Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
Academic Plan

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The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Academic Plan – Towards 2020 and beyond

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I am very pleased to present the Academic Plan of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The plan was agreed by the Coleg’s Board of Directors on 23 November 2016. It is based on discussions at the Coleg’s Academic Board, the Board of Directors and on consultation with universities and other partners over the past year. It builds on the strong foundations of the Coleg’s first Academic Plan from 2012.

Since 2012, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has established sustainable foundations for significant provision across a range of academic disciplines. There are now over 900 degree courses where students can study at least part of the course in Welsh. This new Plan builds on this work, focusing on ensuring world class higher education with the students at the heart of the education. The plan aims to ensure international education for all and to put the Welsh context within the appropriate global context, thus preparing students effectively for the world of work.

The development of Welsh medium higher education is a major undertaking and this plan offers an exciting opportunity to contribute purposefully to the Welsh Government’s aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. I am delighted therefore to present this plan, which I am confident, if fully and effectively implemented, will make a major contribution to developing a confident bilingual nation.

Dr T. Hefin Jones
Dean of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
The Coleg Cymraeg
Cenedlaethol’s Academic Plan –
Towards 2020 and beyond

Introduction

The Coleg Cymraeg was established in response to the increasing calls to ensure that every student has the right to first-rate Welsh-medium higher education. This is the principle underpinning the Coleg’s original Academic Plan published in 2012, and the Coleg worked diligently during its first five years putting the principle into practice. This Academic Plan builds on this early work. The original principles and themes are still in place while this Plan sets the strategic priorities for the next period.

During the period of the Coleg’s establishment, the strategic priorities have included:

- Developing Welsh-medium provision (at least 40 credits) across a wide range of subjects, primarily by investing in Lectureships through the Staffing Scheme, and other projects and activities through the Strategic Developments Fund. This investment was based on the Coleg’s national Academic Plan and the subject development plans that fed into it;

- Offering and promoting Scholarships for Undergraduate Students who are studying on eligible courses determined by the Coleg;

- Providing up to ten PhD Scholarships each year, to be submitted through the medium of Welsh;

- Developing Technical Infrastructure, specifically through the Coleg’s resources and e-learning platform, Y Porth, to promote collaborative teaching and the sharing of Welsh-medium resources;

- Providing Training Programmes and a pathway for qualifying as a recognized educator through the medium of Welsh for academic staff, postgraduate students and early-career researchers;

- Focusing on achieving HEFCW/Welsh Government targets for the number of students studying at least 5/40 credits a year through the medium of Welsh.

The priorities listed above have largely been achieved by now:

1. More students studying through the medium of Welsh than ever before – 5,300 studying at least 5 credits through the medium of Welsh, and, by 2014/15, 2,500 of those studying significantly through the medium of Welsh, despite a) changes in student choice patterns with more Welsh-speaking students choosing to study over the border; b) a (very) significant reduction in the number of part-time students, including plans like Cynllun AUR – Going for Gold; and c) a decline in the number of students studying Education/Teacher Training;
ii. At least 40 credits per year of Welsh-medium provision is now available in the majority of academic fields. There is a small minority of areas where the provision will be introduced afresh in the next 12/18 months. There are very few subject areas where 40 credits will not be available through the medium of Welsh by 2020;

iii. Subject development plans have been created in every area identified in the original Academic Plan;

iv. 115 lecturers have been appointed at universities across Wales;

v. 700 Welsh language and bilingual digital resources are available in 24 different subjects at the Coleg’s Library, with robust infrastructure for a range of further developments;

vi. Over 600 undergraduate students have received scholarships;

vii. Over 50 Masters students have received scholarships;

viii. Over 600 students have gained the Coleg’s Welsh Language Skills Certificate;

ix. The Welsh Language Skills Certificate accredited as a formal qualification by WJEC;

x. Over 100 Staff Development workshops have been held to train over 1,000 staff, and 200 postgraduate students trained in research skills, with the Coleg’s Academic Staff Development and Research Skills programmes mapped against the Higher Education Academy’s Professional Standards Framework and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and attracting a number of trainees each year;

xi. Over 2,000 students have joined the Coleg Cymraeg each year;

xii. Over 50 PhD Scholars have been funded.

In summary, therefore, we can note that the Coleg’s early years were successful in addressing the agreed strategic/operational priorities. Through all of this, very solid foundations were laid for the years ahead.

Nevertheless, the progress noted above is dependent in part on various external factors that have influenced what has been achieved by the Coleg thus far. Those factors include (but are not limited to):

- The number of students studying A levels or equivalent qualifications through the medium of Welsh and the range of subjects studied;
- The number of Welsh-speaking students choosing to study at a university in Wales;
- The patterns in terms of student subject/discipline choices;
- The impact of Welsh Government and/or UK Government policies in terms of financial support for students;
- The extent to which clear employer demand can be identified for Welsh-speaking graduates who have studied through the medium of Welsh;
The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol’s Academic Plan - Towards 2020 and beyond

- The number of students taking part-time courses;
- Changes in the field of Initial Teacher Training that have affected the number of students training as teachers.

