

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## 2020 Graduate Support Programme: consultation

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**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** 09 October 2020  
**Contact:** Name: Emma Mock  
Telephone: 029 2085 9742  
Email: [emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk)

This circular is a consultation on the new 2020 Graduate Support Programme, which will aid universities to support those individuals who graduated during the pandemic to access work experience, to help soften the impact of the pandemic and aid economic recovery in the context of the impact of Covid-19.

This paper is seeking views on the proposed arrangements for the operation of the programme, including graduate cohorts, the delivery model, and the funding model.

We will take on board consultation feedback and issue a circular in respect of the 2020 Graduate Support Programme fund by mid-October 2020.

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



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## Introduction

1. On 28 July 2020, the [Welsh Government](#) pledged £40m investment to support employment and training to help Wales' Covid-19 recovery. The Welsh Government's Employability and Skills support would help employers to take on new workers, with incentives for recruiting apprentices and young people. The aim is also to help adults overcome barriers in both maintaining and gaining work with a focus on Wales' growth sectors.
2. The plan includes an emphasis on achieving better outcomes for people who will be affected most by the economic downturn, including disabled people, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women, and those with low skills and on low wages.
3. In this context, Welsh Government has made available to HEFCW an additional funding allocation of £1.5m in financial year 2020/21 ([Remit Letter](#)) to support graduates to access work experience, work tasters and paid work placements.

## Aim of programme

4. The funding is to support socially disadvantaged individuals and those from under-represented groups who graduate in 2020 to access work experience, with the aim of moving them closer to the labour market and helping their transition into employment in a more competitive job environment.
5. It will reflect and complement the ESF funded [GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience](#) programme which is delivered by nine universities in Wales and supports young HE students who may need help to secure quality work experience. The GO Wales programme encourages employers to become more inclusive and opens up opportunities for students. The intensive, customised support offered through GO Wales helps the most vulnerable students to achieve positive outcomes at graduation by providing them with bespoke work experience that they would not otherwise succeed in gaining through open competition with their peers.
6. The Welsh Government funding will support individuals (all age) who have graduated from a higher education institution in Wales during 2020 who are from groups under-represented in HE or from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. This could include:
  - Disabled graduates
  - Graduates with a work limiting health condition
  - Graduates with a mental health or physical health condition
  - Graduates estranged from their families
  - Graduates who are care leavers

- Graduates with caring responsibilities
  - Graduates from Black, Asian or minority backgrounds
  - Graduates who are migrants
  - Graduates from low HE participation neighbourhoods (i.e. bottom two quintiles of POLAR 4)
  - Graduates from an area of Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)
  - Graduates from low income families
  - Graduates who are first in their family to attend university
7. All graduates supported must be unemployed or employed in a low skilled role

### **Delivery model**

8. It is expected that delivery will closely follow the ESF-funded *GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience* model; advisers will work with graduates to identify opportunities for work experience opportunities. Opportunities could be short-term shadowing, longer term tasters (up to 20 days) or paid work placements (between 20 and 30 days). Opportunities may be undertaken physically, virtually or a mixture of both. Opportunities should be flexible, and arranged around the graduate's requirements, skills and circumstances.
9. Graduates should be mentored and supported by appropriate staff in their university before their work experience, whilst they are on work experience and after their work experience, including support to reflect on which skills they have developed.
10. There may be opportunities for universities to collaborate to the benefit of their graduates. For example, universities could work together on a group opportunity with an employer, or universities could host work experience to graduates of another university.
11. The work experience must be with an employer in Wales.

### **Funding**

12. Each university will receive a funding allocation to deliver graduates into work experience as described above on the basis of a Delivery Plan approved by HEFCW. The proposed options for funding models are outlined below and are based on the latest data available.
13. The models include an option for a funding floor of £50,000, to provide each HEI with capacity to engage, for example, staff resource to deliver the support.

**Option 1:** using each university's percentage of graduates (2018/19)

- a) No floor
- b) £50,000 floor

Institution name	i) No Floor	ii) £50k Floor
Aberystwyth University	87,360	86,716
Bangor University	120,323	119,436
Cardiff Metropolitan University	132,906	131,926
Cardiff University	342,264	339,741
Swansea University	242,752	240,962
The Open University in Wales	39,231	50,000
University of South Wales	313,654	311,342
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	162,281	161,085
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	59,229	58,792
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>

**Option 2:** using each university's percentage of widening access graduates (2018/19)

- a) No floor
- b) £50,000 floor (same allocations as with no floor)

