



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-HL-1411-15

William Graham AM
Chair, Enterprise and Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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21st January 2016

Dear William,

Thank you for your e-mail of 18 January following the budget scrutiny session by the Enterprise and Business Committee on 14 January. I have set out below responses to your e-mail together with the additional information requested at the Committee meeting.

Higher Education

The table below shows the forecast (as at 02/07/2012) and actual numbers of English and international students enrolled at Welsh Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from 2012/13 onwards. Figures shown are for full-time undergraduates. Note that 2015/16 student numbers are not yet available and Welsh Government do not forecast non-EU international student numbers.

Income projections for Welsh HEIs depend not only on student numbers, but also on factors such as changes to average fees. It is, therefore, not always the case that the trend in income forecasts will directly reflect the trend in student numbers.

Full-time undergraduate students at Welsh institutions, by domicile

		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
England	Forecast	29,525	29,043	28,204
	Actual	30,255	30,660	30,015
	<i>Difference</i>	730	1,617	1,811
International (non-UK EU)	Forecast	2,802	2,822	2,843
	Actual	2,745	2,895	3,055
	<i>Difference</i>	-57	73	212
International (non-EU)	Actual	8,440	8,385	7,795

Sources: Higher Education Statistics, Student Number Projections as at 02/07/2012 (Forecasts); Higher Education Statistics Agency (Actuals)

The difference between the forecasted student numbers ranged from 2 per cent (2012/13) to 6 per cent (English students, 2014/15) and 7 per cent (non-UK EU students, 2014/15). The increase in this difference reflects a diminishing accuracy of forecasts as the time following the forecast update increases, particularly when annual changes in student numbers are inconsistent (as has been the case in recent years).

English domicile student numbers at Welsh HEIs were forecast to decrease by 2 to 3 per cent each year from 2012/13. The actual figures show a 1 per cent increase in 2013/14, followed by a 2 per cent decrease in 2014/15.

Non-UK EU student numbers at Welsh HEIs were forecast to increase by 1 per cent annually. The actual figures show larger annual increases of 5 per cent (2013/14) and 6 per cent (2014/15).

Non-EU international student numbers have decreased since 2012/13, by 1 per cent in 2013/14 and 7 per cent in 2014/15.

Skills for Employment Wales

Officials are currently in discussions with Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) over the availability of European Structural Funding (ESF), which would further enhance the overall package available within this programme from April 2016 onwards. Outcomes for the programme are still being discussed as part of these ongoing negotiations with WEFO.

I will provide an update to the committee on the outcomes of the programme as soon as WEFO approval has been received.

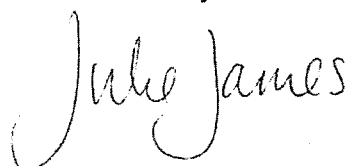
Traineeships

Officials are currently awaiting the outcome of an independent review of Traineeship delivery. I anticipate that this review will be published following the evaluation of the 2007-13 European Structural Funds (ESF) Traineeship programme. Both the evaluation of the ESF programme and the wider review of Traineeship delivery will inform ongoing policy decisions in this area aimed at ensuring maximum value for money from future interventions.

I will report back to the committee on the lessons that have been learnt and the findings of the review as soon as the information is available.

I hope this response is sufficient to provide clarification on your points raised.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AC / AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology