

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-884
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06644/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
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11 July 2019

Dear Chair

P-05-884 Amendment to Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 to include UK institutions with operations overseas

Thank you for your letter of 5 July regarding a petition made to the National Assembly of Wales. My response to the Committee in May 2019 noted that I would instruct my officials to consider these matters further, which they have done.

The Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 ('the Regulations'), as amended, provide the basis on which the Welsh Ministers designate undergraduate courses of higher education (regulation 6). Courses at the University Institute of London in Paris ('ULIP') do not meet these criteria.

My officials have reviewed the position in order to determine whether amendments to the regulations would be appropriate. However, the underpinning policy position has always been that courses will be designated where the Welsh Ministers are assured that the provider demonstrably meets certain standards which protect the interests of both the student and the public purse. In the case of courses outside Wales which are designated by the regulations (so-called 'automatic designation'), this has always been achieved by relying on regulation of the provider by the UK Government. Where the provider is not regulated, the provider's courses will not be automatically designated by the Welsh Ministers.

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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.

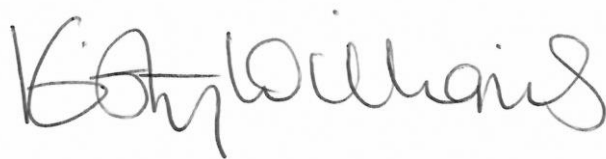
Regulation of providers in England is now carried out by the Office for Students, who maintain a Register of providers which are regulated. As ULIP is not currently on the Register, I cannot be certain that the institution is regulated. My policy officials have written to the Office for Students on this matter, but they have not had a response. In my view, making amendments to the Regulations to enable an unregulated provider to have courses designated would not be appropriate or in the best interests of Wales.

The Welsh Ministers may use their powers to designate a course under the Regulations (regulation 8). Courses so designated ('specific designation') attract a lower rate of fee support. I am of-course prepared to consider an application for specific designation. The Welsh Ministers policy on specific designation, including the criteria that must be met, can be found at <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/media/196461/specific-course-designation-policy-document-english.pdf>.

There has been no discussion with ULIP since I last wrote to you.

Further information on the regulatory position of ULIP is necessary before the Welsh Government can determine whether its courses could be designated. In the meantime, ULIP may apply for specific designation.

Yours sincerely

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

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