Several of these factors have militated against the development of Welsh-medium higher education, and so it could be argued that the progress made over the period of the first Academic Plan is even more impressive.

For the next period, the Coleg will build on the solid foundations that have been laid. Furthermore, the Coleg will adopt a holistic approach to the Coleg’s mission and the work that needs to be accomplished.

Implicit in this kind of approach will be the need to establish one more principle in relation to the new Academic Plan and the elements within it that will be supported through investments by the Coleg, subject to the budget and the supporting resources that will be available. Until now, it could be argued that the main driver for funding decisions has been the choices made by the individual universities in submitting bids for funding to the Coleg, whether for academic posts in specific subjects or for strategic projects. In future, taking the holistic approach referred to above, the Coleg will provide stronger strategic leadership concerning the nature of the support for different areas. Similarly, following a review of subject development plans and a consideration of the academic content of the provision, the Coleg will commission projects proactively, rather than relying solely on bids submitted, in order to act on priorities that have been identified and agreed.

At first glance, such a holistic approach seems quite ambitious considering the level of resources available to the Coleg – and indeed the likely level of resources the Coleg and the universities will have in the foreseeable future. However, it is suggested that only by understanding the principles of planning holistically in a robust and sophisticated way can we ensure that the Coleg makes the maximum impact – thereby ensuring the best value for money. This approach is fully consistent with the recommendations of the Diamond Review.¹

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As noted above, this will involve asking different questions, taking different approaches to planning and implementation, and determining different funding priorities. Although the Coleg has been moving in this direction since its inception, we will now need to do so in a more systematic way, bringing greater unity to the activities – both nationally and in the entirety of the Coleg’s community.

How then would such an approach guide the Coleg’s work in the various elements set out above?

In terms of the prospective students – we would need to consider:

- How many prospective students in each year could study an element of the higher education course through the medium of Welsh? Of these, how many are studying through the medium of Welsh at A level or equivalent at school (or could do if the offer was there); how many are studying through the medium of Welsh at A level or equivalent at a further education institution (or could do if the offer was there); and how many mature students are thinking about venturing and/or returning to higher education? There is a clear relationship here with the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Strategy.²

- Of the prospective students who speak Welsh – who are they? Where do they live? What subjects are they studying at the moment? What are their attitudes towards the Welsh language and towards studying in the language? What factors influence their university choices? What are their perceptions of universities in Wales? What language skills do they have? What are their perceptions of their language skills? Which degree subjects are they interested in? What about students who are less confident about their Welsh language skills – how can they be given every opportunity to take advantage of the Welsh-medium provision at university?

- Of the prospective students who have recently or who are about to attend university – to what extent can we create a comprehensive map of the choices of students who speak Welsh?

- Finally, and to add a further level of complexity to this picture – who has a significant influence on student attitudes? Fellow students at school or further education college? Peers they know who are already at university? Teachers? Further Education Lecturers? Career Advisors? Parents/Guardians? Others?

Given a fuller picture of the target audience – within the wider context of planning in relation to the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Strategy – the Coleg could identify the nature of the target audience more accurately and completely. Ensuring effective progression from School/College to university and eventually to the world of work is key to success.

Based on the analysis made, the next step would be to draw up a programme of activities to target that audience, recognizing all the potential tools that the Coleg may have at its disposal in order to reach them. The Coleg’s central resource – that is, the Coleg’s officers employed in marketing and communication – is limited,

but considering the Coleg’s partners inside and beyond the Higher Education Sector, a much wider network could be created in order to develop a long term strategy for these promotion and marketing activities.

In describing the situation thus, the goal may be achievable, but very soon the Coleg will encounter opportunities and/or obstacles over which, at least in the first instance, it has very little control:

- Welsh Government fees policy;
- The policy for English universities (UK Government);
- Students’ perception of the reputation of Welsh universities.

The evidence about the actual impact of the Welsh Government’s fees policy on student choices is mixed. The number of students from Wales who choose to remain in Wales to study is about the same as it was five years ago, but the number of students from Wales choosing to study in England has increased significantly, with a large number of them being Welsh speakers.

In terms of the UK Government’s policy in relation to English universities – specific reference is made to the ceiling (the ‘cap’) on the level of tuition fees. In England, the Government has lifted the restrictions on student numbers, and universities are therefore allowed to recruit as many students as they can attract. The effect will become even more pronounced when a range of new providers enter the market. The Higher Education Policy Framework in England allows new providers – which could include all manner of new initiatives, companies or institutions – to be registered and be given the right to award degrees, and it is estimated that over 300 will have done so by 2020. It can therefore be expected that English universities will make even greater efforts to attract students from Wales over the coming years as market competition will tend to dominate any other considerations.

