

Proposed Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Appointment of Independent Directors

Applications are invited for independent directors of the proposed Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Background Information

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹ will be an organisation which will promote and support higher education through the medium of Welsh.

Various groups over recent years have sought to have such a body, a “Coleg Ffederal”, to support Welsh medium higher education. The establishment of the Coleg was made part of the *One Wales* agreement, which forms the basis of the current programme of the Welsh Assembly government.

A Planning Board was established in October 2008 chaired by Professor Robin Williams. Professor Williams submitted his report on a proposed approach for establishing the Coleg to the then Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in June 2009². The Welsh Assembly Government accepted the recommendations and in 2010 the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), at the request of the Assembly Government, established an Implementation Board to work on the detail of setting up the Coleg.

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol will be established as a company limited by guarantee and it will also seek registration as a charity. All higher education institutions – the universities - in Wales will be members of the Coleg and there will be an equal number of stakeholder organisation members. The Coleg will have a smaller Board of Directors with an independent chair. The chair will also be an individual member of the Coleg. There will be six directors put forward by the higher education sector, one director representing Welsh medium teaching staff and one representing students. There will be four independent directors. The Coleg will have a small core staff including a Chief Executive.

The object of the Coleg shall be, for the benefit of the public, to advance learning and knowledge by promoting, maintaining, developing and overseeing Welsh medium provision in higher education in Wales, working with and through higher education institutions in Wales. It will also take into account higher education which is provided through further education colleges.

¹ Note: The name of the organisation will be confirmed on the incorporation of the Coleg as a company.

² <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090622ColegFfederalReporten.pdf>

The constitution for the Coleg has been considered by the governing bodies of the higher education institutions and it is hoped to complete the incorporation of the Coleg by the end of the year or early in the new year.

Professor Merfyn Jones has been appointed as the first Chair of the Coleg. It is expected that the Chair will be part of the appointment process for the directors. The intention is that the Board of Directors will be in place by April 2011, with the Coleg beginning its first full academic year in August 2011.

The Coleg will incorporate and build on the work of

- i) the current Welsh Medium Higher Sector Group which was established in 2007 to lead a more strategic approach to the development of Welsh medium higher education and
- ii) the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. The Centre leads in implementing, supporting and facilitating national schemes to increase, develop and expand opportunities for study through the medium of Welsh at Welsh universities.³ The staff of the Centre will transfer to the Coleg and the Coleg's central office will in Carmarthen.

The Centre has already completed detailed work on the first two initiatives arising from the establishment of the Coleg, namely an undergraduate scholarship scheme, launched by Leighton Andrews AM on 2 November, and an academic staffing scheme through which the Coleg will fund up to twenty new academic posts from 2011/12. Other initiatives are in preparation.

The primary funder of the Coleg will be HEFCW, although the Coleg will be able and will be expected to secure funding from other sources.

The Coleg will operate within the wider context of the Welsh Assembly's Government's priorities for higher education as set out in *For Our Future, the 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales* (November 2009).⁴

³ More information on the role and work of the Centre can be found at <http://www.welshmediumhe.ac.uk/en/>

⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/091214hestrategyen.pdf>

Role of the directors

The role of the directors will be as follows:

- To prepare for and attend all meetings of the Board and to contribute, and be party, to key decisions concerning the Coleg's strategy.
- To work closely with the Chair and the Chief Executive in giving advice and encouragement to the Coleg in the initiation, development and implementation of policy and in the fulfilment of its responsibilities and objectives.
- To provide authoritative and timely advice to the Chair and the Chief Executive as may be required between meetings.
- As individual members to chair or be members of standing committees of the Board and Coleg according to need.
- Contribute to ensuring the overall effectiveness of the Board and its Committees, and to uphold the highest standards of corporate governance.
- Contribute to ensuring that the Coleg works effectively with and through higher education institutions in Wales and all other appropriate bodies.

Skills and experience of the directors collectively

To ensure the Board can fulfil its responsibilities properly and effectively, the Directors collectively would be expected to bring a mix of skills and experience to the Board which might include:

- Strategic direction and leadership
- Business and financial management
- Staff and human resource management
- Marketing and recruitment

- Curriculum leadership and planning
- Welsh medium higher education teaching
- Application of technology to education.
- Lifelong learning and progression planning
- Language acquisition and planning

- Student perspective
- Academic staff perspective
- Experience of other Welsh medium education sectors
- Employer perspective and work-based learning
- Vocational education

Independent directors

Independent directors will need to demonstrate how they can contribute to the range of skills and expertise set out above, or provide comparable skills and expertise relevant to the work of the Coleg.

