

P-05-884 Amendment to Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 to include UK institutions with operations overseas, Correspondence – Petitioner to Chair, 14.01.20

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

Following the Minister for Education's letter addressed to yourself on 11th December 2019, a copy of which I recently received, I would like to take this opportunity to make some comments on Ms Williams' correspondence. To begin, obviously the letter was very disappointing to read as I truly thought a solution to this issue, which is detrimental to and disadvantages the young people of Wales, would have been found by now.

In response to Ms Williams' comments on the time frame of the current regulations remaining as they are until at least the 2021/22 academic year, I find this very concerning and unfair especially in light of the recent events surrounding the future of the Erasmus scheme and the uncertainty for British students in the coming months and years with Brexit negotiations. Also, with respect, I don't imagine it would be that difficult to amend the regulations as current Welsh students (who started in or before September 2018) are currently receiving funding to study at the University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP).

I also found it quite unnecessary for Ms Williams' to mention the Global Wales Discover programme in her letter. I am quite confused as to how this programme will substitute obtaining a French Studies degree at ULIP, which is totally taught in French and after three years of study in Paris, students tend to leave this unique university fluent in French. The Global Wales Discover scheme is a short term opportunity which lasts a maximum of eight weeks and is in no way comparable to a three year degree. Furthermore, this scheme is run by the British Council. You and the committee may find it useful to be made aware of the fact that ULIP actually shares a building with the British Council in Paris and the Student Union has worked successfully with them in the past. For example, during the last academic year, there was a mentoring scheme in place between British Council staff and ULIP students. My personal opinion is that it seems as if Ms Williams' is trying to alienate ULIP and provide alternatives, such as British Council schemes, which seems quite bizarre when strong links between the two British institutions already exist.

I sincerely hope that yourself and the committee are able to find a solution to this unacceptable situation, which would ensure Welsh students are given the same opportunities as other British students and are able to study at ULIP, regardless of their and their family's financial situation. I fear that once again, for Welsh students, university is becoming something exclusive, accessible only to students from seemingly privileged backgrounds.

Yours sincerely

Alanna Jones