

Maximum tuition fee in Wales will remain £9,000 – Kirsty Williams

The Welsh Government is securing a stable, progressive and sustainable funding system, whilst also responding to the many unscheduled changes announced in England.

The Education Secretary has also confirmed an increase in the repayment threshold for undergraduate loans from £21,000 to £25,000, subject to the successful conclusion of discussions with Her Majesty's Treasury.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I will not allow the political turmoil and uncertainty in England to knock us off course from delivering on a stable and sustainable higher education system in Wales.

"Our sector does not operate in isolation and we must provide stability for our institutions to compete both domestically and internationally.

"Given the uncertain political climate in England I have carefully considered our future plans for tuition fee levels. After consulting with our Universities and the National Union of Students, the maximum tuition fee will remain at £9,000. We are also on track to deliver the most equitable and progressive student support system in the UK, starting next academic year.

"Unlike the Government across the border, we are delivering investment to support both students and universities as part of these changes.

"I also remain concerned about the rate of interest charged to students whilst they study and I will continue to discuss this with counterparts in Whitehall."

To help universities and students from Wales, the Education Secretary has announced:

- An additional £10m will be made available to HEFCW to deal with any immediate issues arising from the tuition fee changes.
- Additional £6m to HEFCW in this financial year to deal with the short-term implications of demographic change, as well allowing them to start preparing for the implications of Brexit.
- A further £5m will be allocated to HEFCW in both 2018-19 and 2019-20 to allow our institutions to provide bursaries and grants to postgraduate students, prior to full implementation of the new package of postgraduate support in 2019/20. This will help incentivise student

progress and for Welsh Students to return to Wales to study, in line with our response to the Diamond Review.

The Welsh Government will continue with their plans to introduce the most progressive student support system in the UK where all students will receive support of around £9,000 in their pocket to help with day to day costs and will provide a parity of support across all levels and modes of study.