The third element that needs careful consideration is the university’s reputation and the course’s reputation. The exact way students understand these factors is complex. It can result from performance in various tables, the research performance of a school/department, perceptions about the quality of teaching and student satisfaction in a school/department, as well as perceptions of the university more widely. Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that a school/department can be innovative and pioneering (and be recognized as such) without necessarily having a high status in a particular league table. Having noted all these contextual factors, we need to recognize that reputation significantly affects student decisions. How many Welsh universities are considered or recognized as some of the best universities in the UK? How many Welsh universities are considered or recognized within their group of universities as some of the best? How many academic departments or schools in Welsh universities are considered or recognized as being among, say, the top ten in the United Kingdom?

In considering this, the discussion moves from the prospective student to the student experience. Thus far, we have discussed the factors that affect the prospective student, but it leads logically to the core opportunity/challenge for
the Coleg Cymraeg – which is to provide educational experiences through the medium of Welsh. Unless this core is robust (and attractive) the most polished and comprehensive marketing campaigns to prospective students are bound to fail to achieve their goals.

The core objective of the Coleg as stated in the original Academic Plan offers a distinct challenge:

‘The right to first-rate Welsh-medium higher education.’

The Coleg’s priority in its early years was to increase the opportunities for students to study through the medium of Welsh at university and realize their right to a Welsh-medium educational experience. Those developments have been significant, and by now students can study at least a significant element of the degree programme, in each of the subjects listed in the original Academic Plan, through the medium of Welsh in at least one of Wales’s universities. There are differences by subject in terms of development, and indeed, in the amount of provision considered appropriate (e.g. the objective in Sciences has mainly been bilingual degrees, with at least a third of a degree course being provided through the medium of Welsh), but there is no denying that this has been a big step forward.

However, if we wish to take a holistic view of these matters, the suggestion made is that the second half of the objective is just as important as the first half. That is, we must focus on achieving first-rate Welsh-medium education.

What then are the characteristics of a first-rate Welsh-medium educational experience? The following characteristics are suggested, recognizing the fact that the exact balance between these can vary widely from one discipline to another:

- A subject being taught by recognized experts in their field with a good reputation as educators and/or researchers in Wales and beyond;
- A Welsh language/bilingual curriculum designed so that the Welsh-medium experience is suitable to the context of the subject and the employment market when the student has graduated;
- The student voice is clearly heard in the development and creation of the courses they study;
- Students benefit from an enriched experience in the course in terms of study support, feedback and support from lecturers, extracurricular experiences and alternative opportunities to develop their careers;
- Students achieve outstandingly compared with their counterparts, in terms of completion rates and university degrees;
- Quality resources are designed and developed to support student studies, with enough resources available in Welsh to ensure students’ confidence to approach the subject in Welsh;
- Multidisciplinary educational opportunities;
An active relationship with the world of work with firm plans to support and/or develop suitable career paths for every student, recognizing national workforce planning priorities;

Employment rate of graduates after graduation – and the types of jobs they undertake;

A good percentage of students go on to postgraduate studies;

A viable number of students and lecturers to ensure the sustainability of the teaching and the breadth of the subjects covered.

Inclusive Welsh-medium education – a curriculum that includes everyone, whatever their characteristics and background. Welsh-medium education therefore needs to be an education with which every student can engage; from the resources to the teaching, and from the learning environment to the assessments. In order to achieve this, students need to be at the heart of shaping their education.

This also raises the question of what the objective is in terms of first-rate education. The development of the Teaching Excellence Framework (or TEF) is very relevant to this discussion and, as the metrics are developed, the academic considerations of the Coleg Cymraeg will reflect the development of the teaching framework of British universities.

Recognizing the fact that, in the first instance, student choice is driven by the reputation of the university and the course, the Coleg sets a clear objective, of bringing the best of the world to Wales, and presenting the best of Wales to the world, and to do so through Welsh-medium higher education. Welsh-medium higher education needs to be comparable, as a minimum, with education provided in other languages.

In defining the features and objectives of first-rate education, the task – whilst openly recognizing the fact that first-rate education is a process, not an event – is to look at each subject and consider how close it to the established ideal, and what could be done to develop the subject in that direction. The Coleg’s aim would be to work closely with universities to promote first-rate educational standards, and the Coleg centrally will develop new support schemes to facilitate this.

As a foundation for all of this, this kind of strategic thinking and approach is bound to mean that the Coleg will need to work in more detail and more widely, and do so directly with the Welsh-medium academic community. If such a vision of educational development at the university is to be implemented, we will need to develop the Coleg community – both nationally and through the branches – in a much more intensive way than has been the case thus far. The Coleg’s decision to establish the concept of an associate lecturer is a step towards creating an active relationship with the wider academic community.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) As the period of funding posts through the Academic Staffing Scheme ends after five years, there will be a reduction in the number of lecturing posts funded by the Coleg. The Coleg has adopted the principle of using the term ‘associate lecturer’ to refer to every lecturer teaching through the medium of Welsh in departments receiving funding by the Coleg via the new Academic Plan.
funding provision moves away from the original pattern of funding posts through the Academic Staffing Scheme towards subject grants, the Coleg will establish agreements with individual institutions noting the commitments to be undertaken by the institution as well as the activities funded by grants from the Coleg.

