

Developing the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Scholarships Scheme

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To: Heads of Welsh higher education institutions
Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Advisory Group
Co-ordinators
Institutional Welsh Medium provision
Heads of further education institutions
Heads of secondary schools

Respond by: 18 February, 2013 (clause 24)
18 March 2013 (clause 31 to 33)

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The aim of this Circular is to consult on new arrangements for awarding the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Main Scholarships and to note other relevant information regarding the Coleg's Scholarships Scheme.

This document is available on the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol website

Developing the Coleg's Scholarships Scheme

Background

1. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Scholarships Scheme was introduced when the Coleg was established in 2011. The Scheme includes three elements:
 - Main Scholarships – worth £1,000 per annum for those studying at least 80 credits a year through the medium of Welsh. The Coleg agrees annually with institutions a list of eligible courses for the Main Scholarships.
 - Incentive Scholarships – worth £500 per annum for those studying at least 40 credits a year through the medium of Welsh. The Coleg agrees annually with institutions a list of eligible courses for the Incentive Scholarships. The majority of eligible courses are in subject areas which do not have a long tradition of teaching in Welsh.
 - Masters Scholarships – worth £3,000 per annum for those studying at least 60 credits a year through the medium of Welsh (taught) and who submit their dissertation in Welsh. The Coleg agrees annually with institutions a list of eligible courses for the Masters Scholarships.

Current arrangements

2. In 2011/12 it was agreed that the Coleg could award 50 Main Scholarships, 100 Incentive Scholarships and 20 Masters Scholarships (worth £1,500 at that time) annually.
3. Following discussion with the Funding Council arrangements were modified slightly for 2012/13 with the maximum undergraduate scholarships budget set at £100,000 (between 40 and 60 Main Scholarships and between 80 and 120 Incentive Scholarships) and 10 Masters Scholarships set at a value of £3,000 each.

Review Arrangements

4. A Task and Finish Group was established to review the Scholarships Scheme, which included experts not currently directly involved with the Scheme.
5. In addition, comments were invited from universities and those comments have been considered as part of the review. Various comments received from schools, students and parents regarding the implementation of the scheme were also noted.
6. Following discussion, it was concluded that a review of arrangements regarding the Main Scholarships was needed and this is detailed below.
7. In relation to the Incentive Scholarships there are no fundamental changes recommended for the Scheme at present. The Coleg is in discussion with the Funding Council regarding the possibility of implementing some recommendations relating to provision and less traditional degree courses and the students studying such courses.
8. The Coleg will also verify the details of any new courses recommended for either scheme through the unistats website <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/cy/> in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Scheme.
9. The Coleg is revising the marketing and promotion arrangements for the scholarships in the context of the Recruitment Campaign which will be launched at the beginning of the summer.

The Main Scholarships

10. From the start, it was recognised that the Main Scholarships and the Incentive Scholarships have different purposes. One of the main aims of the Main Scholarships is to recognise academic excellence, while the Incentive Scholarships exist mainly to encourage more people to study through the medium of Welsh. It is important to recognise this difference, and these different

aims need to be kept in mind when discussing any changes to the Main Scholarships.

11. The current arrangements for the Main Scholarships are complex. Amongst the matters for concern raised before and during the review are:
 - i. The arrangements for allocating a specific number of scholarships to individual institutions and the fact that these institutions award the scholarships in different ways. This leads to inconsistencies e.g. some institutions require applicants to sit an exam, while others invite them to interview or to submit a portfolio etc.
 - ii. The Coleg does not have control over who receives the Main Scholarships since the institutions themselves nominate through their own systems. There are no consistent criteria for awarding the scholarships and it could be argued that this goes against equal opportunity and means that it is not the best applicants who necessarily receive the scholarships.
 - iii. The arrangements for applying are complicated. Students must apply to the Coleg stating to which individual universities they are applying. Then, applications for any eligible courses are considered through the normal arrangements of individual universities.
 - iv. A high percentage of students who receive Main Scholarships under the current arrangements study Welsh either as a Single Honours course or on a Joint Honours pathway. The Coleg is committed to supporting the work of Welsh departments at Universities but it is proposed that the maximum number of Main Scholarships offered to students studying Welsh should be reviewed.
12. During the consultation many universities stated that these arrangements are unsatisfactory, and many parents, prospective students and teachers have also expressed concern regarding the complexity of the current arrangements.
13. There are several examples of problems that have arisen in relation to the current arrangements. For example, there are cases where students have been unable to apply to all locations and therefore have not been considered for scholarships; and other examples of bright students receiving a scholarship

offer from one university (University A), but deciding to attend another university (University B) but being unable to transfer the scholarship (due to the processes of University B).