Institution name	i) No Floor	ii) £50k Floor
Aberystwyth University	80,262	80,262
Bangor University	114,172	114,172
Cardiff Metropolitan University	154,825	154,825
Cardiff University	302,812	302,812
Swansea University	236,132	236,132
The Open University in Wales	51,482	51,482
University of South Wales	324,563	324,563
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	170,878	170,878
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	64,875	64,875
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>

Notes:

- Source: HESA student record 2018/19;
- All modes of study (full time and part-time) and levels (first degree, other UG, PGR and PGT) included;
- EU, overseas and unknown domiciles are excluded;
- Data for University of Wales, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Grŵp Colegau NPTC Group of Colleges and Gower College Swansea are excluded;
- Graduates - qualifications obtained population (graduates are counted once, whether they were awarded one or more qualifications);

- Widening Access students are those counted in one or more of the following categories: with a disability, from a Black or minority ethnic group, care leavers, carers, from a low participation area, from a widening access area, students with parents with no HE qualifications;
  - Widening access areas: for undergraduate students - are those areas in the bottom quintile of areas defined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014; postgraduates are excluded;
  - Low participation areas: for young full-time undergraduate students - are those areas in the bottom quintile of areas defined by POLAR4. For mature full-time and all part-time students - are those areas in the bottom quintile of areas defined by the proportion of working age adults with HE level qualifications (as measured using Census 2011 data). Young is defined as being aged 20 or under at the start of course. Mature is defined as being aged 21 or over at the start of course. Postgraduates are excluded.
14. HEFCW's preferred approach is to use each university's percentage share of graduates from widening access backgrounds (option 2, with the floor), as this programme is targeted specifically at those graduates. However, we will consider views from respondents.

### **Payments, monitoring and reporting**

15. A Delivery Plan will be required from each HEI. It will include information on the groups of graduates to be supported, targets, delivery model, alignment with policies, legacy, opportunities for collaboration and how the activity will complement the *GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience* programme.
16. A Monitoring Report will be required in April 2021 with information on delivery to date, including the number of graduates supported and the number of graduates who have undertaken work experience.
17. A Final Report will be required in August 2021 detailing how graduates have been supported, the number of graduates supported and the number who have undertaken work experience.
18. HEFCW will supply templates for the Delivery Plan, Monitoring Report and Final Report.
19. Payments will be made in three instalments against the deliverables, each to be approved by HEFCW:

<b>Payment</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Indicative Date</b>
50% of total allocation	Delivery Plan	November 2020
30% of total allocation	Monitoring Report	April 2021
20% of total allocation	Final Report and Case Study	August 2021

20. We will issue funding confirmation for each successful Delivery Plan setting out the allocated funding and the conditions attached to this. Payments will be made as set out in the funding confirmation, with any changes to the profile of payments subject to agreement by HEFCW.

## **Consultation**

21. We welcome views on our proposed arrangements for the fund as outlined above, including the funding model and the arrangements for monitoring the delivery of approved delivery plans.
22. The deadline for written consultation responses is **9 October 2020**.
23. We have scheduled a meeting on 14 October 2020 to discuss this consultation with Heads of Careers and Employability in Welsh HEIs as those directly responsible for delivering this and the *GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience* programmes.

## **Consultation questions**

- i. **Are the groups of students proposed for support (listed at point 6) appropriate? Are there any other groups of students that should be considered?**
- ii. **Should paid placements form part of the offer?**
- iii. **If yes, should they be subsidised and at what level? Note that funding for this would come from the HEI's allocation.**
- iv. **How can HEIs ensure that this activity complements and does not adversely affect the *GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience* programme?**
- v. **Do you agree with HEFCW's preferred funding model (option 2 with a funding floor)? Please explain.**
- vi. **Are there any unintended consequences regarding the proposals in this consultation? Please explain.**
- vii. **What positive or adverse effects might the proposals have on:**
  - a. **opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and**
  - b. **treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?**

- viii. **Could the proposals be changed to increase positive effects, or decrease adverse effects on:**
  - a. **opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and**
  - b. **treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?**
  
- ix. **Do the proposals for the fund have any positive or negative impacts or unintended consequences in terms of equality and diversity and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's seven well-being goals, Sustainable Development Principle and five ways of working?**

#### **Further information / responses to**

- 24. For further information, contact Emma Mock (tel 029 2085 9742; email [emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk)) or Lisa Barry (tel 029 2085 9741; email [lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk)).

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

- 25. We have carried out an impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including our Well-Being Objectives. Contact [equality@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hefcw.ac.uk) for more information about impact assessments.