Strategic Partnership between Qualifications Wales and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol – progress report

Background

Qualifications Wales and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Coleg Cymraeg) are key organisations in post-compulsory education and training in Wales.

Qualifications Wales is responsible for regulating non-degree qualifications in Wales and has four focus areas as part of its Dewis i Bawb/Choice for All strategy to increase the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications.

Coleg Cymraeg is responsible for developing and supporting Welsh-medium and bilingual provision across the post-compulsory education and training sector and is leading the delivery of the Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan.

To support and formalise our working together a strategic partnership was formed with a commitment to develop a joint three-year action plan between 2022-2025.

The action plan, structured across four different themes, has been developed to help achieve their common goal - to align the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision alongside suitable bilingual qualifications for learners studying those courses.

Coleg Cymraeg and Qualifications Wales meet quarterly to review progress, identifying future plans, including areas of focus that need further development and discuss any areas of concern.

This report is a summary of achievements over the first year of the partnership between 2022-23.

Priority 1

Working together to set priority areas and respond to the availability of Welsh medium and bilingual qualifications

Our commitments

- Continue Qualification Wales' programme of sector reviews[1] and identify demand for Welsh-medium vocational qualifications.
- Support awarding bodies to offer Welsh-medium qualifications.
- Discuss the demand for and supply of Welsh-medium qualifications with further education (FE) and work-based learning (WBL) providers in subject-specific qualification groups[2] led by Qualification Wales.
- Raise awareness of QW's review and reform of vocational qualifications in priority areas and promote feedback on the availability of post-16 Welsh medium vocational qualifications.
- Gather feedback from Regional Skills Partnerships.
- Establish subject panels in the priority areas and create a national plan for the subject area which will include progression pathways into higher education and employment.
- Promote the opportunities to study vocational qualifications through the medium of Welsh and bilingually.

Outcomes

- Coleg Cymraeg has collected feedback from regional skills partnerships, further education institutions and apprenticeship providers and reported back to Qualifications Wales on an ongoing basis.
- Coleg Cymraeg has fed into the Qualifications Wales sector reviews and shares the results of those reviews with the sector.

[11] Business, Administration and Retail (Law and Accountancy) (Spring 2022); Art, Creative and Media (Summer 2023); Hair and beauty (2025)

[2] Health and Social Care, and Childcare, Construction and the Built Environment, ICT and Digital, Engineering and Manufacturing, Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering, Sport and Public Services, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Business, Administration and Retail, Art, Creative and Media, Hair and Beauty, Education and Training and Preparation for Life and Work (including Independent Living Skills)

- Coleg Cymraeg has subject panels in seven priority areas with a view to establishing a panel for the eighth area of focus following the provision of funding to establish construction provision in the 2024/25 academic year.
- Qualifications Wales has made significant progress in 2022/23 to target post-16 vocational qualifications in identified priority areas.
- There has been an increase in the number of successful applications for Qualifications Wales' Welsh Language Support Grant. In the 2023/24 financial year, applications were submitted by eight awarding bodies, some of whom submitted an application for the first time. Grants to the value of £272,875 were awarded relating to more than 80 qualifications. This is a significant increase over previous years. The success of this targeting has been made possible through a combination of activities[3] and seeking the feedback of key stakeholders such as Coleg Cymraeg.
- Qualifications Wales has established a Cymraeg Stakeholder Group. This new group, alongside the existing Awarding Body Welsh Language Support Group and 13 Sector Qualification Groups, has led to increased involvement in *Choice for All* activities across multiple partners. These have led to increased interest in and support for *Choice for All* activities from external partners. These increased engagement opportunities will ensure that Qualifications Wales can target the relevant stakeholders more effectively and gather information that will help further identify and prioritise qualifications.
- Progress has been promoted on Qualifications Wales and Coleg Cymraeg social media and communication channels and communicated via events and news stories.

[3] These activities include: data mapping exercises, our enquiry form regarding the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications, the findings of our Phase 2 Sector Reviews of Business, Admin and Retail and Art, Creative and Media, and evidence gathered from our Sector Qualification Groups meetings.

