



To Consultees

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
8 July 2013

## A call for evidence – Higher Education Funding in Wales

The Finance Committee is calling for information to help inform our inquiry into the Funding of Higher Education in Wales.

This was an issue which arose during our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget last year, and which the committee agreed to return to once more data was available.

### The inquiry's Terms of Reference

The purpose of this inquiry is to consider the funding of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales, the financial impact of the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant policy on HEIs and students in Wales, and whether the Welsh Government is delivering value for money in this area.

The new part time Higher Education funding policy does not come into effect until 2014 and therefore this enquiry focuses on **full time** Higher Education funding.

Our terms of reference cover three broad income streams of HEI funding plus the role of finance in choices made by students:

- Research – How effective are HEIs in securing research income including Welsh Government (WG) funding of research via HEFCW.
- Tuition fee income and support – What has been the financial effect of the new tuition fee policy introduced in 2012 which allows HEIs to charge students up to £9,000 per annum for HE courses and what are the financial implications of the WG's tuition fee grant?
- Other income opportunities or threats – How important is the income stream to Welsh HEIs from tuition fees received from students domiciled outside Wales including overseas

students and what are the financial consequences, now or in the future, of other changes in the HE marketplace including the entry of private providers?

•• Student choices – What financial considerations do students take into account when deciding whether to go into HE and what impact the WG's tuition fee grants have on an individual's choice?

There are **two sets of consultation questions** – one aimed at organisations and one aimed at students and/ or their parents/guardians. See Annex A for Organisations and Welsh domiciled students.

There will also be a detailed student survey which can be completed by Welsh domiciled students in years 12 and 13 and Welsh domiciled students currently **Please complete the set of questions that are most relevant to you.**

### **Providing information to the Committee**

Interested parties are invited to submit written evidence to the Clerk of the Finance Committee at the above address. Responses from **organisations** should arrive by **Friday 27 September 2013**. Responses from students/parents/guardians should arrive by **Friday 25 October 2013**.

If you wish to contribute but are concerned that you won't be able to meet this deadline, please speak with the Clerk of the Committee on 029 2089 8409.

If possible, please supply an electronic version in MS Word or Rich Text format, by e mail to [FinanceCommittee@wales.gov.uk](mailto:FinanceCommittee@wales.gov.uk) by the relevant deadline.

### **Disclosure of Information**

*Witnesses should be aware that once written evidence has been submitted to the Committee it is treated as the property of the Committee.*

*The Committee welcomes contributions in English or Welsh, and we ask organisations with Welsh Language policies/schemes to provide bilingual submissions, in line with their public information policies.*

*It is the Committee's intention to place written evidence on its website, and it may subsequently be printed with the report. The National Assembly will not publish information which it considers to be personal data with the exception of personal opinion and personal data relating to your identity as author of the evidence and the capacity, if any, in which you provide the evidence (for example, a job title). However, in the event of a request for information (which includes personal data) being submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it may be necessary to disclose, in whole or in part, personal data that you provide. This may include personal data which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes (as described in the paragraph above).*

*If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, or if you do not wish your identity, as author of the evidence, to be disclosed, this must be clearly identified and it is up to you to stipulate which parts should not be published, and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.*

Further information about the Finance Committee and its call for information can be found at: [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jocelyn Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Jocelyn Davies AM**  
**Chair of the Finance**  
**Committee**

## A - Questions for organisations to consider

The Committee would welcome your views on any or all of the following points:

### *Research*

- How successful are Welsh Higher Education Institutions in securing research income from all sources?

In answering the above question you may also want to consider:

- Which factors lead to some Welsh Higher Education Institutions receiving more research funding than others?
- How can Welsh Higher Education Institutions improve their performance to meet the Welsh Government's ambition that they receive at least 5 per cent of UK Research Council funding?
- In which areas do Welsh Higher Education Institutions successfully collaborate to bid for research funding, and how could improvements be made in other areas where greater collaboration is required to increase research income?

### *Tuition fee income and support*

- What has been the financial effect of the new **tuition fee policy**, introduced in the 2012/13 academic year, which allows Higher Education Institutions to charge students up to £9,000 per annum for HE courses? What future financial effect is this policy likely to have?
- Does the new tuition fee policy create a greater or lesser level of financial uncertainty for Higher Education Institutions? Please explain your answer.
- What has been, and is likely to be in the future, the financial implications of the Welsh Government's **tuition fee grant**?
- Does the current funding regime provide effective financial support to students from the lowest income households and is this the most cost effective way of financially supporting this cohort of students?
- What are the financial implications for Wales of subsidising Welsh students who study in Higher Education Institutions outside of Wales?
- What are the financial implications of more expensive subjects (e.g. medicine and engineering) being funded under the new tuition fee regime given that some courses may cost in excess of the maximum £9,000 per annum for Higher Education Institutions to deliver?
- How important is the income stream to Welsh Higher Education Institutions from tuition fees received from students domiciled outside Wales including the rest of the UK, European students and overseas students?

### *Other income and financial issues*

- What opportunities do Welsh HEIs have to increase income from recruiting additional students?
- What progress is being made in relation to the Welsh Government's Programme for Government indicator that 'at least 75% of Welsh Higher Education Institutions will have an annual income in excess of the UK median', and how can this be improved in the future?

The public consultation period ends 27 September 2013.

### **B – Questions for Welsh domiciled students and/or their parents/guardians to consider**

**There is also a detailed student survey which can be completed by Welsh domiciled students in years 12 and 13 and Welsh domiciled students currently studying at HEIs. Please complete the set of questions that are most relevant to you.**

**The tuition fee grant (TFG) policy means that the maximum tuition fee Welsh domiciled students will pay in 2012/13 is £3,465 (£3,575 in 2013/14) and the difference between this and what the university charge (up to £9,000) is funded by the Welsh Government via a tuition fee grant. This currently applies to all Welsh domiciled students who attend universities in Wales or elsewhere in the UK and to EU students studying in Wales.**

The Committee would welcome your views on any or all of the following points:

#### *Student choices*

- If there was no tuition fee grant policy in Wales (which pays the difference between £3,575 and the tuition fee the university charges) would this make a difference to your/ your student's decision to go to university?
- If the tuition fee grant was only available to Welsh domiciled students studying at Welsh universities would this impact on your/ your student's decision to go to university?

The public consultation period ends 28 October 2013.