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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of responses

Proposed changes to the student finance support
package in the 2019/20 academic year

February 2019

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Proposed changes to the student finance support package in the 2019/20 academic year

Audience	Higher education institutions, other providers of higher education and respondents to the consultation.
Overview	Summary of responses to the Welsh Government's consultation on <i>Proposed changes to the student finance support package in the 2019/20 academic year</i> .
Action required	None – for information only.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Higher Education Division Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ e-mail: HEDConsultationsMailbox@gov.wales
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at https://beta.gov.wales/consultations
Related documents	Proposed changes to the student finance support package in the 2019/20 academic year https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/proposed-changes-to-the-student-finance-support-package-in-the-2019-20-academic-year-consultation-document-1.pdf

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Introduction

1. The Welsh Government undertook consultation¹ on proposed changes to the student finance support package for the 2019/20 academic year. This document summarises the key themes from the responses received to that consultation and provides the Welsh Government response.

Summary

2. The consultation was about proposed changes to the provision of financial support to students in the 2019/20 academic year. The changes are:
 - a new category of person eligible to access student support – those with Section 67 leave to enter or remain in the UK; and
 - changes to the designation of courses offered by providers in England.
3. The consultation ran between 19 December 2018 and 1 February 2019. Twelve responses were received. The Welsh Government is grateful to those who took the time to submit their views.
4. A range of views were received. All respondents supported the introduction of the changes. The Welsh Government considered the responses to the consultation and determined to introduce the package as proposed in the consultation document.

Responses

5. Of those responses received, the largest number was received from representative bodies and higher education institutions ('HEIs') or further education institutions providing courses of higher education. Responses were also received from a regulatory body and a private company involved in education. Table 1 provides a summary and a list of respondents is at annex A. Annex B contains the responses.

Table 1: Consultation responses from different types of respondent

Individuals	2
Higher /Further Education Institutions	4
Private company	1
Representative body/group	4
Regulatory body	1
Total	12

¹ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/proposed-changes-to-the-student-finance-support-package-in-the-2019-20-academic-year-consultation-document-1.pdf>, Welsh Government, 2019, WG36501

Questions and themes

6. We asked four questions. All respondents welcomed the proposals and were positive about the policies being proposed. Responses resulted in a number of common themes emerging, which are summarised below.

Question 1

Do you agree that a new residency category for individuals granted leave to remain under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 should be added to the regulations to enable them to be eligible students for the purpose of student support?

Section 67 leave and the three year residency criteria

7. All respondents agreed that individuals granted leave to remain under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 ('section 67 leave') should be added to the regulations to enable them to be eligible for student support.
8. Three responses (from the Open University, Cardiff University and the UK Council for International Student Affairs) disagreed with the proposal that to be eligible for student support and home fee status, a person with section 67 leave should be ordinarily resident in the UK for three years before beginning their course. It was suggested that there should be a similar residency rule as for refugees i.e. no three year requirement.

Question 2

Do you agree to the proposed changes for the designation of courses in England?

9. All respondents agreed with the changes to course designation as a result of the introduction of the Office for Students ('OfS'). However, some concerns were raised:
 - The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru stated that some providers, including potentially those which provide courses for the deaf, might not be designated.
 - Independent Higher Education (a representative body for a number of private providers) raised issues suggesting that designation should be made easier by automatically designating those HEIs who are on the OfS register to reduce workload.
10. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales noted that the courses of some private providers will be automatically designated as a result of these

changes. They note that this is a different policy position than that taken to date but go on to say that they 'cannot see any means of avoiding this' given the changes introduced by the OfS.

Question 3

Please explain what, if any, impact you believe the proposed policy would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and on treating it no less favourably than the English language. In particular:

- any positive or adverse effects of the proposed policy;
- how the policy could be formulated or revised so that it would not have any adverse effects or so that it would have decreased adverse effects; and
- how the policy could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive or increased positive effects.

11. All respondents agreed that the proposed policy, if implemented, would not have an adverse effect on the Welsh language.

Question 4.

Are there any other issues about our proposal that you would like to raise?

12. Two additional matters were raised.

The addition of further residency categories

13. The UK Council for International Student Affairs suggested that there would be merit in the consideration of some other residency categories within the student support regulations, such as 'Calais leave' and provision for those with forms of limited leave that the Home Office have been granting instead of discretionary leave.

Accelerated Degrees in England

14. Whilst not part of the consultation, one respondent raised the impact of accelerated degrees being introduced in England in the 2019/20 academic year on Welsh students, and the result of the fee cap not being increased to account for the annual tuition fee amounts being more than £9,250.

Annex A

List of Respondents

Anonymous (2 responses)

Cambria College

Cardiff University

Children in Wales

HEFCW

Independent Higher Education

National Deaf Children's Society

Open University

Pearson

UKCISA

David J L Yewlett