

Meeting
12/03/15

Agenda Item
24

Reference No
HEFCW/15/30

1 Issue

- 1.1 This paper provides a progress report on the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol since March 2014.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 Our remit letter for 2014-15 asked that we:
'Continue [our] role in funding and monitoring the Coleg's activity, including its management of the Welsh language scholarship schemes, and supporting the Welsh language as outlined in the Welsh Language Strategy 'A living language: a language for living';

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
i. note the progress of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol since March 2014.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 This paper is for information.

5 Council members' interests

- 5.1 No conflicts of interests have been declared in advance of the meeting. Professor Robin Williams was the author of the original Coleg Ffederal report to the Welsh Government in 2009 and is an Honorary Fellow of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

6 Further information

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7 Background

- 7.1 The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (the Coleg) was established in March 2011 as a company limited by guarantee and it is also registered as a charity. All higher education institutions in Wales are members of the Coleg and it has an equal number of stakeholder member organisations. The Coleg has a Board of 13 Directors comprising the independent chair, six higher education sector directors, four independent directors, a student director and a staff director. HEFCW has observer status on the Board.

8 Funding

- 8.1 For the current academic year 2014/15 the Coleg was allocated a grant of £7,643,549, with the additional Scholarship Scheme allocation increasing to £330,000 (to cover the three cohorts of scholarship students).
- 8.2 The funding allocated is based on the funding requirements set out in Professor Williams' 2009 report to the Welsh Government. It is a combination of funding specifically made available by the Welsh Government and funding which had previously been made available by HEFCW to support the development of Welsh medium provision.
- 8.3 Funding for the Coleg has been confirmed until 2016/17. The rolling nature of the schemes offered by the Coleg means the appointments made to the five year Academic Staffing Scheme since 2012/13 run beyond the current funding period. Arrangements have been put in place for institutions to bear all contractual responsibilities should funding not continue beyond 2016/17.
- 8.4 The final year of Scholarships funding is 2015/16. As the Scholarships are for a three year period, those offered in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 will run beyond the funding period. HEFCW has agreed to guarantee covering the remaining two years of the scheme should other supportive funding be discontinued after 2016/17.
- 8.5 Discussions are taking place between Universities Wales, HEFCW, the Coleg and Welsh Government around future funding for the Coleg.

9 Evaluation of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

- 9.1 HEFCW's 2013-14 remit letter asked that we 'undertake an evaluation of the outcome of the Coleg's activities, including a review of the funding provided to the Coleg and to supply my officials with the details of this review by September 2013 and final report by September 2014'.
- 9.2 The scope of the evaluation and the response to Welsh Government were approved by Council in September 2013 (HEFCW\13\CE5).
- 9.3 HEFCW carried out the review via a competitive tender, which was won by Old Bell 3. Due to the relatively recent creation of the Coleg the tender expected the consultants to look at what had been achieved in a short timescale against key objectives. The aim also included reviewing funding allocated to the Coleg to provide assurance to Welsh Government and HEFCW that funding has been spent effectively.

- 9.4 The evaluation report was positive overall. The report concluded that it was early in the lifetime of the Coleg to undertake an evaluation of the outcome of the investment made thus far, but that the Coleg had achieved a great deal in a short time and gained the trust and respect of a range of stakeholders across government and the higher education sector.
- 9.5 The final report of the evaluation and HEFCW's response to WG was shared with members in September 2014 (item [HEFCW/14/70](#) refers). Council noted that there were reasonable indications that the Welsh community had welcomed the work of the Coleg. Further, the progress of the Coleg's work needed to be seen as part of a longer-term agenda.

10 Strategic Plan

- 10.1 The Coleg published its new three year Strategic Plan¹ in September 2014.
- 10.2 The Strategic Plan covers the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 and was agreed by the Coleg Board of Directors following discussions at their meetings on 19 February and 18 June 2014.

11 Academic Staffing Scheme

- 11.1 The Academic Staffing Scheme provides funding to institutions to employ Welsh medium academic staff, fostering new lecturers and increasing the delivery of Welsh medium provision. Institutions make applications for posts to the Coleg which are considered by an expert panel.
- 11.2 The overall target is for 100 Welsh medium academic posts to be in place by academic year 2015/16. An additional 20 appointments were made available to begin in 2014/15, which brings the total to date to 94. The funding for the first tranche of these posts ends in 2016, and there is a concern that a number of these academic posts may be in jeopardy in the absence of further funding.
- 11.3 The holders of these awards are responsible for teaching and developing Welsh medium provision within their respective subject areas. Although their main responsibility centres upon teaching students, they are also expected to contribute to the intellectual and Welsh-medium life of Welsh universities through research, facilitating collaboration with other departments and institutions, and promoting the Welsh language within their subject areas.