Priority 2

Working together to align the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual courses and qualifications

Our commitments

- Continue to convene Qualifications Wales' Awarding Body Welsh Language Support Group with Coleg Cymraeg to provide input into group discussions and proposed agenda items.
- Establish a Cymraeg Stakeholder Group which will provide feedback on progress made against Qualifications Wales' *Dewis i Bawb* strategy commitments.
- Using data and an evidence-driven approach, awarding bodies will be encouraged to make target/proactive use of the Welsh Language Support Grant to respond to the growing demand for bilingual and Welsh-medium qualifications. QW will also measure the impact of grant funding on the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications, and benefits to learners, as part of our grant monitoring activities.
- Working with Welsh Government[4] and Medr: Commission for Tertiary Education and Research to plan for and ensure timely, effective and bilingual professional learning for teachers, as well as teaching and learning materials.
- Explore the opportunity to produce bilingual educational resources for the 16-19 curriculum with a bilingual educational resource company.
- Work closely with and continue to gather information from further education institutions and apprenticeship providers to map current provision, identify gaps in Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications and liaise with Qualifications Wales.
- Continue to share this information with each other and relevant awarding bodies
- Coleg Cymraeg will continue to analyse and provide feedback to Welsh Government on all further education institutions' curriculum plans.
- Share best practice and information to the Awarding Body Welsh Language Support Group regarding the provision of Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications.
- Coleg Cymraeg will continue to work with Welsh Government and Adnodd to commission new resources to increase the provision of Welsh-medium and bilingual apprenticeships.

[4] Note - The Welsh Government is committed to leading on this important area of work.

Outcomes

- Coleg Cymraeg continues to build close relationships with FE and apprenticeship providers to map out current provision. Coleg Cymraeg holds planning meetings with the organisations annually and offer funding to expand provision. When offering the funding, it confirms that the relevant qualifications are available through the medium of Welsh and work with Qualifications Wales and the relevant awarding bodies to ensure that they are.
- Coleg Cymraeg to work with Adnodd as it becomes further established. Three new resources will be announced in the summer term of 2023 as a result of these collaborations in sport, business and creative industries.
- WJEC, Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales are working together to establish the scheme for bilingual professional learning and resources to support the Curriculum for Wales and the qualifications designed to support the new curriculum from September 2024.
- The use of data and the adoption of a targeted approach has led to an increase in the number of successful applications for the Welsh Language Support Grant. Measuring the impact on learners will continue into 2024/25.

Priority 3

Work together to strengthen capacity within the system (provision and qualifications)

Our commitments

- Engage regularly with awarding bodies through Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) Wales meetings during term-time and Qualifications Wales' annual Awarding Bodies Forum.
- Working together and with other key stakeholders, to undertake an early mapping exercise of assessors, examiners and quality assurers to identify current capacity in the system and to identify the skills needed for the future
- Qualifications Wales to provide support and information, including through its Cynnig Cymraeg resource pack for awarding bodies on how to be proactive in their use of Cymraeg within the qualification system.
- Develop best practice guidance on how to deal effectively with the work of learners assessed in Welsh where the qualification is not offered bilingually
- Increase staffing capacity where Coleg Cymraeg funds practitioner posts in priority areas[5] in further education institutions, and assessor posts in apprenticeship providers – and giving these staff opportunities to become assessors, examiners and quality assurers.
- Operate the Gwreiddio scheme to highlight all bilingual and Welsh-medium staff development opportunities to target practitioners and assessors. As part of the Gwreiddio scheme, Coleg Cymraeg will establish new staff awards.

Outcomes

- Coleg Cymraeg is funding up to seven practitioner positions, depending on the provision offered, at each FE college, and up to four assessors for each of the main Welsh Government contracted apprenticeship providers.
- 340 staff across further education and apprenticeship providers are now members of the Gwreiddio scheme which alerts staff to opportunities to develop their bilingual teaching skills. In May 2023, a joint conference was held between

[5] Note - The Welsh Government is committed to leading on this important area of work.

higher and further education and apprenticeships for members of the Associate Lecturer scheme (higher education), Coleg Cymraeg and Gwreiddio members to share good practice among the sector.

