the proportion to be invested in 2020/21 is less than in 2019/20 please provide commentary below:

Institutional fee and access plan 2020/21

Table E: Partnership arrangements and fee income for students of all modes and levels, including further education and below, for partnership provision based in the UK that is not already included on Table D, 2020/21

Institution name:
 Institution UKPRN:

This table should be completed by all providers who franchise out to other providers or are parents of subsidiaries that are not submitting their own fee and access plan or validate provision that is delivered by another provider which is not part of a franchise arrangement where the other provider has control of the provision. Where providers have other types of provision they deliver in collaboration with a partner, those arrangements should be included here also.

The table should be completed for all modes and levels of study, including further education and below.

Any provision that has already been reported on Table D, i.e. provision franchised out to a charitable provider and provision delivered by a charitable subsidiary where you are the parent of that subsidiary and the subsidiary is not submitting their own fee and access plan, that is under the current fee regime, **should not be reported here**. Any provision that you only validate, that you do not provide, but that is under the current fee regime, and any FT UG/PGCE (QTS) provision that you franchise out to a non-charitable provider or that is not under the current fee regime, should be reported here

The table should be completed only where the other provider or the subsidiary are in the UK and the students are based in the UK.

The guidance below gives the categories of courses for which information should and should not be returned.

Guidance note

Do include information about courses:

- That you franchise out to another charitable or non-charitable provider.
- That are delivered by a charitable subsidiary, where you are the parent of that subsidiary, and the subsidiary is not submitting their own fee and access plan.
- That are delivered by a non-charitable subsidiary, where you are the parent of that subsidiary.
- That are delivered in collaboration with a partner.
- That you do not provide and that you validate only, whether or not the provider is a charity.

Do not include information about courses:

- That you provide and control which are validated by another body but are not part of a franchise arrangement.
- That you provide, control and validate yourself.
- That you provide and control, that are validated by you, your parent or another body, where you are a subsidiary of that parent.
- That you provide on behalf of another provider via a franchise agreement.
- That are delivered by a subsidiary, where you are the parent of that subsidiary, and the subsidiary is submitting their own fee and access plan. (Unless row five of the inclusions applies.)

If FT UG/PGCE (QTS) provision under the current fee regime is covered by the same agreement as other provision that is not under the current fee regime, the partnership should be reported both on this table and Table D. The forecast numbers of students and income reported on this table should exclude any numbers/income already reported on Table D.

Where partnership agreements have been signed before 1 September 2015 please confirm whether they include an addendum confirming the provision is covered under the HE Act.

For further guidance and definitions used in this table, please see **Section Four** of the guidance.

Row	Type of arrangement (please choose from drop down list)	Partner or subsidiary name	Partner or subsidiary address	Date of partnership agreement DD/MM/YYYY	Where date of partnership agreement is before 1 September 2015, please confirm if there is an addendum that confirms the provision is covered under HE Act (Y/N)	Forecast total number of students	Forecast total income from the arrangement (£)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

Institutional fee and access plan 2020/21

Table F: Partnership and campus arrangements and fee income for students of all modes and levels (including level 3 and below), for partnership and campus provision based outside the UK, 2020/21

Institution name:
Institution UKPRN:

This table should be completed by all providers who have partnership arrangements or campuses that are based outside the UK, including the EU, for all modes and levels of study, including levels 3 and below.

Guidance note

All types of partnership should be included in this table, including a physical presence (e.g. a campus of the provider), a local partnership (e.g. a franchise arrangement or a validation arrangement) and distance learning only where the student is based outside the UK and the course is provided in partnership with a non-UK partner.

Six types of partnership provision are included in the drop down list in the 'Type of partnership arrangement' column, with an additional 'Other' category in case there are circumstances which do not fit into those six types. The types match those used in the in-year TNE survey carried out by HEFCW in 2015. Guidance notes in Section Four contain a description of these categories.

Where partnership agreements have been signed before 1 September 2015 please confirm whether they include an addendum confirming the provision is covered under the HE Act.

For further guidance and definitions used in this table, please see **Section Four** of the guidance.

Row	Type of partnership/campus arrangement (please choose from drop down list)	Partner/campus name	Partner/campus address, including country	Date of partnership agreement/campus commencement DD/MM/YYYY	Where date of partnership agreement is before 1 September 2015, please confirm if there is an addendum that confirms the provision is covered under HE Act (Y/N)	Forecast total number of students	Forecast total income from the arrangement (£)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

