

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-848
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/02686/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
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7 December 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 29 November concerning petition 'P-05-848 Let Welsh Students have the opportunity to choose the best study option for them', considered by the Committee on 13 November.

I welcome the Committee's views on this issue and I have considered the recommendations that you submitted.

My officials have spoken to and corresponded with the petitioner Mrs Ellis and her political representatives on multiple occasions. My officials have already made clear the position regarding student support for her daughter or any other students undertaking a degree abroad. Meeting Mrs Ellis appears to provide little benefit to her or her daughter, particularly as Georgia is already undertaking her degree in America.

As I explained in my letter of 8 October, the new package of support from 2018/19 is based on recommendations resulting from the Diamond Review of Higher Education and Student Funding. The panel considered various different models for the fairest package of support, and difficult decisions had to be made regarding priorities for funding. With the limited budget available, the package targets those most in need. Unfortunately, it is not possible to extend the package to those studying a degree outside the UK.

There are currently a number of grants and funding schemes, as well as scholarships and bursaries, that Welsh domiciled students can access to support overseas study (of any duration).

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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.

I remain committed to providing support which enables more students to benefit from periods of study abroad. On 20 November I made a statement on Overseas Student Mobility in the Senedd. During that statement, I announced details of the planned pilot which will offer a mix of opportunities for Welsh students at Welsh HE institutions, ranging from two to eight weeks. Our scoping study showed that it is these sorts of opportunities that will lead to the strongest take-up. The statement can be found here: <http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5365#A46915>. We are investing £1.3 million in this pilot over the next three years.

Yours sincerely

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

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