- An awards night featuring Gwreiddio awards was held in June 2023 for the second year running.
- Coleg Cymraeg has held conversations with the Education Workforce Council, as well as Qualifications Wales to discuss the possibility of identifying the assessors, examiners and quality assurers to identify current capacity in the system and to identify the skills needed for the future.
- The annual Qualification Wales Awarding Bodies Forum was held in December 2023 and the Cynnig Cymraeg resource pack was presented to an audience of over 50 delegates.
- Qualifications Wales holds monthly meetings with FAB to provide updates and promote opportunities for engagement/consultation – including matters regarding Welsh language provision.
- Qualifications Wales and Coleg Cymraeg will continue to work with Canolfan Cenedlaethol Dysgu Cymraeg (National Centre for Learning Welsh) to identify the current capacity in the system of assessors, examiners and quality assurance staff, and to identify the skills needed for the future.
- Qualifications Wales will continue to work with stakeholders to establish a national database of suitably qualified individuals to address any gaps identified by the mapping exercise.

Priority 4

Work together to improve the information available about Welsh-medium provision and qualifications, promote their availability and facilitate access to them

Our commitments

- Make it a requirement for each awarding body to publish a policy statement setting out whether they make qualifications available in Cymraeg and to evidence how they promote and facilitate access to Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications.
- Promote the availability of Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications through the Qualifications in Wales database and periodic journals for centres.
- Engage with learners during events, such as Skills Cymru and freshers' fairs, to raise awareness of the availability of Welsh-medium post-16 vocational qualifications.
- Gather views from the Qualification Wales Learner Panel and Coleg Cymraeg's learner ambassadors on the current and future availability of Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications.
- Promote Welsh Government's Apprenticeship Matching Scheme website and highlight Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities.
- Promote progression from further education and apprenticeships to Welsh-medium and bilingual higher education provision
- Sponsor a learner award in all further education providers and main apprenticeship providers.
- Working with Skills Wales to include more bilingual opportunities in the World Skills Project.
- Arrange a training session for the ambassadors.
- Use the experience of our further education and apprenticeship learner ambassadors to capture the voice of learners to share their experiences.

Outcomes

- In November 2022, a consultation was held on the 'promotion and facilitation of Welsh-medium qualifications.' In August 2023, Qualifications Wales published its decisions which will require:

    - awarding bodies to publish a policy statement about their availability of Welsh-medium qualifications
    - the introduction of new Qualifications Wales requirements so that awarding bodies know what is expected of them
    - awarding bodies to promote their Welsh-medium qualifications
- Qualifications Wales attended freshers' fairs in September 2022 and Skills Cymru events in October 2022 and 2023 and took part in a BBC Bitesize Cymru session at Ysgol Glantaf in Cardiff to engage learners in Welsh-medium post-16 qualification learning opportunities. Qualification Wales also attended the National Education Show in October 2022 and 2023 where they spoke to teachers about Welsh-medium opportunities available to learners.
- In August 2023 Qualifications Wales held an event with awarding bodies and Comisiynydd y Gymraeg at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol on its decisions on promoting and facilitating Welsh-medium qualifications.
- Qualifications Wales will continue to hold meetings each term with leaders of further education institutions and WBL across Wales and report on the progress of this strategic partnership and identify joint development opportunities.
- Coleg Cymraeg will be launching specific schemes to promote progression from further education and apprenticeships to Welsh-medium and bilingual higher education provision in the 2024/25 academic year.
- Coleg Cymraeg has sponsored an annual learner award for further education institutions since 2019 and apprenticeship providers since 2022. In addition, there is an award for a further education learner and an apprentice award at our annual awards night.
- Coleg Cymraeg is working closely with Inspiring Skills to increase the number of competitions requiring Welsh language skills. There are now nine competitions requiring Welsh language skills. Inspiring Skills delivered a presentation to Coleg Cymraeg's post-16 strategic board in autumn 2023.
- A successful further education ambassador training session was held in Aberystwyth in November and a successful online apprenticeship ambassador training session in the same month.
- Coleg Cymraeg will continue to collaborate with the Apprenticeship Matching Scheme website to highlight Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities.