

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05551/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

seneddpetitions@assembly.wales

15 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 4 August regarding a petition on postgraduate funding from Huw Rhys Norvill.

Unfortunately, a Student Finance Wales (SFW) postgraduate loan scheme could not be implemented for Welsh students in academic year 2016/17 because of resource issues within the Student Loans Company (SLC), but on 3 March 2016 the Welsh Government published a consultation which closed on 26 May 2016. This consultation outlined a proposed interim loan scheme to be implemented for academic year 2017/18 to support Welsh postgraduate students.

<http://gov.wales/consultations/education/support-for-postgraduate-study-and-part-time-engineering/?skip=1&lang=en>

I expect the SLC to be in a position to run the scheme for Welsh domiciled students in 2017.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond and a panel of experts are also considering postgraduate support as part of a wider review into higher education and student finance. The 'Summary of Evidence' was published in December 2015 and can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151215-review-of-higher-education-funding-and-student-finance-arrangements-in-wales-call-for-evidence-summary-of-responses-en.pdf>.

The final report is due to be published this September.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Funding options are therefore limited for Welsh students intending to start Masters courses this year. One option to consider would be deferring entry (with the University's agreement) until AY 2017/18 when a postgraduate loan scheme should be available, or consider a part-time option in 2016/17. Some universities offer a postgraduate bursary depending on the subject area.

There are certain educational trusts and charities that may be prepared to assist by means of small grants or loans. There are standard lists in most public reference libraries including the Educational Grants Directory.

As you have indicated, if no other funding is available, and subject to eligibility, a Professional and Career Development Loan (PCDL) can help to pay for course fees and any associated costs. However, the course provider and course has to be listed on the PCDL register. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans/overview> or by contacting a careers adviser on 0800 100 900. The need to take up this type of commercial loan should be much reduced in academic year 2017/18 when the SFW scheme is implemented and it is likely that the Diamond review will also give a clear steer about postgraduate support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education