12 Strategic Developments and Projects Fund

- 12.1 The Coleg's Strategic Developments and Projects Fund supports strategic developments that will have a significant impact on Welsh medium provision and the numbers studying through the medium of Welsh.
- 12.2 The fund provides financial assistance to universities to realise the strategic goals and priorities that are outlined in subject plans agreed with the Coleg. As well as funding for individual institutional and collaborative development projects, the fund is also used to support a number of sector-wide projects/project officers².

¹ www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/media/main/pdfs/dogfennau/CynllunStrategol2014-en.pdf

² www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/ourwork/provision/

13 Scholarship Scheme

- 13.1 The Coleg operates three scholarship schemes funded by the Welsh Government: Main Scholarships, Incentive Scholarships and Masters' level scholarships. HEFCW has a separate legal agreement with the Welsh Government to allow it to exercise functions on behalf of the Minister in allocating funding to the Coleg for student scholarships.
- 13.2 The Main Scholarships are for students who intend to study degree courses that include at least 240 credits of Welsh medium provision (including at least 80 in each year). The value of the scholarships is £1,000 per year for the duration of the three year course. The Coleg, in conjunction with the individual institutions, is responsible for the process of awarding the scholarships and the institutions are allocated an agreed number of scholarships, according to the range of eligible provision which they offer, with universities using their various procedures for allocating scholarships.
- 13.3 In 2014/15 a total of 37 Main Scholarships were awarded and distributed as follows:

University	2014/15
Swansea University	4
Aberystwyth University	11
Bangor University	9
Cardiff University	5
University of Wales Trinity St David	3
Cardiff Metropolitan University	2
University of South Wales	3
Total	37

- 13.4 The Incentive Scholarships are for students who intend to study degree courses that include at least 120 credits of Welsh medium provision (including at least 40 credits in each year). The value of the scholarships is £500 per year for the duration of the three year course. These scholarships are awarded by the Coleg following receipt of applications from students for courses agreed as meeting the credit volume threshold for eligibility.
- 13.5 In 2014/15 a total of 98 Incentive Scholarships were awarded in the following subject areas: Environmental Sciences and Agricultural Sciences; Health Studies; Social Work; Business and Management; Sport Science and Studies; Law (incorporating the current CyfNawdd sponsorship scheme); Psychology; Modern Languages; Mathematics; Chemistry; Biology; Physics; Geography and Nursing. These were distributed as follows:

University	2014/15
Swansea University	8
Aberystwyth University	24
Bangor University	33
Cardiff University	2
Cardiff Metropolitan University	18
University of Wales Trinity St David	5
University of South Wales	8
Total	98

- 13.6 Proposals were submitted in December 2012 to award two or one year flexible Incentive Scholarships. This was agreed by Welsh Government and a variation document was signed in July 2013. The two year and one year Scholarships will be made available when students that were awarded three year main or incentive scholarships become ineligible for the Scholarship. The balance available for Scholarships would remain the same, however, the use of funding will be maximised when these instances arise. The following flexible Incentive Scholarships were awarded in 2014/15.

University	Two-year Scholarship	One-year Scholarship
	Yr 3	Yr 3
Swansea University	0	0
Aberystwyth University	8	1
Bangor University	5	2
Cardiff University	0	1
Cardiff Metropolitan University	11	3
University of South Wales	2	0
University of Wales Trinity St David	5	1
Total	31	8

- 13.7 Masters' Scholarships are for students on taught Masters' programmes. Such programmes enable the students concerned to work professionally through the medium of Welsh at a high level. To be eligible the course must have at least 60 credits taught through the medium of Welsh and have the capacity to enable the student to undertake their thesis through the medium of Welsh.
- 13.8 44 applications for Masters' Level Scholarships were received in 2014/15 in the following subjects: Fine Art; History and Creative Industries; Creative Writing; Welsh and Celtic Studies; Social Work, Music, Early Years Education, Welsh Law and Politics; Welsh; and Language and Literature. A number of these applicants were successful in applying for funding from elsewhere, and therefore 12 scholarships were awarded in 2014/15 as follows:

