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Cylchlythyr

Circular

Strategic Plan request 2009

Date: 3 June 2009
Reference: W09/14HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: 24 July 2009
Contact: Name: Leanne Holborn
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Email: Leanne.Holborn@hefcw.ac.uk

This circular requests HE institutions to submit their current Strategic Plan to assist in understanding their strategic direction and to provide an important source of dialogue between HEFCW and institutions which it funds.

This document is available online, in large print, Braille, on CD and on audio CD and cassette. Should you or someone you know require this in an alternative format, please contact us on (029) 2068 2280 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.

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Introduction

- 1 This Circular invites higher education institutions to submit their most recent strategic plan. However, if your current plan is more than one year from initial authorisation at the time of submission, the plan should be accompanied by a brief update reflecting any significant developments.

Background and aims of the strategic planning process

- 2 HEFCW currently requires institutions to submit strategic planning and forecasting information on an annual basis. This is to enable us to understand the strategic direction and performance of institutions, and to check that institutions are making adequate contributions, individually and collectively, towards the targets outlined in the Welsh Assembly Government's *Reaching Higher* strategy to 2010/11. The information provided is also an important source of strategic dialogue between HEFCW and the institutions which it funds.
- 3 Following the Strategic Dialogue meeting in March 2009, you will be aware that consultation regarding a new strategic engagement process has taken place.
- 4 The circular outlining the agreed new process will be issued in due course, but it is clear that we will be unable to action the new arrangements for the 2009 Strategic Planning round. Therefore, this year should be considered a transitional period between the old and new approach, and we are again requesting strategic plans from all institutions.
- 5 We will continue to draw a number of specific detailed requests for information into the annual monitoring statement (AMS) process. This process will be dealt with in a separate circular which will be issued in June.

Feedback

- 6 Subject to timely receipt of the information we are requesting, we will aim to provide feedback to each institution on its strategic plan and associated planning documents by **6 November 2009**

Institutional strategic plan

- 7 HEFCW recognises that your strategic plan should be a document of value principally for your institution. Its primary function is to provide structured guidance for strategic development and management across all the issues with which the institution is properly concerned, and to help

meet the needs and responsibilities of the governing body. For this reason, we do not specify a time period for plans submitted annually, but request a copy of your current strategic plan. **However, if your current plan is more than one year from initial authorisation at the time of submission, the plan should be accompanied by a brief update reflecting any significant developments.**

- 8 We do not specify a particular format or structure for the strategic plan; we recognise that institutions' plans vary in size and scope. You will be aware that recent feedback letters from Strategic Planning rounds recognised a general lack of SMART targets in the plans. We would wish to continue to see this addressed in this cycle.
- 9 Within the body of the plan, possibly placed early on, we would expect to see a **brief strategic overview** which highlights the key strategic objectives and challenges facing the institution over the planning period and shows how the institution believes it can deliver its objectives in the light of those challenges. The overview should also demonstrate how the institution is on a sustainable course over the next five to 10 years. We regard this overview as a key element of the information that we seek from you. It should summarise the essence of your strategy
- 10 We will also expect an explanation of how the institution's plan addresses the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities in respect of sustainable development, equality, partnership working, and promoting the Welsh language.
- 11 Additionally, the plan should contain some information on monitoring and evaluation giving a brief summary of what systems and procedures you have in place to monitor and evaluate implementation and to ensure that evaluation outcomes inform ongoing policy and strategy development.

Returns and response dates

- 12 All institutions should submit **one** hard copy of your strategic plan to Leanne Holborn, at the HEFCW office, and **one** electronic copy of your plan to strategic.planning@hefcw.ac.uk, by **24 July 2009**.