Policy Context

It is important to note the context of higher education developments in Wales and beyond when discussing Welsh-medium academic planning. Some of these issues were mentioned in the introduction above, but it is worth noting them again, along with a number of other factors:

- Student Financial Support Policy. There was an intense discussion about the impact of Welsh Government fees policy on the student market in Wales. The Diamond Review recommendations offer a way forward for financial support policy, but it is not yet known to what extent nor in which year the Review’s conclusions will be implemented by the Welsh Government;

- The removal of the cap on student numbers in England and reconfiguring the higher education sector there. There have been significant developments in policy for universities in England, which will have a significant impact on the sector in Wales. The cap on the number of students universities can admit in England has been lifted, which means universities can recruit as many students as they wish. This will undoubtedly increase competition, especially for those universities described as medium tariff, i.e. those with moderate entry requirements. However, the sector is also being affected by the arrival of new providers. Over the last few years, as many new providers registered as prospective universities as there were established universities previously. Many of these providers are small at present, but the potential for competition and for very different models of university provision is substantial;

- The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The TEF is a very significant development in the context of the higher education sector, which will tie the right to charge students tuition fees with the quality of teaching within the university. This will have a significant impact on the student market – since universities will be (very) keen to make extensive use of any formal recognition of outstanding teaching in marketing their courses;

- The Review of Health Professions Education (Wales). For years in Wales there has been a divide between higher education courses (funded by HEFCW) and higher education courses in health (with the exception of Medicine) – commissioned by the Welsh Government through the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) and now through the Workforce, Education and Development Services (WEDS). Following a report prepared by Professor Robin Williams, the Welsh Government has announced that a new body, Health Education Wales, will be established in 2017. Considering the importance of health subjects in the context of Welsh-medium higher education provision, exactly how this develops will be key;

- Part-Time Studies. The number of students studying part-time at university in Wales has fallen significantly and continues to do
so – although the drop in Wales is less dramatic than the drop in England where fees policy has had a very significant impact on the opportunity for students to study part-time at university;

- Brexit. There is currently great uncertainty about the extent of the impact of Brexit on the higher education sector in Wales and beyond. That very much depends on the exact nature of the discussions that will take place between the UK Government and the European Union, and the outcome of those discussions. Although it is difficult to predict the exact outcome of discussions, it is clear that some initiatives from which universities have benefited in the past will not be available. In such a context we can predict that Welsh-medium education will face more competition for the internal resources of universities against other priorities that may currently be in receipt of support from European sources.
Academic Planning
towards 2020 and beyond

The progress made thus far by the Coleg Cymraeg in planning academically and developing provision suggests that there is a real opportunity to develop and embed provision more deeply during the next period. Despite the challenges posed by the public policy context, it is suggested that the solid foundations laid down offer an opportunity to further develop truly innovative provision, which will be recognized internationally as a first-rate educational experience. Whilst the Coleg and the universities have mainly focused during the first five years on ensuring that there is provision in place, we now have the opportunity to develop that provision further. This Plan is a crucial part of the Welsh Government’s Welsh language policy, and its objective is to contribute constructively and positively to the realisation of the long term aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Coleg’s Academic Plan for the next period, therefore, will focus on the goal of ensuring that first-rate higher education is provided to students who choose to study at least a proportion of their course through the medium of Welsh. This will be a collaborative process between the Coleg and the universities in Wales, and the subject planning process will be developed into a process of looking more completely at the subject in question and providing pathways to develop the subject based on a range of questions that will help us ensure first-rate higher education.

Building on the features that have already been discussed about first-rate education, the following headings are noted, which will eventually be discussed in the individual subject plans:

- The Student Experience
- Lecturers
- Curriculum
- Student Attainment
- Resources
- Employability
- Sustainability

Responding to these headlines is clearly challenging, but if a pattern of Welsh-medium higher education provision that is sustainable for a generation and beyond is to be developed, then ambition is critical. We cannot be sure what the public policy context will be, or the level of government investment – so constructing a pattern of brilliant, successful provision is vital.

Each of these headings is discussed initially below:
1. **The student experience.** What is the extent of the study support and feedback available to students on the course? Are there arrangements in place to ensure there is bilingual support available to students in terms of study skills? Welsh language improvement? Extracurricular experiences? Additional opportunities such as work experience schemes or employability awards? It is increasingly clear that students need to develop a round set of skills, and that providing information and technical skills alone is not enough – so appropriate study support and the alternative experiences offered are important as provision develops. Is there a clear partnership with students in terms of studies? Have students been involved in the course’s creation and/or development? Are students actively involved after the course content has been developed? Is the education therefore inclusive (in the widest sense)?