In coming to decisions on the appointment of the independent directors, regard will be had to the need to secure a balanced Board of Directors which can bring an appropriate range of experience and expertise to reflect the tasks and challenges facing the Coleg. This will take into account the experience and expertise which will be brought to the Board by the institutional directors, the student director and the staff director. Consideration will also be given to achieving an appropriate gender balance within the Board.

Person Specification

Directors will be expected to:

- Have proven ability to think and take decisions strategically across a wide range of complex issues, as well as being able to work well within a team to help achieve shared decisions.
- Be committed to ensuring the highest quality, efficiency and effectiveness of services
- Have an understanding of Welsh medium education, and in some cases Welsh medium higher education in particular.
- Be able to relate that knowledge to higher education more widely, to the social, economic and cultural needs of Wales, and to the interests of the Welsh language and the needs of individuals, communities and employers.
- Be good communicators at board level.
- Have demonstrable commitment to the 7 principles of public service: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership, including a clear understanding and commitment to equality issues and a willingness to challenge discriminatory procedures.
- Be committed to the aims of the Coleg of developing and increasing Welsh medium higher education provision and supportive of the ethos of the Coleg as a body which operates through the medium of Welsh.

Welsh will be the administrative language of the Coleg in accordance with its constitution. It is expected that all meetings of the Coleg will be held in Welsh, with provision of facilities for simultaneous translation in English where necessary. In the light of this, it would be desirable if directors were able to communicate, orally and in writing, in Welsh and English. However, full consideration will be given to applications from those who are unable to speak Welsh if they can show that they have significant other skills and experience which can contribute to the ability for the Coleg to fulfil its responsibilities effectively.

The appointment

It is expected that the term of the appointments will vary from one to three years. The draft constitution for the Coleg notes that:

The first directors must, at their first meeting, reach agreement as to staggering their terms of office such that at each of the first, second and third annual general meetings, two of the first institutional directors and two of the other first directors (apart from the Chair) shall retire. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chair shall determine which such directors shall so retire.

Time commitment

The Board of Directors will meet at least three times a year, although there may be more frequent meetings initially. It is likely that there will also be other standing committee meetings which some directors, at least, will need to attend. There will be an annual general meeting of the Members of the Coleg. Overall, it is expected that the directors will need to devote the equivalent of approximately a half day to a day a month to the Coleg, although a greater commitment may be required in the setup period for the Coleg.

Start date

The start date is expected to be in March/April 2011 but may be earlier depending on progress with establishing the Coleg.

Payment of expenses

These positions are unpaid. However, you will be able to claim travel and other reasonable expenses that might be incurred in carrying out work on behalf of the Coleg within limits to be set by Board of Directors.

Eligibility

The independent directors cannot be students, members of staff or the governing body of any higher education institution in Wales. It will be possible for a candidate who is a member of governing body to apply to be an independent director but they would be required to resign immediately from that governing body if they were to be appointed.

It is expected that the directors may, however, determine rules which may allow the Chair and the independent directors to participate on an appropriate part-time basis in higher education provision offered by higher education institutions in Wales and which will address any conflict, or potential conflict,

of interest, so that the chair and independent directors are not excluded from access to higher education during their term of office.

Conduct

The directors will be expected to behave at all times in a manner which will maintain public confidence and demonstrate adherence to the highest standards of corporate governance. Part of the initial work of the Board of Directors will be to prepare rules to ensure that their decisions are not affected inappropriately by a conflict of interests. However, applicants should declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to influence your judgements in performing the functions of directors of the Coleg.

Application and selection process

The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit.

The appointment will be made by a panel which will include representatives of HEFCW, Higher Education Wales (HEW), the Chair Elect and an external assessor. Those who are invited for interview will be expected to demonstrate how they meet the requirements set out in the person specification through using examples and evidence.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is providing support for the arrangements for setting up the Coleg. Applications should be made by completing the enclosed application form, which should be returned to:

Dr Alison Allan, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, The Orchards, Linden Court, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DZ.

The closing date is 10 February 2011.

It is possible that applications received after this date will not be considered. It is expected that interviews will be held in February/March 2011.

If you wish to discuss the role of the the independent directors further, please contact:

Dr Alison Allan (telephone 029 2068 2223, email

alison.allan@hefcw.ac.uk).