

**Interim Evaluation of the Welsh Medium Postgraduate
Scholarship and Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship
Schemes**

Contract: EB0701

Final Report

for

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

by



and

Dateb
Research, Solutions, Change

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1 Introduction

This Final Report is submitted to HEFCW under Contract EBO701. The research has been undertaken by Siôn Jones (LE Wales) and Einir Burrowes (Dateb).

The main objective of this interim evaluation is to assess the extent to which the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme and the Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship Scheme have been successful to date and to identify any lessons about their operation that may be used to inform future developments.

The evaluation was undertaken in nine days during February and March 2008. It involved both desk research and interviews with stakeholders. Documentary materials provided by HEFCW and by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education (formerly the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre), who manage the Schemes, were reviewed. In addition a series of interviews were undertaken with stakeholders at the three higher education institutions who have been in receipt of the largest number of awards – Bangor University, Aberystwyth University and Swansea University.

In Chapter 2 we introduce the two Schemes and provide an assessment of the performance of the Schemes against the HEFCW targets for the Schemes. For these assessments we rely mainly on information provided by HEFCW and the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education (who manage the Schemes), supplemented by information gathered through the stakeholder interviews.

In Chapter 3 we discuss the outcomes of our discussions with stakeholders and in Chapter 4 we provide our conclusions on the performance of the Schemes and recommendations for the future.

2 The Schemes and Performance against Targets

2.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, following a brief review of the policy background, we summarise the two Schemes considered in this evaluation and we provide an assessment of the performance of the Schemes against the quantitative targets set by HEFCW.

In assessing Scheme performance we rely mainly on information from the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education (CWMHE), particularly their latest Monitoring and Evaluation Report to HEFCW (dated July 2007). This information is supplemented by other sources including information provided by HEFCW, supplementary information from CWMHE and interviews with a small number of Scholarship holders, Fellowship holders and other relevant staff at Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea Universities.

These three institutions were chosen in agreement with HEFCW and CWMHE as they are the institutions which have received the largest number of awards under the Schemes to date. The distribution of Scholarship and Fellowship awards across the Welsh HEIs is illustrated in the tables below.

Table 1: Postgraduate Scholarships Awarded by Institution

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Bangor U	3	3	5	11
Aberystwyth U	4	4	1	9
Swansea U	1	3	2	6
Cardiff U	1	0	2	3
UWIC	0	1	2	3
Total	9	11	12	32

Source: Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education

Note: One of these award holders transferred to a scholarship at another institution.

Table 2: Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowships Awarded by Institution

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Bangor U	3	2	3	8
Aberystwyth U	1	3	1	5
Swansea U	0	1	1	2
Trinity College	1	1	0	2
UW Newport	0	0	1	1
Total	5	7	6	18

Source: Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education

Note: These figures include three extensions to existing Fellowships.

2.2 Policy background

The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education in Wales to 2010, *Reaching Higher*, published in 2002, included a target for increasing the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh. This was recast in *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* in 2006:

“The proportion of Welsh domiciled students in Welsh HEIs undertaking some element of their courses through the medium of Welsh to increase to 7% by 2010.”¹

By 2005/06 the proportion of Welsh-domiciled students undertaking some element of their HE course through the medium of Welsh was 4.9%², clearly illustrating the challenge faced. Achievement of this target would also make a positive contribution to the Welsh Assembly Government's wider objectives for the Welsh language, as set out most recently in *One Wales*.³

In response to *Reaching Higher* the Steering Group for Welsh Medium Provision in Higher Education established by HEFCW produced a strategy on Welsh medium provision in the Higher Education sector which was submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government in autumn 2004.⁴ The strategy made a number of proposals for raising the level of Welsh medium provision in higher education. The proposals relate in particular to the areas of staff development and stimulating demand for Welsh medium provision, including reference to the Teaching Fellowship and Postgraduate Scholarship Schemes which had been approved by the Assembly Government in summer 2004.

More recently, in 2007, under the auspices of Higher Education Wales (HEW), all of the higher education institutions in Wales have committed to a strategic framework, including a comprehensive National Development Plan, for university provision through the medium of Welsh. This work is being led

¹ Welsh Assembly Government, October 2006 *The Learning Country: Vision into action*

² HEFCW (2007) *Welsh Higher Education Statistics 2004/05*.

³ *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the Government of Wales* (an agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly).

⁴ Steering Group for Welsh Medium Provision in Higher Education, July 2004, *Welsh Medium Provision in Higher Education – Draft Strategy*, HEFCW.

by a Welsh Medium Higher Education Sector Group (WMHESG) and supports the One Wales commitment to a Welsh Medium Higher Education Network. The plan prioritises subject areas for Welsh medium development and encompasses the Teaching Fellowship and Postgraduate Scholarship Schemes that were already in place.

The overall aims of these two schemes are:⁵

1. To extend the capacity of the sector to provide increased opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh.
2. To take initial steps towards increasing the range and volume of Welsh medium provision in line with the Assembly target of 7% of Welsh-domiciled HE students undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh by 2010/11.
3. To provide an example of good practice, for the Welsh HE sector and beyond, in terms of genuine collaboration and measurable deliverables.

2.3 Funding for the Schemes

HEFCW's planned expenditure from the Reconfiguration & Collaboration Fund on the two Schemes for enhanced Welsh medium provision are set out in a letter of 9 December 2004 from HEFCW to the Development Officer, now the Director, at the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education.⁶

Table 3 below shows the planned expenditures for the three academic years to 2006/07. It also shows the amounts spent by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and the cumulative under-spend. HEFCW note that the under-spends are primarily due to one year postponements of various Scholarships to allow institutions to recruit suitably qualified candidates, and are committed to fund those scholarships.