Next Steps

14. There was unanimity amongst those who responded to the original consultation that the current arrangements need to be changed, but there was no consensus on the way forward.
15. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Board of Directors discussed the situation during their meeting in November 2012 and decided unanimously that the arrangements for awarding scholarships needed to be changed. Two options were considered:

Option A

16. Through this model individual universities would become wholly responsible for awarding the Coleg's Main Scholarships. This would mean continuing with the current arrangements of allocating a specific number of scholarships to individual universities.
17. Consideration would have to be given to the fact that the Coleg's Scholarships could lose their identity as they would be marketed and awarded alongside other scholarships at individual institutions. It is not clear if an arrangement such as this would be acceptable to the Funding Council and the Welsh Government.
18. The Coleg believes that should Option A be adopted, assurances should be sought from institutions that they would agree to a uniform procedure for awarding Main Scholarships. The Coleg would not wish to interfere in that discussion unless institutions could not agree amongst themselves on such an arrangement.

Option B

19. Through this Option the Coleg would be wholly responsible for awarding the scholarships and the process would primarily be driven by students.
20. The Coleg would agree annually with institutions which courses are eligible for the Main Scholarships. Students would then apply to the Coleg for a Main Scholarship stating the courses that they are interested in.
21. The Coleg would, before Christmas, award the Main Scholarships through a process derived from full consultation with universities. The student would then receive the Scholarship subject to being accepted on an eligible course at any university.
22. A process such as this would ease the administrative burden on universities, ensure equal opportunity for students and give far more clarity to students, parents, teachers and careers advisers regarding the whole process.
23. If Option B was chosen full consultation would take place with institutions before April 2013, which would include discussion and agreement on practical arrangements e.g. would there be a completely open arrangement for all disciplines/subjects or a limited number of scholarships for individual subjects e.g. Welsh for a specific number.

Next Steps

24. The Coleg's Board of Directors is unanimously in favour of **Option B**. However it is recognised that some universities prefer Option A. Therefore those universities are invited to submit recommendations to the Coleg on how a uniform arrangement across all universities could be established in order to award the scholarships. Responses on this matter are requested to be returned by **Monday 18 February**.

25. The Coleg believes it will be difficult for institutions to agree on such an arrangement in light of the different opinions expressed to the Coleg regarding current arrangements.
26. Implementing Option A would also be subject to agreement from the Funding Council and the Welsh Government.
27. Unless new evidence is presented in response to this consultation, the Coleg's Board of Directors will confirm their decision that the Coleg will be responsible for the Main Scholarships' awarding arrangements from 2014/15 onwards.
28. Under this arrangement the Main Scholarships will be awarded to individual students and those students will have the right to use this scholarship on any eligible course at any university in Wales.
29. The awarding of Scholarships by the Coleg will be a process completely independent of any internal university processes regarding their own scholarships and/or applications. Universities will be free to decide if students can accept institutional scholarships in addition to the Coleg's Main Scholarships.
30. The new arrangement would ease the administrative burden on universities, ensure equal opportunity for students and give students, parents, teachers and careers advisers far more clarity regarding the whole process.
31. Before introducing a new arrangement (unless new evidence is presented in relation to clause 24 above) the Coleg intends to consult with fully universities, further education institutions and schools regarding the implementation of Option B. The scope of the consultation includes all arrangements for awarding the Coleg's Scholarships.
32. As the Coleg would be introducing a uniform arrangement across subjects, it is requested that universities, further education institutions and schools respond to

the Circular stating their opinion on the most suitable way of assessing applications for Coleg Scholarships.

- Exams. If exams were introduced
 - I. How practical would this be?
 - II. What kind of examination arrangements could be introduced?
 - III. What kind of exams should be held, and when?
 - IV. What range of subjects should be examined?
- Portfolio of work and/or essays. If scholarships were to be awarded based on portfolios or essays, what is the most suitable way for them to be set and assessed?
- Awarding scholarships based on A Level results. Would a model of awarding scholarships based on A Level results be practical?

33. Opinions are also sought on subject limitations. Between 40 and 60 Scholarships could be awarded to the brightest students without giving any consideration to the subjects they intend to study. Another option is to set the number of Scholarships for each subject, with for example 10 Scholarships awarded to the brightest students in Subject A. Feedback is requested on the most suitable arrangements for awarding scholarships – either completely open or per subject?

34. Responses are requested for clauses 31 to 33 above by **Monday 18 March**.