

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Postgraduate Taught Master's Bursary Scheme for students aged 60 or over 2019/20

Date: 11 September 2019
Reference: W19/29HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in
Wales
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This circular informs higher education providers of the bursary scheme for Welsh and EU domiciled students aged 60 or over, studying for a postgraduate taught (PGT) Master's degree in Wales. It sets out the funding allocations to be provided in academic year (AY) 2019/20.

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Introduction

1. This circular informs higher education providers of the bursary scheme for Welsh and EU domiciled students aged 60 or over, studying for a postgraduate taught (PGT) Master's degree in Wales. It sets out the funding allocations to be provided to institutions for the scheme. The bursary has been introduced, on a one-year basis, in view of current Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) restrictions on the provision of loans for postgraduate courses to individuals aged 60 or over.
2. In addition to this bursary scheme, we published details of the Postgraduate Taught Master's Incentivisation Bursary Scheme 2019/20 in HEFCW circular [W19/27HE](#). Its aim is to increase the number of Welsh graduates who remain in or return to Wales to undertake a PGT Master's degree in science, technology, engineering, mathematics or medicine, also known as 'STEMM' subjects. The scheme also makes available additional funding for students to undertake a Master's degree through the medium of Welsh.

Background

3. The [Welsh Government's remit letter](#) (March 2019) to HEFCW makes reference to the need for us to work with Welsh Government officials to consider how the Minister might provide additional grant support for Welsh and EU domiciled students aged 60 or over who want to study for a PGT Master's degree in Wales starting in AY 2019/20.
4. The [Welsh Government's revised remit letter \(July 2019\)](#) provides details of the additional funding support. Allocated in the revenue expenditure line is £80k support for a bursary scheme for PGT Master's students aged 60 or over. This funding will be available to HEFCW under section 68 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The funds will be accessible in financial year (FY) 2019-20, enabling us to deliver funding support for eligible PGT Master's students in AY 2019/20.
5. As HEFCW cannot fund students directly, the Welsh Government's request is for us to provide funding via higher education providers in Wales. We will provide the funding to providers for the bursary scheme, with terms and conditions that require the funding to be used for providing support for PGT Master's students aged 60 or over, both those studying on a full-time basis and those studying on a part-time basis. The Welsh Government's intention is that this funding will provide support for students to cover costs arising specifically from their studies.

Method of allocating funding

6. We are allocating funding for AY 2019/20 to higher education providers in Wales in proportion to their AY 2019/20 estimated numbers of PGT

Master's students aged 60 or over. Estimated Master's numbers for AY 2019/20 are based on the proportion of postgraduate taught (PGT) entrants that are Master's students aged 60 or over, taken from the 2017/18 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record, and the number of forecast PGT entrants in AY 2019/20 taken from the student number forecasts provided to us by providers in July 2018.

7. For the purposes of allocating funding, eligible students will be considered to be Welsh and EU domiciles, studying in Wales, that are not Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)/NHS funded, that are new entrant completions, studying full-time or part-time. Our modelling looks at the expected length of time a student takes to complete their course and divides the £4k bursary across years. In our allocation we have assumed that full-time students take one year to complete and a proportion of part-time students take two years and a proportion take three years to complete and have allocated the funding accordingly. For example, for those students taking three years to complete, £1.3k is assumed to be paid to them in each year of study.
8. The student number data used to calculate the allocations has been verified by providers. The allocation for each provider has been calculated on the basis of a £4k bursary per eligible student and is presented in **Annex A**. The figures in Annex A confirm the estimated payments to be made in AY 2019/20 only. Additional funding will be required from Welsh Government to provide the full £4k for those starting in AY 2019/20 who continue into AY 2020/21 and AY 2021/22. Therefore, Annex A also presents expected allocations for AYs 2020/21 and 2021/22, but as provisional indicative allocations only. These bursaries are demand led as described below, which means that adjustments to the allocations are likely to be required to take the actual number of bursaries awarded into account. We intend to pay allocations for each AY in September, and will include any necessary funding adjustments. Further funding adjustments may be made in year.

Basis of providing bursaries and monitoring

9. The funding allocation from HEFCW will be made available for the provider to develop a distribution method to award bursaries to eligible Welsh and EU domiciled students, aged 60 or over undertaking a PGT Master's course starting in AY 2019/20. In developing a distribution method, providers will have to be mindful of any relevant courses that they may franchise.
10. It will be for the providers to assess individual students' eligibility for a bursary and award the bursaries to individual students at the rate of £4k per student for the duration of their PGT Master's course.
11. Providers will be expected to award bursaries to all eligible students who apply. Where the actual number of starters eligible in AY 2019/20 who

apply for a bursary is greater than the number estimated and used in the allocation of funding, providers are still expected to provide bursaries. Where this is the case, providers will be allocated further funding for the additional students to ensure that they can provide all the necessary bursaries at the rate of £4k per student over the duration of their course. This will be done through a monitoring exercise after the start of AY 2019/20 where we will collect data on the number of bursaries awarded. A similar exercise will take place for each year in which funding is provided, to pay the remaining portion of bursaries for continuing students. Any funding not spent on bursaries will be recovered.

12. The eligible population will be the same as the current eligible population for loans set out in [The Education \(Student Support\) \(Postgraduate Master's Degrees\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#), but without the age restriction.
13. Total funding available for FY 2019-20 is £80k. Our modelling indicates that £104k is required to fund starters in AY 2019/20, for study during AY 2019/20. We estimate that £64k and £29k will be required in AYs 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively to award the remaining bursary allocations to continuing students.
14. At the end of AY 2019/20, we will request a monitoring report to provide confirmation from each provider that all the funding has been spent in accordance with the terms and conditions upon which it was allocated, ie that the bursaries were awarded according to the eligibility outlined above.
15. Any data that we use to allocate funding is included in the scope of our external audit of higher education data. The systems and processes used to collate data are also included in the scope of providers' internal audits of data systems and processes. Included in this would be a check for reasonableness of the criteria used to assess students' eligibility for a bursary. More information can be found in HEFCW circular [W18/33HE](#) Audit of Higher Education Data 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Further information

16. For further information, contact Gemma Stephens (029 2085 9642; funding@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

17. We have carried out an impact assessment to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including our Well-

Being Objectives. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about impact assessments.

18. A similar responsibility rests on higher education providers to assess the impact of their proposals for distribution, to safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.

PGT Master's bursaries allocation for 2019/20 entrants aged 60 or over

Provider	Estimated allocation paid in:				£
	AY 2019/20		AY 2020/21	AY 2021/22	Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time	Part-time	
University of South Wales	0	4,900	4,900	2,200	12,000
Aberystwyth University	8,000	1,633	1,633	733	12,000
Bangor University	8,000	1,633	1,633	733	12,000
Cardiff University	16,000	13,067	13,067	5,867	48,000
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	0	6,533	6,533	2,933	16,000
Swansea University	0	16,333	16,333	7,333	40,000
Cardiff Metropolitan University	8,000	1,633	1,633	733	12,000
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	0	8,167	8,167	3,667	20,000
The Open University in Wales	0	9,800	9,800	4,400	24,000
Total	40,000	63,700	63,700	28,600	196,000