⁵ Set out in the original funding letter for the Schemes from HEFCW to the University of Wales, dated 9 December 2004.

⁶ At that time funding from HEFCW for the Centre was allocated through the University of Wales. In August 2007, the Centre's management transferred to a sector consortium and funding is allocated through Trinity College Carmarthen, .

Table 3: Planned and actual expenditures on the two Schemes

	£	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Planned		16,025	251,660	423,037
Actual		8,815	233,942	395,307
Cum. under-spend		7,210	24,928	52,658

Source: HEFCW

2.4 The Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme

The Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme was launched in 2005 and is aimed at contributing to the development of a new generation of lecturers able to expand opportunities for higher education students in Wales to learn through the medium of Welsh in a range of subject areas.

The Scheme is managed by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and applications for the Scheme are made each year by the higher education institutions for specific subject areas. Decisions on awards are made by an independent panel, chaired by Andrew Green, Librarian, National Library of Wales. Those institutions that are awarded funding through the Scheme then appoint individual Scholarship holders. Those individuals who are awarded Scholarships obtain funding for up to five years, including 3 or 4 years as a doctoral research student and one year as a teaching fellow.

Scholarship holders are expected to teach through the medium of Welsh and to develop new Welsh medium provision during the funding period. The Institutions which are in receipt of funding are also expected to create a full-time lecturing post, for which the scholarship holder may apply. However, it is not incumbent upon the institution to appoint the scholarship holder to such a post, if other suitably-qualified candidates apply. Welsh medium teaching must be an integral part of these posts.

2.4.1 Strategic targets

The three strategic targets for the Scholarship Scheme, together with a review of performance to date against those targets, are set out below.

Additional Welsh medium teaching staff

The strategic target is –

“The production of thirty additional staff competent to teach through the medium of Welsh by the end of 2012.

Measured by:

- *The appointment of ten scholarships per year from 2005/06 to 2007/08*
- *The development by institutions by no later than 2007-08 of a strategy for the creation of full time lecturing posts for which the holders of scholarships may apply.”*

The table below shows the number of scholarships awarded between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

Table 4: Postgraduate Scholarships Awarded

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Total	9	11	12	32

Source: Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education

It should be noted that:

- One of the 9 Scholarships awarded in 2005-06 came to an end after one year when the scholarship holder transferred to another scholarship under the scheme at another institution.
- One of the 11 Scholarships awarded for 2006-07 has been postponed (with HEFCW agreement) until 2007-08.

Unused funds from the Scholarship that ended after one year and also from the fact that a number of the Scholarships are of 4 years duration (instead of a potential 5 years) have been used to fund additional places.

These figures suggest that, assuming that none of the existing Scholarship holders withdraw from the Scheme, 31 people will have completed the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme by 2012.

The second part of the target involves the creation by the relevant HEIs of strategies for the creation of full time lecturing posts for which Scholarship holders may apply.

HEFCW wrote to the heads of the HEIs on 31 August 2006 to revise this target. HEIs were required to submit a strategy, in the case of each individual Scholarship holder, for the creation of a full time lecturing post no less than two years before the end of the funding period for each Scholarship.

The first tranche of Scholarships are due to finish by 30 September 2009. They include four Scholarships at Aberystwyth, one at Bangor and one at Swansea. The target suggests strategies in respect of each of the Scholarships should have been submitted by 30 September 2007. There does not appear to be clarity about what constitutes a strategy. As far as we understand, no formal strategy documents have been submitted to HEFCW to date, although discussions between the Centre and institutions are advanced in some cases and there have been written commitments to create posts in other cases.

A further discussion of the requirement for the creation of full time lecturing posts is provided in the next Chapter.

Additional Welsh medium teaching hours and development of teaching materials

The strategic target is –

“The development of an additional 50 hours teaching each year through the medium of Welsh against a 2004/05 baseline level together with the development of new modules to the value of 200 credits per year from the fifth year onwards (2009/10).

Measured by:

- *The delivery of five hours Welsh medium teaching per week by each scholarship holder from the second year onwards until 2011/12.*
- *The production of material to support one 20-credit module in the fifth year of each scholarship.”*

Details of the Welsh medium teaching undertaken to date and of the production of Welsh medium material by the Scholarship holders are included in the individual reports submitted by Scholarship holders to the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. At this early stage, this information is not summarised in the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education’s Monitoring and Evaluation Reports to HEFCW but we

understand it will be requested in the next monitoring report. We have not examined each of the individual Scholarship holders' reports.

We understand from conversations with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education that the requirement for Welsh medium teaching has been met. Our discussions with a small sample of Scholarship holders suggested that a number of them, whilst teaching Welsh medium seminars/tutorials every week, were not teaching as many as five Welsh medium hours per week.

The requirement to produce Welsh medium modules does not arise until 2009/10. Nevertheless it is clear from discussions with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and with Scholarship holders that some holders are already undertaking this activity in advance of the fifth year of their Scholarships.

Growth in Welsh medium student registrations

The strategic target is -

"Direct growth in registrations at each institution offering the particular subject through the medium of Welsh.

Measured by:

Registrations by year per scholarship awarded of one additional FTE for subjects already offered through the medium of Welsh against a 2004/05 baseline and an additional 0.5 FTEs for subjects being offered for the first time."

Details on student registrations are included in the individual reports submitted by Scholarship holders to the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. This information is not yet summarised in the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education's Monitoring and Evaluation Reports to HEFCW but, as noted above, will form part of the next report. We have not examined each of the individual Scholarship holders' reports.