2. **Lecturers** who are recognized experts. What is the nature of the academic community who will be teaching through the medium of Welsh? Are the Welsh language educators recognized as leaders and innovators in teaching, research and/or wider engagement? Clearly, these are difficult questions – but careful consideration is needed in the development of Welsh-medium teams of educators who can offer a rich and varied experience in Welsh. We would emphasize that this is not limited to notable researchers, it is about ensuring that individuals who are recognized as leaders in their field, whether in research, teaching or community engagement, are nurtured and developed as part of Welsh-medium teams. In some areas the existing pattern will be suitable and robust, but in other areas it may be necessary to consider a ten-year-plus strategy in order to reach a robust position. If the total Welsh-medium provision depends on one early-career lecturer with some support from a PhD student, for example, it will be challenging! Careful consideration will need to be given to a training and support programme for those who teach through the medium of Welsh. A solid foundation for this work already exists, with the Academic Staff Development Programme already in place at the Coleg. We will also need to consider in detail how to further develop the Coleg’s academic community – especially as the balance moves towards (a higher number of) lecturers who have contact with the Coleg rather than (a smaller number of) lecturers fully funded by the Coleg.

3. **A planned Welsh-medium/bilingual curriculum.** Has there been full consideration of the Welsh language and Wales context in shaping the curriculum for Welsh-medium teaching? Does the curriculum bring the best of the world to Wales and present the best of Wales to the world? There are some prominent examples where this has taken place, but there are other examples where the Welsh-medium provision is an exact translation of the English-medium provision. It is suggested, as a minimum, that the suitability of the curriculum to Welsh-medium education should be considered and that every opportunity should be taken to embed education in the Welsh language and Wales context. It should also be recognized in this context that some subjects are more limited than others in terms of making curriculum choices because the courses have been approved and/or accredited by regulatory bodies for the particular subject. Are there opportunities within the degree course to receive multidisciplinary
4. **Student attainment.** One of the clearest metrics of student development is their attainment rates and the university degrees awarded to them. How do the students receiving Welsh-medium higher education compare with their English-medium counterparts in terms of attainment rates? And what about university degrees? Do students on the Welsh-medium course perform better, worse or about the same? How does this relate to the students’ entry grades? It is important to remember that if a student arrives at university with low entry grades and manages to earn a 2i degree, this can be a more remarkable feat than a very bright student gaining a First Class degree! Consideration should also be given to whether the student goes on to postgraduate study. If the students have benefited from a rich and interesting education, they may well be keen to undertake further study. What opportunities do they have to go on to postgraduate studies (ideally through the medium of Welsh) and how many benefit from these opportunities?

5. **Resources.** What is the extent of the resources available to support students who are studying through the medium of Welsh? We must of course recognize that there will never be the same number of resources available in Welsh as there are in English – that is now a similar pattern to any other European language, including languages much more widely spoken than Welsh. But have appropriate resources been developed? Do they meet the students’ requirements? And are they of suitable quality?

6. **Employability.** How much of the Welsh-medium education provided contains a firm link with the world of work? We know that some courses include specific modules involving work experience – or even provide a full year out ‘in industry’, but to what extent is there a clear link with the world of work, and are there subjects where greater focus is needed in this area? At the end of the course, how many students succeed in securing employment? Within six months? Within 18 months? Is this employment in a graduate position? What is the student’s salary, and how does this compare with other students? [Care is needed here in comparing like with like – i.e. if a student settles in London, it is highly likely that they will earn a higher salary than a student who has settled in the countryside, whatever their job.] Employer links and meeting the needs of the world of work are a prominent theme in the Diamond and Hazelkorn reports, and are likely to be an important part of the Coleg’s work during the next period. This is also relevant to the Welsh Government’s strategy for ensuring a million Welsh speakers by 2050 – and the consequent need for effective and careful workforce planning. The individual subject plans will identify opportunities to develop and intensify links with employers, and identify more accurately the needs of the future workforce and ensure that Coleg-supported provision responds to this need.

7. **Sustainability.** A viable number of lecturers and students to sustain the provision. How many lecturers are available to sustain the provision? The original Academic Plan included benchmarks, namely four lecturers
for provision worth 80 credits or more, and two lecturers for provision worth 40 credits or more. Although some people considered this to be ambitious, challenges do arise when a small team tries to provide across a range of areas. How many lecturers are available to teach through the medium of Welsh within the team, and how can this be developed? In terms of students, ensuring a sustainable number of students to study in Welsh continues to be a challenge. There is considerable consensus that around six students are needed in each year as a minimum; but ensuring that figure in some subjects and some contexts is challenging.

The considerations outlined here are just a taste of the questions that arise when considering the question of first-rate Welsh-medium higher education. At first glance, they may seem too ambitious or too extensive to be fully considered. Two key points are highlighted:

1. Ensuring a first-rate educational experience is a process, not an event. If we are agreed on the goal we are working towards, there is an opportunity to put plans in place to reach that goal; and if, say, in a particular subject we have managed to respond positively to most of the seven objectives set out above, we can be sure that very significant progress will have been made;

2. These objectives, if accepted, will form the basis for planning and prioritization by subject. The context of each subject will vary, so we will need to consider each of the above objectives in the subject planning process, and formulate a development programme that will prioritize the various elements in question.

**The development of higher education in the next decade**

We also need to be alert to the potential developments in higher education during the coming years, and respond to strategically important themes. Several potential themes emerge, with some overlap between them:

- The development of educational technology;
- Collaborative provision;
- More flexible learning;
- Learning in the workplace;
- Variety of courses and qualifications;
- Widening access;
- Learning Pathways.

**Technology**

There has been some dramatic development in educational technology in recent years, and there is no doubt that those developments will continue. The Welsh language needs to be at the forefront in terms of technology and ensuring the adoption of the most up-to-date teaching methods in terms of technology-enhanced learning. Effective use of technology can help us in dealing with a number of the challenges regarding the development of first-rate education, but
it is important to ensure that such use meets the needs of students – and that it genuinely enriches the experience. To this end, the Coleg will regularly review and update its technology strategy.

**Collaborative provision**

Within certain areas, the Coleg placed considerable emphasis during the first five years on promoting and supporting the development of collaborative provision. Some of the plans were successful, others less so. During the next period, it is anticipated that the Coleg will continue to support collaborative provision where the academic basis for doing so is sound. That would be the case, for example, in terms of enriching the student experience by enabling them to benefit from the expertise of lecturers employed at other institutions. It is a more difficult question in situations where student numbers are very small and collaborative provision is considered to be the only means of providing through the medium of Welsh.

The Coleg has now put structures in place for supporting collaborative provision, including:

- A planning framework agreed by the Coleg’s Board of Directors for the development of collaborative degree programmes, with the focus on securing the agreement and commitment of the partners from the outset;
- An Academic Collaboration Committee established to ensure strategic oversight of the Coleg’s involvement in the collaborative agenda;
- Encouragement for institutions to continue to operate robust internal structures for ensuring the quality of provision.

The Coleg does not consider that providing collaboratively is an expectation in every case where funding is provided by the Coleg to support academic provision. However, the Coleg reserves the right to impose this as a condition where the relevant subject development plan gives priority to collaborative provision in terms of Coleg investment. Each subject plan will therefore clearly state the suitability and priority of collaborative provision within the particular subject, and the emphasis placed on collaborative activities can vary greatly depending on the subject context.

During the first few years the Coleg has – in some specific areas – invested extensively in activities such as conferences or forums that bring students together without necessarily contributing to the formal provision for the degree course (this applies to ‘More flexible learning’ below). In future, however, there will be greater expectations that such activity should be associated with credited modules or components of modules.

The Coleg will also keep an eye on developments in relation to allowing students to take modules at other institutions, including opportunities for students who choose to study outside Wales to follow some Welsh-medium modules.
More flexible learning

Although this Plan has already suggested that there has been a substantial drop in the number of part-time students, student preferences suggest that courses that provide the opportunity to study part-time while continuing to work (e.g. several foundation degree schemes which have been developed and/or provision at Masters level) are attractive to students. There are also developing discussions about the ability to transfer credits and/or recognizing prior learning as part of degree courses. Some universities in England have begun giving credits for studying online courses (MOOCs in particular) and then using those credits as part of a degree pathway. Every subject development plan should at the very least consider what opportunities exist to study more flexibly and not take for granted that the basic model is an 18-year-old student studying full-time with no other commitments. It is also possible that the boundaries between the higher education sector and the further education sector will become less clear as the patterns of provision and learners’ needs evolve.

In order to respond more effectively to this agenda, the Coleg will establish closer partnerships with institutions that specialize in the provision of part-time and flexible provision in order to increase the opportunities offered through the medium of Welsh in this context.

Workplace learning

This is partly linked with technological advances and more flexible learning, but there are increasing demands for higher-level skills training in the workplace. This could be through short courses, or even degree-level apprenticeships. There is also a clear and significant market of individuals in the workplace who want to develop their skills that could and should be drawn towards Welsh-medium provision. The ambiguity regarding the traditional boundaries between higher education, further education and vocational education is also relevant in this context.

Variety of courses and qualifications

In higher education, the most striking development in recent years is the MOOC. Although there are clear challenges with these courses in terms of completion rates, hundreds of thousands of students choose to pursue such courses each year. The range of higher education courses and options available to prospective students will expand significantly in the coming years, and it is vital that the Welsh language is ready to take advantage of the opportunities presented. The example of the MOOC in social work offers one way of doing this; develop a MOOC where the resources can be used on more traditional degree courses, there also being the opportunity for any person in the workplace, or beyond the workplace, to work through the MOOC when directing their own learning.

This is just a taste of the possible developments, but it is suggested that the subject plans need to be more structured while recognizing the diversity of the higher education sector and the likelihood of that variety increasing in the years to come.

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4 MOOC – Massive Open Online Course – courses usually provided remotely, at no cost, except if a student wishes to receive a certificate at the end.
Widening Access

Ensuring that every student who has the ability to benefit from higher education has the opportunity to do so is a key part of the Welsh Government’s strategy. This principle has been crucially important to the Coleg Cymraeg since its inception, and it played a clear role in the Coleg’s first Academic Plan. The evidence about the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in Wales suggests that there is more work to be done in this context, and the Coleg has worked closely with some of the Widening Access partnerships to ensure that Welsh-medium provision is a part of their activities. The Coleg will establish a Widening Access Working Group to oversee a specific programme of activities which will include elements of the following:

- Visits to Schools and Further Education Colleges where a high percentage of the students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, with particular emphasis on building relationships throughout the year with the teachers and the prospective students.

