



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation

Outlines the strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation published by Welsh ministers under section 13 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022.

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# Statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation

This statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation is published by the Welsh Ministers as required under section 13 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 (“the Act”). This statement will remain in place until it is either amended or replaced.

The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (“the Commission”) is required to prepare a strategic plan setting out how it will address these priorities and how it will discharge the strategic duties given to it under the Act. In preparing the plan, the Commission must consult such persons as it considers appropriate and the plan must be submitted to the Welsh Ministers for approval. The Commission is under a duty to publish its approved plan and take all reasonable steps to implement it.

## Strategic priorities

### **Develop a tertiary system that prepares learners for a dynamic and changing economy where all can acquire the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life and work**

Explore how flexible learning can be broadened across providers so that it is more widely available and the infrastructure that would be needed to make this happen.

Review the planning and organisation of adult education in the context of section 94 of the Tertiary Education and Research Act 2022 to ascertain how flexible learning across providers can be improved with a view to maximise adult participation rates whilst balancing the social and economic benefits of that

provision as well as the infrastructure needed to make this happen.

Establish how basic skills provision should be delivered in the future and develop a plan to improve basic skills acquisition across the Welsh adult population.

Ensure that accurate, relevant and timely data is used to indicate the number of learners in part time further education, adult community education, apprenticeships and work-based learning, and to provide detail on the breadth and type of that provision. In addition, ascertain how learner outcomes could be measured to ensure that learning undertaken has had a positive effect on their futures.

Explore the opportunities for and barriers to achieving credit transfer across the tertiary system and consider how they may be addressed including how to incorporate the recognition of prior learning to facilitate the movement of learners throughout the tertiary sector.

## **Maintain and enhance the quality of the tertiary system, continue and intensify work on widening participation and take steps to ensure a more equitable and excellent system for all**

Have ambitious targets that aim for high standards, and in doing so remain within international quality standards to maintain the international reputation of the tertiary system whilst recognising the role other bodies play in enhancing the quality of the tertiary system.

Have a quality enhancement approach that recognises a diversity of provision and take robust action where quality baselines are not met, while always considering how the learner experience can be enhanced through partnership and collaboration.

Use data to identify inequities in the tertiary system and introduce a response that will include the setting of ambitious targets and actions for providers to reduce the inequity of access to tertiary education, improve the diversity of intake where it is low and reduce attainment gaps.

## **Putting the learner at the heart of the system by focusing on the experience of learners in the tertiary system and their wellbeing**

Respond to ongoing policy development by the Welsh Government on learner pathways and undertake research to ensure that they are more strategically organised.

Ensure that all pathways into and through the tertiary system are clear so that learners are able to make informed choices about the best route for them and, develop plans to strengthen parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes and ensure that routes into flexible forms of learning for skills acquisition are clear.

Ensure that learner voice plays a central role in the work of the Commission and, in producing the Learner Engagement Code, focus on improving learner engagement in further education and training, sixth form, apprenticeship and adult learning provision.

Create a common framework for mental health and well-being support across tertiary education and facilitate providers to embed this in their policies and practices so that learners receive, as far as is practicable, consistent support from provider mental health services and are clear on the minimum that they can expect from their providers in this area.

Establish the environment for education providers to make progress in improving the coordination of service provision with healthcare services. Ascertain whether the new registration and funding condition can achieve this.

Develop a plan to increase and improve the provision and promotion of Welsh-medium education and assessment in the whole of the tertiary system recognising the role of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, as the designated person under Section 9 of the 2022 Act and Qualifications Wales as the independent qualifications regulator. This is a key part of the seamless pathway for learners into the tertiary education of their choosing.

## **Ensure that the tertiary education system contributes to the economy and society**

Promote collaboration to drive excellence in research and innovation as required under section 6 of the Act and develop measures for research performance so that outputs meet the country's needs.

Develop a culture of innovation and engage in mission-based collaboration with business, industry investors and government that contributes to economy and society.

Promote further development of civic mission activity as defined in section 10(3) of the Act, and ensure institutions learn from each other to benefit civic society and be valued members of their local communities.

Develop strong links with business and industry, the Regional Skills Partnerships and Careers Wales to understand key labour market intelligence, using it, together with other data, to influence the skills system and, working with Qualifications Wales, vocational qualifications.

Create an environment where providers are encouraged to collaborate with employers to ensure that provision is of high-quality and meets the needs of the economy and society.

## **Establish the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research as a**

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## **highly effective organisation providing stability and leadership during this time of transition**

Establish an efficiently functioning organisation with a culture of innovation, social partnership and leadership that develops and builds its relationship with key partner organisations and understands its place and role within the education, skills and wider economic landscape.

Develop robust, efficient and streamlined systems of data collection and analysis that minimise bureaucracy for providers. Ensure that these systems will provide a sound understanding of the tertiary system as a whole as well as its constituent sectors and providers enabling the Commission to become the authority on the tertiary system with a unified oversight that is focussed on progress against long term outcomes.

Establish systems for monitoring, managing and improving the performance of the tertiary system, including to ensure that learning undertaken has had a positive effect on learners' futures. Consider how this outcome data can be used to guide funding allocations in future.

Operate as a risk-based regulator, incorporating the National Audit Office's guidance on effective regulation and ensure the quality and financial sustainability of the tertiary education system and establish good mechanisms of communication and the adoption of a relationship management approach to work with providers and disseminate good practice.

Use the funding powers for the strategic direction of the system to ensure that provision is comprehensive and innovative in its delivery reducing duplication by encouraging providers to differentiate themselves so that they play to their individual strengths. This will include exploring the use of outcome-based funding based on collaborative approaches to provision.

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