Some of the people we interviewed were able to give an indication of how student numbers had changed since the introduction of the two Schemes. In some cases, Scholarship holders were the first providers of Welsh medium teaching in their departments and so all Welsh medium student registrations were additional (e.g. teaching French language to 7 students at Bangor). In others the numbers of students undertaking Welsh medium modules had

increased significantly since Scholarships and Fellowships had been awarded. For example:

- an increase since 2004 from 4/5 students to around 12 students per year learning Spanish language at Swansea;
- an increase over the same period from 2/3 students to 6/7 students per year learning French language at Swansea; and
- In the Music department in Bangor, there were 7 students following each of 7 Welsh medium modules in 2004/05. A Fellowship commenced in 2005/06 and in that year 5 of the 7 modules saw increases in student numbers to 9 or 10 on each module whilst student numbers fell from 7 to 6 on two of these modules. In 2005/06, 6 and 7 students also attended two new Welsh medium modules.

In the 2006/07 report on their Welsh Language Scheme, Bangor University report that there was a 26% increase between 2004/05 and 2006/07 in the numbers of FTE students studying a part of their course through the medium of Welsh. Whilst the report attributes some of this increase to the influence of the Scholarship and Fellowship schemes it also notes that better recording of student numbers in the health area (especially nursing) was an important factor.

We have no direct evidence of any causal link between the Schemes and changes in student numbers.

2.5 The Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship Scheme

The main aim of the postdoctoral teaching fellowship is to enable higher education institutions to provide new staff who, normally, already have advanced degrees, with Welsh medium teaching experience. In essence, the Fellowship Scheme is designed to provide Welsh medium teaching capacity in the short term, whereas the Scholarship Scheme has a rather longer time horizon.

The Fellowship Scheme was established in 2003/04 on an interim basis and has been administered by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education on a more permanent basis since 2005/06. An associated fellowship scheme that was more vocational in nature was also introduced in 2006, though it is

planned to amalgamate the two schemes from 2008/09. Applications for the Scheme are made by the higher education institutions and from 2008/09 funding will be available for 1, 2 or 3 years.⁷ For 2008/09, the Scheme will make an annual contribution of £22,891 towards each Fellowship, with the HEI providing any remaining funding, if required.

Fellows are expected to teach through the medium of Welsh for at least five hours per week and to develop new Welsh medium provision equivalent to a 20 credit module. The Institutions who are in receipt of funding are also expected to create a full-time lecturing post, for which the Fellow may apply. Welsh medium teaching must be an integral part of these posts.

2.5.1 Strategic targets

The four strategic targets for the Fellowship Scheme, together with a review of performance to date against those targets, is set out below.

Additional Welsh medium teaching staff

The strategic target is –

“The provision of eighteen additional staff competent to teach through the medium of Welsh by the end of 2008.

Measured by:

- *The provision of six fellows each year from 2005/06 to 2007/08.”*

The table below shows the number of Fellowships awarded between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

Table 5: Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowships Awarded

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Total	5	7	6	18

Source: Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education

⁷ Initially it was available for 9 months. This was subsequently increased to 12 months.

It should be noted that:

- one of the 2005/06 fellows was awarded an extension to 2006/07 and is also included in the 2006/07 figures.
- a further 2005/06 fellow was awarded an extension to 2006/07 and subsequently left academia. This place for 2006/07 was taken up by another individual.
- one of the 2006/07 fellows was awarded an extension to 2007/08 and is also included in the 2007/08 figures.

The figures thus suggest that 16 people will have completed a fellowship by the end of the 2007/08 academic year, 2 fewer than the target of 18.

Institutional Strategies for full time posts

The strategic target is –

“The development within institutions of a strategy for the creation of full-time lecturing posts for which Fellowship holders may apply.

Measured by:

- *The delivery of the strategy for implementation by September 2005. Institutions that are awarded Fellowships for the first time in the second or third years of the Scheme, will prepare strategies by September of the year concerned.”*

The CWMHE Monitoring and Evaluation Report for July 2007 reports that institutions have not drawn up formal strategies relevant to this target. We understand that this remained the position in March 2008.

Full time posts have been created however for some, though not all, of the Fellowship awards, thus in effect fulfilling the requirement for a strategy.

New posts have been created for the three 2005/06 Fellowship holders that were not awarded extensions to 2006/07. Two others were awarded extensions. One of the latter left academia and the extension was transferred to another individual.

Of the 7 Fellowship awards in 2006/07, 3 new posts have been created. In addition, one Fellowship was extended to 2007/08; two new posts were

under discussion in July 2007; and the position for the remaining Fellowship is unclear.

We have no information about posts which will be created in relation to those Fellowships awarded for 2007/08 and, in reality, it is a little early to be able to report progress with any degree of certainty.

Additional Welsh medium teaching

The strategic target is –

“The delivery of an additional 30 hours teaching a year through the medium of Welsh against a 2004/05 baseline together with new modules to the value of 120 credits each year.

Measured by:

- *The delivery of 5 hours additional Welsh medium teaching by each Fellow each year until 2007/08*
- *The production of Welsh medium materials to support the equivalent of one twenty credit module during the lifetime of each fellowship.”*

The CWMHE report in the Monitoring and Evaluation Report for July 2007 that the teaching targets for each Fellow have been met.

The Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education have provided us with details of 54 Welsh medium modules produced by the 16 Fellowship holders. Each fellowship holder had produced the equivalent of at least one 20 credit module, except in one case where (to date) a smaller volume of provision has been produced.⁸

Details on the numbers of module credits are not available for each one of these modules, but for those where this information is available, the number of credits totals 590, significantly in excess of the requirement of 120 credits per annum over 3 years (i.e. 360 credits in total). It is important to note, however that the 54 modules worth 590 credits include modules developed by the Fellows subsequent to completion of their Fellowship.

