**Call for Written Submissions**

**Review of part-time provision at Higher Education providers in Wales**

OB3 Research has been appointed by HEFCW to conduct a qualitative review of part-time provision at Higher Education providers in Wales.

The aim of the review is to identify and review the current state of all modes of part-time provision, including how they are funded within higher education in Wales. It is expected that the review will inform recommendations put forward to HEFCW’s Council regarding how part-time provision should be funded in the future.

As part of the review, we would like to invite you to provide your views via a written submission. Please respond to the specific questions below and send to [nia@ob3research.co.uk](mailto:nia@ob3research.co.uk) by 17th January 2020.

**Key Questions:**

1. **What are the current strengths of part-time higher education provision in Wales?**

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| The fact that Diamond review addressed parity with full time study. That FE institutions fill the gaps that are left by HEIs concentrating on FT undergraduates, who of course have the flexibility to run smaller class sizes as the pay their staff on FE pay rates for delivering HE provision. Having FE in this space enhances part time delivery- without them it would in our view be under threat. |

1. **How has part-time higher education provision in Wales changed over the last five years?**

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| From our perspective, it has suffered because of Welsh government funding priorities, we are starting to see changes, but not enough is done in our view to ensure engagement with the communities and individuals who would genuinely benefit for returning to learn. It has been suggested by a response from a rep in one FE institution that :- The delivery and resources amount to 50% of FT but the funding provided is a third of FT taught.  Arguably HEIs are looking to international markets and their role in meeting the part time education and training needs is seen as a role for FE. How much evidence there is to support this view we are unable to say.  Unit of Funding for Engineering and Technology in 2014/5 was £ 34.49 and Built Environment was £27.32 in 19/20 these are the respective amounts £33.87 and £26.83.  When one takes into account inflationary pressures over the 5 years the cuts are deeper than reflected in these figures. |

1. **To what extent does current part-time higher education provision in Wales meet the needs of individuals as well as regional and local economic needs? Why do you say this?**

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| We need a clear and well used progressions route from FE to HE, which are properly funded and are not reactions to the ‘skills’ agenda, but recognise the value of education for healthy and happy communities. |

1. **What are the current gaps in part-time Higher Education provision in Wales, and why should they be addressed?**

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| STEM based courses are dwindling as there is a recruitment crisis for the public sector. Also HE like sport, business and hospitality is being affected as traditionally their recruitment would come internally for FEIs. As the schools encroach on these areas at level 2 and level 3 it affects the routes of progression and applicants are less likely to go to the FEI for HE. The HEIs are not targeting these areas as the funding per credit studied is low compared to other ASC areas (such as STEM). |

1. **What are the current challenges affecting the development and expansion of part-time Higher Education provision in Wales?**

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| It could be argued that institutions have reduced funding for part time provision and the costs to the ‘customer’ (local employer) are increasing – squeezing form both ends. In relation to individuals it may be that we need to address the criteria for support and repayment, we argued this is our response to previous consultation on student financing.  Degree apprenticeship is at the forefront currently and we need to ensure that pathways below level four are properly informed about the Welsh apprenticeship framework and they align properly and at the same time keep pace with the technological developments in their local industries. UCU have been trying to persuade Welsh Government and the FE employers that they need to have arrangements in place which reflect the academic sabbatical that exists in HE, so that staff have the time and motivation to engage with their local employers to ensure that provision does align and make sense in relation to pathways for students.  We also need to address the failure of Welsh government policy to focus on pedagogy in relation to the development of apprenticeships and their pathways |

1. **What impact has HEFCW’s approach to funding part-time Higher Education provision had on its development?**

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| Comment from one of our reps in an HE institution :- A letter to David Allen, chair of HEFCW on the 20/3/19 from Kirsty Williams states that a sum of money of 10 million in capital funding was projected. We as institutions are having to compete against English Universities who seem to have better equipment and able to carry out more research so therefore students are taking up their options elsewhere in the UK. This has to be increased as we are falling behind on latest technologies. That letter stated we are trying to get the most talented Welsh Students, well we are not. Also it spoke about Quality Research eg STEM and lack of STEM researcher’s and this is still the case.  UCU believe that the terms and conditions of researchers/ early careers staff must be addressed if we are ever going to be able to attract and retain the best and the brightest to study and work in Wales. We acknowledge that HEFCW recognise this as a challenge for the sector in Wales and are hopeful that we will be able to make progress. |

1. **How can HEFCW incentivise growth in part-time Higher Education provision?**

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| HEFCW must address the franchising arrangements which are currently in place within Wales. The amount of money that HE institutions are allowed to top slice for the work they actually do in franchise provision must be the subject of a through review with recommendations for the new PCET body. The ability of FE to deliver increased part time provision depends on the funding they receive to deliver that provision. A reasonable and fair cap on franchising within Wales may encourage FE institutions in Wales to look to Welsh HE institutions for their future franchise arrangements. |

1. **What should be HEFCW’s funding approach to part-time provision in the future?**

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| They should develop a coherent long term strategy to ensure that FE are best placed to ensure every resident in Wales can access HE provision through their local college. Lifelong learning must be the goal for every citizen who is able to take advantage of such an offer. It can never be achieved if HEFCW don’t start by looking at the structural barriers which currently hold back these developments and in our view inhibit genuine collaborative working between the two sectors. That strategy must also include easy access to financial support for those who can only study in small chunks, maybe a credit at a time because of family commitments. |

**Any additional comments:**

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| If HEFCW could only do one thing on the funding mechanism for HE delivery of teaching before the introduction of the new PCET body then it should be to address the current structural constraints on collaboration. We believe it is one of the keys to the future prosperity of our country, Wales. |