

Petition to the National Assembly for Wales

We the undersigned call on the Assembly to grant Welsh domiciled postgraduate students access to the proposed new Assembly Learning Grant (ALG).

We note the proposals by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 12 February 2002 to introduce Assembly Learning Grants, "which will provide a guaranteed source of extra financial support for students in higher education and, for the first time, students in further education as well" (statement to plenary session of the Assembly 12/2/02). Funding for the new scheme will, following the recommendations of the Independent Investigation into Student Hardship and Funding (the Rees Report), largely come from money presently allocated to Access and Hardship Funds. It is not planned to grant postgraduate students access to the scheme.

We believe that to exclude postgraduate students from the ALG is discriminatory and contrary to the spirit of the scheme. Access to financial support should depend on need, not the level of course being undertaken.

We further believe that the proposed new Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) scheme is unlikely to provide sufficient funds for the needs of Welsh domiciled postgraduate students. Postgraduates currently require significant amounts of Hardship Fund money, notably for childcare costs, and the (greatly reduced) amount of FCF money is unlikely to provide an adequate substitute.

Signature

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Address

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