⁸ In one instance, the data provided by CWMHE suggests that two 10 credit modules were completed, though our fieldwork suggested that no modules had been completed yet – work to assess the demand for Welsh medium provision had been undertaken in place of this. This raises concerns about the reliability of the data, which derives from the reports submitted by individual award holders. See Chapter 3.

Growth in Welsh medium student registrations

The strategic target is –

“Direct growth in registrations at each institution offering the particular subject through the medium of Welsh.

Measured by:

- *Registrations by year per fellowship awarded of one additional FTE for subjects already offered through the medium of Welsh against a 2004/05 baseline and an additional 0.5 FTEs for subjects being offered for the first time.”*

Details on student registrations are included in the individual reports submitted by Fellowship holders to the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. This information is not yet summarised in the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education’s Monitoring and Evaluation Reports to HEFCW. We have not examined each of the individual Fellowship holders’ reports.

See the generic discussion of this issue in the section on the Postgraduate Scheme above.

3 Findings From Our Fieldwork

In this chapter we present the findings of our discussions with a range of stakeholders including

- Representatives of the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education;
- Senior managers from three Institutions:
 - Aberystwyth University;
 - Bangor University;
 - Swansea University;
- Fellowship holders, past and present from each of these Institutions
- Scholarship holders from each of these Institutions

We present our findings in terms of:

- An Institutional perspective;
- Issues of relevance to the Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme;
- Issues of relevance to the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme;
- Administration and Facilitation of the Schemes.

3.1 An Institutional Perspective

Whilst all three Institutions we visited reported a growth in Welsh medium provision in recent years, the level of Welsh medium teaching expertise varied considerably between Institutions and Departments offering Welsh Medium Teaching Fellowships/Scholarships. Across the board, there was a feeling that Welsh medium provision had historically been too reliant upon a very small number of lecturers and the Schemes were a welcome vehicle for the development of a stronger base for Welsh medium teaching. In some areas, this meant building upon existing expertise, whilst in others the Schemes were seen as a means of developing Welsh medium provision anew, focusing on subject areas where it was envisaged that latent demand for Welsh medium courses exists. Allied to this, contributors emphasised the

importance of ensuring that Fellowships/Scholarships fit with Institutions' Welsh medium provision development strategies.

A recurring theme amongst contributors was the difficulty of attracting the numbers of students onto Welsh medium courses or Welsh medium modules within bilingual courses to render provision viable in the longer term. Allied to this, each of the Institutions was concerned that the requirement to create permanent, full-time teaching posts at the end of Fellowship and Scholarship periods acted as a brake on Institutional participation in the Scheme. Two of the Institutions we visited had raised the question of the sustainability of teaching posts created with HEFCW and recommended the creation of a fund to support new posts over a period of one or two years, to allow Institutions time to stimulate student demand and to establish provision firmly.

Another institution made a call for more flexibility in the requirement for the introduction of new permanent WM teaching posts. They were going through a pump-priming exercise at present where they were trying to grow supply and demand – plenty of flexibility is required to be able to achieve this. More specifically they suggested that the flexibility to switch the funding between tutors, fellowship holders, scholarship holders, full time lecturers etc, according to the needs of the department at the time, would make it easier to direct resources in a more effective way. In place of the current funding requirements the institution suggested that HEFCW set specific targets for the numbers of WM students, with the departments free to determine how they use the funds go about achieving this. They also suggested that HEFCW could introduce clawback provisions where departments failed to meet their targets.

In essence, the Institutions we visited would welcome a greater degree of flexibility from the Scheme to enable them to address demand side as well as supply side issues. In this context, Institutions certainly appreciated the proposal that Fellowships might be available for periods from one to three years.

To a large extent, the scope for Fellowship/Scholarship holders to deliver provision through the medium of Welsh is determined by the level of demand for Welsh medium courses/modules, but in the absence of demand, particularly within Departments which have seen the Fellowship/Scholarship Schemes as vehicles for introducing Welsh medium provision, both Fellowship and Scholarship holders have been involved in activities

designed to promote the value and availability of Welsh medium provision. This clearly suggests that a degree of flexibility has already been allowed, if not in an entirely overt way. However, the digression of Fellowship/Scholarship holders into promotional activity might mean that the volume of provision developed and delivered will not, in all cases, meet expectations, although it may have longer-term benefits.

It was accepted that Universities will continue to recruit academic staff on the basis of their of their research credentials in the first instance. However, the Schemes were seen by some as a means of providing Welsh speakers with the talent to become academics of international standing with the 'leg-up' necessary to attract them into careers in Higher Education. Thus, rather than compromising standards at participating Institutions, the Schemes were seen as a means of upping the ante, using people capable of working in Welsh.

One interviewee perceived that there may be a danger of the Scholarship Scheme duplicating expertise within specific Institutions/Departments, because PhD students attracted will, inevitably, be people whose research interests lie in the same areas as those of academics already within those Departments, and who are capable of supervising their PhDs.

It was felt that the existence of the Schemes had helped to raise the profile of Welsh medium education within Institutions, regardless of whether specific Departments had engaged with the Schemes or not. They were also thought to have raised the profile of Welsh medium education outside the Institutions themselves, as well as demonstrating that the agenda is being taken seriously by the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.2 The Fellowship Scheme

We interviewed four current and former Fellowship holders, one of whom was involved in one of the subjects which the WMHESG has prioritised within the Welsh Medium National Development Plan for collaborative development in the sector. Three of our interviewees had completed PhDs, whilst the fourth was on the verge of submitting a thesis. Two had been PhD students at their sponsoring institutions immediately prior to being awarded their Fellowships, whilst the other two had been in employment, one within academia and the other in various posts relevant to the subject.

