

Annex C – Report on use of delegated decision making relating to funding

1. The scheme of delegation, approved on 22 September 2020, specifies that:
 - a) (Part 8, row 11) “Any decision to give financial support under sections 39 and 40 of HERA (and determine terms and conditions for such financial support under section 41 of HERA)” has been delegated to the Chief Executive and the Director of Resources and Finance. With the written permission of the Chief Executive or Director of Resources and Finance, this may also be delegated to any director.
 - b) (Part 6, paragraph 2) “Apart from Reserved Matters (which are dealt with separately in this scheme of delegation and include other delegations to directors), each director has individual authority to exercise, and make decisions in respect of, any other Functions of the OfS without any limitation whatsoever (irrespective of whether or not such Functions: are in force at the time this scheme of delegation was made; involve matters of policy; or may have serious consequences for any natural or legal person).”
2. This report covers decisions and exercise of delegated authority for the period of 30 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.

Uni Connect budgets for 2021-22

3. On 28 May 2021, the Director of Resources and Finance agreed that the Uni Connect budget for 2021-22 be set at \$40 million. This decision was taken in light of responses to our consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22¹. This decision was taken separately from other decisions on our funding methods for 2021-22, which have yet to be agreed. It was necessary for Uni Connect budgets to be agreed on an earlier time scale, to allow for allocations to Uni Connect partnerships to be taken as soon as possible.
4. The Director agreed that the Uni Connect budget should be set at £30 million for 2021-22. This allowed the Director of Fair Access and Participation to make decisions on 9 June 2021, under authority delegated to him from the Director of Resources and Finance, on the individual allocations of funding to Uni Connect partnerships.

Recurrent funding for 2020-21

5. On 9 June 2021, The Director of Resources and Finances agreed adjustments to recurrent funding for 2019-20 for four providers, arising from student data audit and reconciliation.

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-recurrent-funding-for-2021-22/

6. Details of the funding changes noted in paragraph 5 are set out in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Formulaic grant adjustments for 2019-20

Provider	Total adjustment to recurrent grant for 2019-20
New College Swindon	-£142,297
Leeds College of Building	£73,004
West Herts College	-£24,057
Highbury College Portsmouth	-£31,697
Total	-£125,047

Student hardship funding for the financial year 2020-21

7. The government made available a total of £70 million of funding for the financial year 2020-21 to support students facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was distributed to providers in the Approved (fee cap) category. This funding was made available in two separate announcements:
 - a. An allocation of £20 million for the financial year 2020-21 announced on 14 December 2020.
 - b. An allocation of £50 million for the financial year 2020-21 announced on 2 February 2021.
8. Providers were required to distribute this funding to their students in full by the end of the financial year (31 March 2021). Where they could not do this, they were asked to report any unspent funding to us, so that it could be reallocated to other providers.
9. Providers were asked to complete a monitoring template on their use of this hardship funding and to return it to us by 12 May 2021. Following this, we notified providers that we would seek to reclaim any funding that had not been distributed to students in line with the terms and conditions placed on the use of this funding. Providers were given an opportunity to appeal.
10. On 28 June 2021, the Director of Resources and Finance made decisions on any appeals received and agreed the amounts to be reclaimed. 88 providers made no appeal. A further 13 providers made appeals for mitigation of the amount to be reclaimed. The Director accepted eight appeals and rejected five. The total amount to be reclaimed totals £1.66 million.

Student hardship funding for the academic year 2020-21

11. On 27 April 2021 the government made available an additional £15 million of funding to support students facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the rest of the academic year 2020-21. The Director of Resources and Finance approved allocations of this funding to providers on 29 April 2021. Providers are required to distribute this funding to their students in full by the end of the academic year (31 July 2021), and to contact us if they will not be able to do this in full.

12. Write University College notified us that they would be unable to distribute their allocation before 31 July. On 28 June 2021, the Director of Resources and Finance agreed that £12,006 be reclaimed from the provider.