- Working more closely with widening access partners and ensuring that specified Welsh-medium and/or bilingual elements are a formal part of the annual programme of activities.

- Working with protected groups, such as carers, care leavers etc. in order to promote equality and diversity.

- Developing the relationship with the Open University and expanding the provision of short taster courses as part of ‘Open Learn Cymru’ so that those who perhaps lack confidence who are considering higher education (perhaps as mature students) can have a taste of the provision and develop confidence.

- Identifying opportunities to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds who lack confidence in their Welsh language skills and providing a programme of linguistic support through the Coleg-funded Language Tutors.

- Identifying specific areas (if appropriate) where there are particular issues in relation to attracting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and trying to put plans in place to support students to successfully apply to these areas.

- Ensuring that we use students from different backgrounds in promoting the Coleg’s activities.

Learning Pathways

As part of the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Strategy there will be an increased emphasis on ensuring Welsh-medium progression through the education system. This will involve further development of the Coleg’s work in partnership with schools, but also (subject to the findings of the Task and Finish Group established by the Welsh Government to consider the Coleg’s role in future) to much closer collaboration with further education colleges to ensure that the widest possible range of students can benefit from Welsh-medium higher education provision. This will also mean ensuring that prospective students have the confidence to benefit from elements of their educational experience through the medium of Welsh.
Academic Planning by subject

This Academic Plan identifies the objectives and principles of all of the Coleg’s academic planning work. The Plan will also guide the funding priorities of the Coleg alongside the universities. This section briefly notes how the Coleg will implement the objectives and principles adopted.

The Coleg is committed unequivocally to developing and maintaining Welsh-medium provision across a range of academic subjects and universities across Wales. Nevertheless, the position of individual subjects can vary greatly. Subjects can vary in terms of:

- The extent to which there was a tradition of providing the subject through the medium of Welsh;
- The level of Welsh language resources available to enrich and support the teaching of the subject;
- The number of Welsh-speaking students choosing to study the subject;
- The number of students choosing to study the subject through the medium of Welsh;
- The extent of the provision provided through the medium of Welsh in the subject;
- Is the subject considered a priority area in terms of public policy?;
- Is there recognized demand from employers for Welsh-medium graduates in the subject?;
- The number of universities providing the subject or wishing to do so.

The challenge facing the Coleg is how to direct limited resources strategically in order to have the most significant impact. To meet the challenge, the Coleg has adopted a new framework to guide its decisions. There was agreement on the importance of ensuring a clear central framework, since a number of the committees that will discuss future resources will include a large number of colleagues who will have some sort of interest in the decision.

It is proposed that the academic subjects are grouped into different categories. In doing so, we will also consider the subject areas that have been identified as strategic priorities of public policy by the Welsh Government. These include:

- Health and Care: Based on More Than Just Words 2, the Welsh Government’s strategy for Welsh language health and care. The action plan already identifies a role for the Coleg in implementing that strategy.
Initial Teacher Training: Negotiations are currently underway with Welsh Government officials in relation to developments and changes in this area, with particular attention to the possible role of the Coleg in the future.

The Welsh Government's Draft Language Strategy: a million Welsh speakers by 2050. We will work with the Welsh Government to identify priorities arising from this strategy and the action plan published in 2017. The Coleg will consider the specific position of the areas/subjects mentioned above separately.

Otherwise, we will divide the subjects into three categories:

1. **Development subjects**: subjects where the number studying through the medium of Welsh at the moment are relatively small, but where there is potential and a desire to develop;

2. **Developed subjects**: subjects where the provision and number of students are healthy, but where it is considered that the provision is not yet sustainable;

3. **Matured subjects**: subjects where teaching through the medium of Welsh is established (either on the basis of a long tradition of investing by universities, following investment by the Coleg, or a combination of both), the staffing capacity is robust, and the student numbers are sufficient at a national level to sustain the provision.

Note that the intention is to place subjects into categories nationally. That is, the decision is led by the national overview, not necessarily the particular situation at an individual university. Over time, the Coleg's objective is to ensure that most subjects move towards the third category. Certainly, it can reasonably be expected that the vast majority of subjects will reach Category 2 (if not 3) over time. The Coleg will also consider carefully how to ensure that subjects that are developing effectively are supported (and financially) in doing so. It is considered that subject grants is one component of the funding where support could be provided on the basis of i) the level of provision, but also ii) the number of students who are benefiting substantially from the provision provided.