All four were attracted to teaching and Fellowships were generally seen as a means of building up pedagogical expertise and, thus, bridging the gap between pure research and teaching, particularly in the context of a perceived shortage of permanent lecturing posts. Had the Fellowships not been on offer, it is not at all clear that two of the interviewees would have considered academic careers, although the other two certainly had ambitions in that direction.

Two of our interviewees had secured permanent lecturing posts at their sponsoring institutions, one has recently applied for a lecturing post advertised by the sponsoring institution and the fourth hopes to apply for a lecturing post which it is anticipated will be created within the sponsoring institution at about the time the Fellowship period is scheduled to finish.

Provision Developed and Delivered

Two former Fellowship holders had created new Welsh medium modules, and another had revamped and updated an existing Welsh medium module developed by a former colleague. The latter had also taken responsibility for managing a pre-existing Welsh medium module run jointly by Bangor, Swansea and Aberystwyth.

A fourth fellowship holder, working in a newly established division of an existing Department, had concentrated on trying to establish the size of the potential market for a specific Welsh medium course, rather than developing provision for that course. The work undertaken involved surveying secondary schools to establish whether they deliver specific courses through the medium of Welsh, and what difficulties practitioners face in doing so. The purpose of this work was twofold in that, on the one hand, it helped the University to better understand its potential market and, on the other, it alerted schools to the fact that the University planned to offer Welsh medium courses in the specific subjects reviewed. The individual concerned has subsequently been appointed to a lecturing post.

Three Fellowship holders had delivered at least some Welsh medium provision during their fellowship period. One former Fellowship holder, who had since secured a full-time lecturing post, had developed further Welsh medium modules and was teaching almost exclusively through the medium of Welsh, albeit that some tutorials in English were also delivered. Another former Fellowship holder had and continues to lecture through the medium of Welsh, playing an important role in developing Welsh medium provision in the Department and more widely across the Faculty.

One current Fellowship holder taught a range of tutorials and seminars through the medium of Welsh, with teaching hours varying between 2/3 and 8/9 hours a week. In addition, the Fellowship holder also supervised field trips through the medium of Welsh. The other current Fellowship holder had not, as yet, taught at any modules through the medium of Welsh but, as discussed above, had instead focused on research designed to reveal and create demand for a new Welsh medium course. This had been discussed with the CWMHE, which had accepted that "setting the foundation for future provision" was a legitimate use of Fellows' time, given that the provision to be delivered would be entirely novel for the Institution.

Fellowship holders commented on the difficulty of attracting students on to Welsh medium courses/modules where they had not previously been 'marketed': indeed in cases where Fellowships had been awarded after the start of the academic year, the holders indicated that they had expended considerable energy in persuading students who had already opted for English medium modules to switch to Welsh medium alternatives. Allied to this, there were comments on the administrative burden placed upon Fellowship holders in that Departments are not necessarily geared up to respond to demands which come late in the day to reorganise timetabling and organise teaching rooms, for example. Interviewees perceived that Fellowships should start in advance of the academic year to allow Fellowship holders a) to influence demand for Welsh medium courses/modules and b) to influence departmental activities.

3.3 The Scholarship Scheme

We interviewed six Scholarship holders, three of whom had a specific interest in one of the priority collaborative subjects identified within the Welsh

Medium National Development Plan⁹. One interviewee was in the first year of the Scholarship, four were in their second year and one in the third year. Two Scholarship holders were recent graduates, whilst the remaining four had had some work experience, two outside academia and two in roles connected to Higher Education. It is notable that three of the interviewees had undertaken the bulk of their higher education through the medium of Welsh, whilst another had undertaken some elements in Welsh. Three scholarship holders were based at their alma mater.

Whilst three interviewees had notions of an academic career in mind prior to being awarded Scholarships, all six were primarily focused on achieving PhDs. Two of them had explored other sources of funding, prior to coming across the Scholarship Scheme, and two others were adamant that they would not have embarked on a PhD course had the Scholarship funding not been available.

It is clearly too soon to comment upon the role of the Scholarship Scheme in encouraging or enabling participating Departments to create new permanent posts at the end of scholarship periods. It is also too soon to comment upon its effectiveness in attracting Scholarship recipients in to Welsh medium teaching within higher education. However, it is possible to provide an insight into Scholarship holders current career plans: the majority of those interviewed hoped to become lifelong academics, whilst the others envisaged that they would probably remain in higher education teaching for a short time after completing their PhDs, but hoped to move on within two or three years.

Provision Developed and Delivered

All six interviewees (including the one first year Scholarship holder) had been involved in delivering some Welsh medium provision, with the time dedicated to teaching ranging from two hours to five hours per week. Generally, this teaching involved the delivery of one or two seminars per week, following an established curriculum and using pre-prepared materials. In one case, however, the Scholarship holder was responsible for the delivery of a whole module, as well as being involved in its development, by altering and adding substantially to materials inherited from another institution.

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The groups at which the scholarship holders taught were generally small, usually numbering some five to ten students. A comment was made that that students opting to pursue Welsh medium modules "get a much better deal" in that seminar and tutorial sessions tend to be confined to very small numbers, so students are able to get far more tutor input than would be the case if they were studying the same modules through the medium of English.