University	2014/15
Aberystwyth University	2
Bangor University	7
Cardiff University	2
University of Wales Trinity St David	1
Total	12

14 Research Scholarships

- 14.1 The Research Scholarship Scheme is funded by the Coleg separately to the other Scholarship schemes. The Scheme was established under the previous Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education. This scheme provides financial sponsorship (that is equivalent to Research Council UK's (RCUK) post-graduate scholarships) to prospective academics who are studying for a doctorate. The holders of these scholarships also receive staff development and training in teaching skills and gain experience by contributing towards the teaching of undergraduate modules through the medium of Welsh. This is designed to ensure that by combining research qualifications and Welsh medium teaching experience and skills, they can be strong candidates for lecturing posts after they have completed their research.

- 14.2 Funding is available for a maximum of ten Scholarships a year, they are provided for three or four years depending on whether the student is required to complete a Master's degree before embarking on a PhD. A further year's funding is given when the holders are employed as members of the academic staff within their departments after they have completed their doctorate. Their teaching duties increase during that extra year, and they are expected to plan and develop the Welsh medium provision. A total of 39 Research Scholarships have been awarded against a 2014/15 target of 40.
- 14.3 In the case of each award, the department or university where the holders are studying is expected to create a new lecturing post for which the holder will be able to apply at the end of the funding period.

15 Welsh Language Skills Certificate

- 15.1 The Welsh Language Skills Certificate has been developed to enable students studying in Wales to gain an additional qualification which demonstrates that they have the necessary language skills to work through the medium of Welsh. Many employers are backing the Certificate.
- 15.2 When applying for jobs, applicants who have succeeded in the assessments will have proof of:
- Welsh language skills (evidence recognised by the higher education sector and employers)
 - The ability to work in a confident and professional manner through the medium of Welsh, in a variety of environments and contexts.
- 15.3 In order to gain the Certificate, candidates must successfully complete an oral presentation task and written examination. The written exam consists of 3 tasks.
- 15.4 In 2014, 157 candidates completed the tasks required for the certificate. 134 of those candidates were successful, with 19 attaining excellence.

16 Welsh medium target

- 16.1 The Coleg is undertaking a range of strategic actions which aim to assist the sector in meeting the Welsh medium target; *'of those studying at least 5 credits of their course through the medium of Welsh will rise to 5,600 in 2015/16, including a rise to 3,030 in the number of those studying at least 40 credits.'*
- 16.2 The latest performance and forecast figures on the HEFCW Corporate Strategy (2012/13 data), are indicating that only the 5 credit element of the target will be met by 2015/16. The Coleg are carrying out further work with institutions to assist them in meeting the 40 credit element of the target.

The Council is invited to note the progress of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol since March 2014.

17 Financial implications

- 17.1 The funding provided to the Coleg to date is noted in paragraph 8.1. The grant for the Coleg is estimated to rise in line with Professor Williams' report as its schemes, particularly the Academic Staffing Scheme and Scholarships Scheme

reach full capacity in 2015/16. The rolling nature of the Coleg's schemes means that commitments which the Coleg has made for 2014/15 for the Academic Staffing Scheme and Scholarships Scheme will have implications beyond the period of the current government. Arrangements beyond this period of funding are noted in section 8.

18 Communications implications

- 18.1 The Coleg provides full information on its work and programmes on its website www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/cy/ and www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/. A press release³ was issued by HEFCW in January 2015 to announce the publication of the Evaluation of the Coleg.

19 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 19.1 The paper is central to the development of Welsh medium higher education and enhanced choice for students. Our funding agreement with the Coleg states that the Coleg will be expected to have regard to legislative requirements relating to diversity and equal opportunities matters which impact on its work.

20 Risk Assessment

- 20.1 The main risks are:

Risk	Action to address risk
Funding beyond 2016-17 is not provided by WG.	HEFCW officials are working closely with the Coleg, Universities Wales and WG to consider all possible funding opportunities beyond 2016-17.
Failure to meet the target for Welsh medium provision.	The Coleg are working closely with institutions to achieve this target.

³ www.hefcw.ac.uk/news/press_releases/press_releases.aspx