In responding to the variation between subjects and the factors that influence the various contexts, the following was agreed:

- The history of the Welsh-medium provision – those subjects with a long tradition of delivering successfully in Welsh will be expected to fall into Categories 2 or 3;

- Welsh-medium resources – the range of resources available in Welsh could slightly affect the categorization of the subject, but since the funding streams for resources is open to every category, it is suggested that the range of resources is not a key factor in categorization;

- The number of students who speak Welsh and/or are studying through the medium of Welsh. If there are large numbers of students who speak Welsh already studying the subject, and doing so primarily through the medium of Welsh, subjects are expected to fall into Categories 2 or
3. Figures are considered nationally where many universities provide the subject (that is, if one or more locations are providing the subject with matured provision, the subject will fall into Category 3);

- The number of students who speak Welsh and/or are studying in Welsh. If the numbers studying the subject in Welsh are low, but the number of Welsh speakers is high, the subject is expected to fall into Category 1;

- The Provision. Subjects with at least 80 credits in each year will usually fall into Categories 2 or 3. Subjects aiming at a minimum of 80 credits, with at least 40 credits will usually fall into Category 2, and those subjects aiming for/that have reached 40 credits, but with no intention of further expanding the provision, will usually fall into Categories 1 or 2.

Priority areas of public policy

Those subjects identified as priority areas by the Welsh Government will be identified as priorities, regardless of the number of students/the breadth of provision. These subjects will be eligible to receive the following: Specific funding/support schemes; Subject grants (higher level); Incentive Scholarships; Main Scholarships; PhD Scholarships; Collaborative modules; Small Grants; Project Funding; the support of subject officers

Usually the funds made available to public policy priority subjects or Category 1 subjects will be available to a limited number of universities or to one university only. Subjects where a number of universities provide significant provision will usually fall into Categories 2 or 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1 – Developing Subjects</th>
<th>Category 2 – Developed Subjects</th>
<th>Category 3 – Matured Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>areas with low numbers</td>
<td>areas with good numbers, and provision of 40 credits as a minimum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Grants (at higher level)</td>
<td>Subject Grants (at lower level)</td>
<td>Main Scholarships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentive Scholarships</td>
<td>Incentive Scholarships</td>
<td>PhD Scholarships</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD Scholarships</td>
<td>Main Scholarships</td>
<td>Collaborative Modules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Modules</td>
<td>(where 80 credits are available</td>
<td>Small grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Grants</td>
<td>in each year)</td>
<td>Project funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding</td>
<td>PhD Scholarships</td>
<td>Support of Subject Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Officer Support</td>
<td>Collaborative Modules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Coleg’s intention is to consider by subject how to balance the resources provided by the Coleg with the resources provided by the university. In all cases the principle of co-funding will be followed – but the balance between the expectations on the Coleg and the university will vary by subject category.

In terms of subjects identified as priorities of public policy by the Welsh Government, it is expected that a significant portion (if not most) of the resources
provided will be provided by the Coleg and/or the Welsh Government, depending on the exact context of the subject.

In Category 1, it is expected that a significant proportion (and possibly the majority) of the resources provided will be provided by the Coleg.

In Category 2, it is expected that the majority of the resources provided will be provided by the university, noting that the Coleg will also be expected to contribute (and perhaps significantly).

In Category 3, it is expected that the majority of the resources provided will be provided by the universities, noting that the subjects/departments will be able to continue to benefit from a number of the Coleg’s national plans.

We would emphasize that the matter in question here is the balance between the requirements on the Coleg and the individual universities, not the overall size of the funding.

It is envisaged that the new funding agreements that will come into force in 2017/18 will include a framework for an agreement setting out the commitments of institutions to maintain provision using their own resources by subject, alongside receiving support from the Coleg Cymraeg.
Metrics

We will measure the success of the Academic Plan by adopting a range of metrics to assess progress.

We will measure success as follows.

Provision

Ensuring that academic provision for students is provided in a cost-effective way in as many disciplines as possible

[Metric: The number of disciplines where at least 40 credits/at least 80 credits are provided each year in Welsh];

Sustainability

Ensuring that as many students as possible benefit from Welsh-medium higher education provision

[Metric: The number of students studying at least 5, at least 40, at least 80, at least 120 credits through the medium of Welsh];

Effective links being created with the further education sector and schools to promote progression

[Metric: The percentage of school and further education students who choose to study through the medium of Welsh at higher education level];

An appropriate number of lecturers to sustain Welsh-medium provision, providing a range of core and specialized modules to students as appropriate

[Metric: The number of lecturers teaching through the medium of Welsh];

Employability

Ensure that workforce development needs in Wales are identified and addressed

[Metric: Demonstrate evidence that the higher education sector is responding to workforce development targets that appear in Welsh Government strategies (e.g. More Than Just Words 2)];

Appropriate recognition of students’ language skills through the Welsh Language Skills Certificate

[Metric: The number of students sitting the Welsh Language Skills Certificate and the number of employers who recognize the Certificate formally];

The success of students in terms of being employed at the end of the degree or moving on to postgraduate studies

[Metric: Employment/further study rates after six months recorded via DLHE];

The Student Experience

Students receive a first-rate educational experience.

[Metric: Teaching Excellence Framework Data/Assessment for the University/School's Welsh-medium provision];
Resources

The students’ teaching being enriched by the development of first-rate resources. 

[Metric: The breadth and evidence of use of the resources hosted by the Coleg];

The Welsh-medium research and publication agenda being fully considered 

[Metric: The number of Welsh-medium academic publications each year].
The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Academic Plan — Towards 2020 and beyond