Some Scholarship holders had been involved in promoting Welsh medium courses at their Institutions to school sixth formers, primarily by attending careers fairs organised by Mantais. Whilst they thought that this was a legitimate thing for them to do, they felt that a disproportionate amount of their time had been used for a this purpose, arguing that "marketing" courses is not something that PhD students funded by Research Council grants would be expected to do. Other stakeholders from participating Institutions concurred with this view and argued that a balance needs to be struck between using Scholarship holders to market Welsh medium courses and the time made available to them to undertake their academic research.

Scholarship holders also felt that it can, at times, be difficult to balance the time dedicated to preparing and delivering seminars, tutorials or lectures, and the time dedicated to working on their PhDs. Indeed, one Head of Department argued that Scholarship holders need to develop two different types of skill - pedagogical and research - at the same time, and argued that "one can destabilise the other" if the right balance is not struck.

Though not true in the majority of cases, there were comments that there was insufficient demand for Welsh medium provision at their Institutions to enable all of the staff capable of teaching through the medium of Welsh to do so for the requisite five hours a week. Clearly, this was one of the disadvantages of working in a Department populated by Welsh speaking academics, but there was a general consensus that such Departments provide Scholarship holders with a more supportive environment as they cut their teeth on teaching through the medium of Welsh. Interviewees also observed that lecturers able to teach through the medium of Welsh were expected to cover a wider range of subject areas than English medium tutors, and, because seminars/tutorials/lectures cannot be repeated, need more time to prepare.

3.4 Administration and Facilitation of the Schemes

Although each institution had developed slightly different systems for administering the Schemes, interviewees overwhelmingly felt that the interface with the CWMHE worked well. The one criticism made was the CWMHE tends to be a little late in the day in issuing guidance and informing Institutions of funding decisions, which compresses the time available for Institutions to make appropriate arrangements with Fellowship/Scholarship holders. Allied to this point, one contributor suggested that the CWMHE (and HEFCW) could usefully take a three year view in allocating indicative awards to Institutions, thus allowing them to plan with a greater degree of certainty.

By and large, it was not thought that monitoring arrangements were particularly onerous, and one interviewee commented that administrative arrangements were considerably less bureaucratic than those of some other funders, including Research Councils. The same interviewee cautioned, however, that to date the Schemes have been reasonably small and that the administrative burden may well grow as increasing numbers of Scholarships in particular are awarded.

The majority of the Fellowship/Scholarship holders interviewed had attended training seminars/workshops organised by the CWMHE on subjects such as "Welsh medium teaching methodologies" (run by Cen Williams) and "academic writing in Welsh" (run by Elin ap Hywel).¹⁰ Interviewees were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about these seminars, finding them relevant and useful. A particular aspect of the seminars which several interviewees valued was the "opportunity to talk to other lecturers teaching through the medium of Welsh ... just to discuss any problems that they've encountered... and to discover that you're not alone and that you don't need to worry about your grammar being less than perfect". There was a view that it did not necessarily matter whether lecturers participating in such seminars taught the same disciplines in that the value of this kind of networking lies in sharing experiences and building confidence. Others

¹⁰ These events are part of a formal staff development programme being developed as part of the National Development Plan. All fellows and scholarship holders are advised to attend a full programme and pursue an accredited qualification before their funded period ends.

disagreed, believing that participants could only derive real value from networking with people within the same or similar disciplines. Whilst this difference in view may have merely reflected the personal preferences of particular contributors, it may also owe something to the level of linguistic support available to them within their respective departments and/or the level of linguistic content of their different disciplines (i.e. humanities subjects such as psychology or history are much more linguistically demanding than science based subjects such as maths or physics).

Despite certain contributors' view that the opportunity to network had been a valuable element of the seminars/workshops put on by the CWMHE, our interviews revealed surprisingly little evidence of such networking between Fellowship/Scholarship holders outside these events. Indeed, in one case where a Scholarship had been seen as a means of enabling two institutions to work together on the delivery of a specific module, there had been virtually no collaboration as yet beyond an initial sharing of partially developed materials. One contributor observed that there are a handful of subject areas (e.g. Geography/Earth Sciences) where there is a good deal of co-operation between universities in Wales and it is possible that none of the Fellowship/Scholarship holders that we interviewed were employed in these disciplines. There was an acknowledgement that, where an awardholder might be the only Welsh speaker in a department, building up contacts with awardholders in other institutions could help in preparing for Welsh medium teaching and avoiding feelings of isolation.

It is possible that the CWMHE could play a useful role in encouraging and facilitating networking between Fellowship/Scholarship holders within the same or related disciplines. We understand that collaborative development is also an area being pursued through the network panels.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Scheme management and organisation

There was a clear consensus amongst the stakeholders that we met at the Higher Education Institutions that the Schemes were well managed by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. This was also our impression.

The close links between the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and the Institutions, and between the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and the award holders, were welcomed. The flexibility that the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education had exhibited in dealing with the practical problems that inevitably arise, e.g. where award holders are unable to continue in their positions, or need to delay take up of the award, was recognised and valued by the Institutions.

The vast majority of award holders also welcomed the programme of training that had been developed by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education, valuing both the content of the training and the opportunity to network with other award holders.

Nevertheless some stakeholders did feel that some aspects of the Schemes could be improved. Two particular issues were raised as follows.

- a. There was a plea for earlier funding decisions in order for Institutions and Departments to better plan the allocation of their resources. One Institution mentioned that confirmation of funding had not been received until the end of February 2008 for Schemes commencing in September 2008. We understand that this was due to discussions between HEFCW and the Welsh Assembly Government to confirm continued funding of the Schemes by the Assembly Government beyond the three years initially agreed. HEFCW has noted that institutions were advised at an early date to prepare and proceed as if the Schemes were continuing.

