

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Graduate Support Fund II

Date: 07 March 2022
Reference: W22/04HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
Response by: 25 March 2022
Contact: Name: Lisa Barry
Telephone: 029 2085 9741
Email: lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk

This circular confirms arrangements for the process, allocations and timetable for payments and monitoring against additional funding for the Graduate Support Fund, building on Welsh Government funding as detailed in circulars [W20/34HE](#) and [W20/26HE](#).

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



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Introduction

1. It is clear from the monitoring reports submitted to HEFCW that there has been significant demand for the [Graduate Support Fund](#), the Welsh Government funded provision for graduates impacted by the pandemic (circulars [W20/34HE](#) and [W20/26HE](#) refer).
2. HEFCW is pleased to make available an additional budget of up to £1.5m in academic year 2021/22 to enable institutions to continue this support.
3. This circular confirms the arrangements, allocations and timetable for monitoring the additional HEFCW funding, which is to be committed by the end of the 2022-23 financial year and spent by the end of the 2022/23 academic year.

Aim of the funding

4. The funding is provided to continue to support individuals who have graduated during the pandemic to access work experience and employability support, with the aim of moving them closer to the labour market and helping their transition into employment in the current job environment. It will build on the initial Graduate Support Programme funding and should reflect and complement the ESF-funded [GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience](#) programme.
5. The fund is to support graduates of all ages who are unemployed or in low-skilled roles, with a focus on graduates who experience socio-economic disadvantage¹, or from groups under-represented in HE, such as²:
 - Disabled graduates
 - Graduates with a mental health condition
 - Graduates estranged from their families
 - Graduates who are care experienced
 - Graduates with caring responsibilities, including parental responsibilities
 - Graduates from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds³
 - Graduates who are refugees or asylum seekers
 - Graduates from an area of low HE participation (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
 - Graduates who identify as LGBTQ+
 - Graduates from religious minorities
 - Armed forces veterans and service children

¹ HEFCW Council has committed to act in the spirit of the [Socio-economic Duty](#).

² As outlined in circulars [W20/26HE](#) and [W20/34HE](#)

³ HEFCW has indicated that regulated institutions will be expected to sign up to a Race Equality Charter by April 2022 to demonstrate commitment to supporting this group of students and staff.

6. Each institution will be required to articulate in their Delivery Plan the groups on which they will focus and how they intend to reach and engage with their priority groups, and the activity they are planning to deliver.
7. Institutions are encouraged to consider ways to provide opportunities through the medium of Welsh and to ensure that resources provided to the graduates are available bilingually.
8. In order to assess the impact of the funding and measure the outcomes, institutions will be expected to include performance measures and targets in their Delivery Plans, e.g. the number of graduates who have moved closer to the labour market. These will be subject to HEFCW's approval.

Funding allocations

9. In line with the funding methodology for the 2020 Graduate Support Programme, maximum funding allocations are based on each university's percentage share of graduates from widening access backgrounds. The methodology includes a floor of £50,000 and has been updated to apply 2019/20 HESA data. The maximum allocations for each institution are confirmed in table 1 below.

Table 1: Maximum funding allocations per institution

Institution name	£ (GBP)
Aberystwyth University	77,895
Bangor University	134,955
Cardiff Metropolitan University	143,270
Cardiff University	294,760
Swansea University	246,589
The Open University in Wales	50,000
University of South Wales	306,516
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	195,646
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	50,369
Total	1,500,000

Notes:

- Enrolments - HESA standard registration population 2019/20.
- Graduates - qualifications obtained population (graduates are counted once, whether they were awarded one or more qualifications).
- All modes and levels included.
- EU, overseas and unknown domiciles are excluded
- Data for Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Grŵp Colegau NPTC Group of Colleges and Gower College Swansea are excluded.
- For the purposes of this modelling, Widening Access graduates are those counted in one or more of the following categories: with a disability; from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group; care experienced; carers; from a low

participation area; from a widening access area (Welsh domiciled); students with parents with no HE qualifications (undergraduate).

- 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 undergraduate 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.
 - Widening access areas: for undergraduate students are those areas in the bottom quintile of areas defined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019.
 - Postgraduates are excluded.
10. These allocations represent the maximum level each institution could receive. The actual amounts will be based on the budget within the allocations at table 1 that institutions are realistically able to commit by March 2023 with the aim of spending by July 2023. This will be indicated in each institution's Delivery Plan.

Process and timetable

11. A Delivery Plan will be required from each university by **25 March 2022**. The template for the Delivery Plan is at Annex A. The Delivery Plan should outline the activity institutions will deliver in order to meet the outcomes, the groups of graduates on which they will focus, and the maximum indicative budget as described at paragraph 10. The Delivery Plan should be submitted in Microsoft Word format by email to Lisa Barry, lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk.
12. On approval of the Delivery Plan, HEFCW will issue funding confirmation setting out the allocated funding and the attached conditions. Payments will be made as set out in the funding confirmation, with any changes to the profile of payments subject to agreement by HEFCW.
13. The first tranche payment will comprise of 50% of the total allocation and will be paid to institutions in line with their planned expenditure in their approved Delivery Plan.
14. The second tranche payment (the remaining 50% of the total allocation) will be released when at least 75% of an institution's first payment has been committed, as reported in a satisfactory Monitoring Report. HEFCW will provide the Monitoring Report template.
15. The timetable for approval and payment of grant and submission of monitoring reports is below:

Activity	Timetable
Submission date for Delivery Plans	25 March 2022
Confirmation of approval of Delivery Plans	4 April 2022

First payment (50% of total allocation)	To be determined by Delivery Plan
Submission date for Monitoring Reports. Details of utilisation of funding	Every quarter, from 31 August 2022
Second payment (50% of total allocation)	To be determined by expenditure outlined in Monitoring Reports
Submission date for Final Report detailing utilisation and impact of funding and Case Study (see note below)	To be determined by activity and expenditure outlined in Monitoring Reports

Monitoring

16. We will require quarterly Monitoring Reports for the duration of activity, and a Final Report when the funding has been spent in full, detailing the outcomes of the funding. This will include a case study, a summary of the total number of graduates supported (including the number by each demographic) and the final position against the institution's performance measures. **In the event of unsatisfactory monitoring outcomes, we reserve the right to recover funding.**
17. The templates for the Monitoring Report, Final Report and Case Study will be provided separately.

Responses to

18. An electronic Microsoft Word version of the Delivery Plans should be submitted by email to Lisa Barry (lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk) by **25 March 2022**.

Further information

19. For further information, contact Emma Mock (029 2085 9742; emma.mock@hefcw.ac.uk) or Lisa Barry (029 2085 9741; lisa.barry@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

20. 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 for more information about impact assessments.