- b. Fellowship holders suggested that starting dates that were either at the beginning of an academic year or after caused practical problems for Fellowship holders. They made it harder for award holders to persuade students to take up Welsh medium provision and to ensure that Welsh medium provision was organised as part of mainstream Departmental administrative activities (e.g. timetabling, room booking etc). We understand that it is possible within the current rules of the Scheme for Fellowship holders to start earlier (from 1 August), although the timing of appointments may not always make this possible.

Recommendations

1. The Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education should continue to manage the Schemes, taking the same practical and flexible approach to dealing with problems as they arise.
2. HEFCW should ensure that funding decisions in respect of individual Scholarship and Fellowship awards to Institutions are made at least 12 months before award holders are due to commence.
3. HEFCW and the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education should encourage Institutions to enable award holders to commence at least two months before the start of an academic year.

4.2 Scheme requirements

There was broad acceptance from award holders of the requirements to develop Welsh medium teaching materials, to teach through the medium of Welsh and to report regularly to the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. Nevertheless, some concerns were expressed by Scholarship holders about the workload this entailed, as preparation for teaching was time consuming and did impact on the time available for PhD research.¹¹ The point was made that this was particularly the case for Welsh medium provision for two reasons.

¹¹ These concerns were also raised by some members of staff at the Institutions.

- First, award holders were usually expected to teach seminars/tutorials for a much wider range of modules than would be the case where provision was in the medium of English, where they might run the same session for a number of groups. This led to the need for more time to be spent preparing for Welsh medium teaching sessions.
- Second, award holders often found themselves spending significant amounts of time making students and prospective students aware of the availability of Welsh medium provision and persuading them to take it up. This involved time spent persuading students already availing themselves of English medium provision to switch to parallel Welsh medium provision and time spent assisting the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education with wider marketing activities.

These additional pressures on Welsh medium award holders are inevitable given the position of Welsh medium provision relative to English medium provision. In a sense, award holders accept these additional requirements and the consequent pressures in exchange for funding that would not otherwise exist. These pressures are, and should continue to be, recognised through the flexible management of the Schemes (see Recommendation 1).

For the Institutions, the requirements for the creation of full time posts has clearly caused problems. One of the problems, in respect of the Fellowship Scheme, has been that the initial 9 month (and then 12 month) period for the award did not allow Departments sufficient time to be able to plan for new posts to commence immediately after completion of the Fellowship. Institutions are now potentially able to apply for Fellowships of 1, 2 or 3 years' duration (for commencement in 2008/09). Institutions warmly welcomed this development and for the most part expected to be applying for three year awards. HEFCW has noted, however, that the scope for longer fellowships depends on available funding, and that it would not expect to fund all fellowships for a full three-year period.

Some Departments clearly see the requirement to create a new post as a strong barrier to taking up the Schemes, preferring to retain flexibility and to focus recruitment activities on those who have established research records.

On the other hand, however, award holders see the potential for a new post as a strong factor attracting them to the awards – they are well aware of the difficulties of otherwise obtaining a permanent lecturing position.

The challenges of implementing the Schemes differs according to the volume of Welsh medium education already being delivered by Departments and the numbers of Welsh speaking/teaching academic staff working within them. The requirement to create a new post can cause problems for Departments who are in the early stages of developing their Welsh medium provision, and who may not experience enough student demand to justify the creation of a new post that is focussed on Welsh medium provision. These Departments need to allocate resources to balancing supply and demand if Welsh medium uptake is to grow.

At present, the precise nature of the requirements in relation to Welsh medium provision for any new posts that are created is not wholly clear. The requirement is that teaching through the medium of Welsh must be an integral part of these posts. Flexible interpretation of the level of Welsh medium provision that this implies may be particularly important for Departments with low existing levels of provision, but may by the same token, afford scope for Departments to sponsor Fellowship/Scholarship holders according to the letter rather than the spirit of the Scheme.

Recommendations

4. The requirements for creating full time lecturing posts should remain but the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education should take account of the position of each Department with respect to Welsh medium provision when considering how flexibly to apply the requirement, particularly in respect of how much Welsh medium provision is undertaken by the new post-holder. It may also be appropriate to take account of the work which is being or will be done in stimulating demand for Welsh medium provision within Departments in awarding any Fellowships of longer duration.

4.3 Scheme targets and monitoring

The Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education report annually to HEFCW through a Monitoring and Evaluation Report for the two Schemes. This has been a useful source for the production of this interim evaluation. Nevertheless, these reports do not provide as full and concise picture for HEFCW as they might in respect of performance against the “strategic targets” that HEFCW have set for the Schemes.

In particular, reference is frequently made to other documentation not included as part of the report. This is sometimes a reference to material provided as part of previous Monitoring and Evaluation Reports and sometimes to material included in the reports that award holders make to the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education (but which are not submitted to HEFCW). The latter applied particularly to more detailed information on performance against the targets for the number of teaching hours, the number of Welsh medium modules developed and the number of new Welsh medium student registrations. We suggest that the information showing performance against these targets is collated by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education for inclusion in the annual reports to HEFCW. Robust reporting systems will be all the more important if the Schemes are to be extended and more Fellows/Scholars need to be accounted for. We understand that this has already been acknowledged in discussions between HEFCW and the Centre. We recognise as well that there is a good deal of informal contact with the Centre which keeps HEFCW officers apprised of progress.

Although the centrally collated information is not complete, our overall impression has been that the “strategic targets” for each of the Schemes are being met for the most part. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are a number of exceptions to this. Our general impression is that there are usually good practical reasons for the exceptions.

Recommendations

5. Information showing performance against all targets should be collated by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education for inclusion in the annual monitoring and evaluation reports to HEFCW.

4.4 Impact of the schemes

In assessing the overall impacts of the Schemes it is useful to refer to the strategic outcomes expected from the Schemes. These were:

1. To extend the capacity of the sector to provide increased opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh.
2. To take initial steps towards increasing the range and volume of Welsh medium provision in line with the Assembly target of 7% of HE

students undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh by 2010/11.

3. To provide an example of good practice, for the Welsh HE sector and beyond, in terms of genuine collaboration and measurable deliverables.

We believe that the Schemes are making a contribution to all three of these strategic outcomes, though there are a number of caveats to this.

Increased opportunities.....

The Schemes are extending the capacity of the sector for Welsh medium provision, relative to the situation where the Schemes did not exist.

However, this does not necessarily mean that, overall, capacity for Welsh medium provision in the sector is increasing. Retirements and other staffing changes could outweigh any positive impacts from these Schemes, for example. We have not reviewed the evidence in relation to this proposition, though we note that the number of Welsh medium modules available increased between 2004/05 and 2006/07.

In addition, the Schemes will almost certainly not extend the capacity of the sector to the extent that might be suggested by the headline figures of 31 Scholarship holders and 16 Fellowship holders. Not all of those who complete the Schemes will stay in academia. There is some evidence of this from those who have already completed fellowships and from what current scholarship holders say about their future career plans. Nevertheless, institutions must create posts and make appointments even if the scholarship or fellowship holder chooses not to apply. This has already happened in the case of one fellowship.

It also seems likely that some of the award holders who continue to teach through the medium of Welsh would have followed a similar career path even in the absence of the Schemes. However, the Schemes are enabling some individuals to start a career in teaching through the Welsh medium when they would not otherwise have done so.

Whilst it is difficult to be clear about the counterfactual (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of the Schemes), in our view the Schemes are making a positive contribution to the capacity of the HEIs to make Welsh

medium provision available to students. The size of this contribution, in terms of numbers of additional Welsh medium lecturers is difficult to judge, though it clearly is not as high as the stated targets for the two Schemes. Although institutions have an obligation to make new appointments even if award holders choose other career paths, those appointed in these cases may be existing Welsh medium lecturers and so there may not be an addition to the stock of Welsh medium lecturers (even if there are additional Welsh medium posts).

For those award holders that decide not to pursue a career in academia, it is important to recognise that they may still have contributed to the development of Welsh medium provision in their Departments through the teaching they have undertaken whilst holding the award and for the Welsh medium teaching materials they have developed.

In order to give an indication of the scale of the contribution of the Schemes to Welsh medium provision in the sector it is useful to compare the figure of 54 Welsh medium modules developed by Fellowship holders, both during and since their Fellowships, with the total number of Welsh medium modules offered by the sector.¹² Provisional data for 2006/07, suggest that 927 Welsh medium modules were being offered to students across the sector. This represents an increase of 85 modules over the figure for 2004/05. This implies that the modules produced by the Fellowship holders constituted a significant proportion of the increase in Welsh medium modules over this period. The extent to which this activity by Fellowship holders was displacing similar activity by other Departmental staff is not clear.

To put the figures in context it is also important to note that there was a high degree of variation by Institution underlying the aggregate increase. While Bangor has seen a noticeable increase in Welsh medium modules and Welsh medium FTE numbers, the picture in other institutions varies, with some also having increases and some decreases.

¹² It is difficult though to make a comparison of like with like here. The level of credit available for individual modules varies, and there is no guarantee that the modules developed by the Fellowship holders are actually being taught to students. We have also noted, in Chapter 2, some possible problems with the data underlying the figure of 54 modules.

Initial steps.....

We have not seen detailed data on the changes in the numbers of student registrations associated with the Schemes, though the Schemes are contributing to increased capacity for Welsh medium provision in the sector. On this basis, it could certainly be argued that the Schemes constitute “initial steps” towards the achievement of the 7% target. Nevertheless it seems to us highly unlikely that the Schemes, on their own and as currently resourced, will make any significant inroads into this target. They are, however, part of a wider National Development Plan for Welsh medium provision in the sector.

We note that the target refers specifically to the proportion of Welsh-domiciled students receiving “some element of their course through the medium of Welsh”. At present there does not appear to be any attempt to specifically direct funding of the Schemes to those areas where the Schemes would enable additional students to receive some element of their education through the medium of Welsh, as opposed to areas that enable students who already receive some element of their education through the medium of Welsh to expand the extent of their Welsh medium education. Whilst it might seem cynical to channel resources towards meeting this element of the target, there may be an argument for doing so in terms of spreading the exposure of a greater number of students to some Welsh medium higher education, rather than resourcing Departments, which already have the capacity to deliver Welsh medium provision, to build upon that capacity. As discussed earlier, there needs to be an awareness of the demand and capacity for Welsh medium provision within individual Departments in awarding Fellowships.

Good practice.....

The good relationships that have developed between the Institutions and the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education are an example of good practice in collaboration. The staff development programme offered by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education, in collaboration with institutions, also offers an opportunity for award holders to network and share experiences. Nevertheless, there is little evidence other than this that Fellowship/Scholarship holders are networking or sharing learning materials with each other or, sometimes, with others in their Departments.

There would be value in the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and Departments facilitating this kind of activity in order to support

Fellows/Scholars, to embed Welsh medium provision and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Although it is recognised that academics will inevitably want to produce their own material, time can be saved by starting with something rather than a blank sheet. Sometimes the sharing of English medium materials as a basis for the development of Welsh medium materials will also be useful.