

## News release

**Date:** 1 May 2019

**Title:** University work experience programme reaches 1,000<sup>th</sup> student

A work experience programme for young full-time undergraduate students from less advantaged backgrounds has recruited its 1,000<sup>th</sup> student, less than three years after its launch.

GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience is a university-led programme offering tailored support to eligible students under 25 to get the best out of their work experience and plan their next steps. The programme offers flexibility, from three days' unpaid work shadowing to a six week paid work placement.

The all-Wales programme, funded by the European Social Fund, HEFCW and higher education providers, helps students to develop and refine their employability skills so that they are in the best situation to secure employment, training or education when they leave their course.

Aberystwyth University undergraduate student Daniel, who is on the autism spectrum, said: "Taking part in the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience programme has made me realise what I can do and given me something to look forward to. The experience really helped me to identify my goals and develop new skills. You can discover hidden qualities that you didn't know you possessed. I improved my communication skills, especially speaking to people one-to-one."

David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "It's no mean feat that the programme has already impacted on a thousand lives, and so many of them have already seen the benefit of the opportunities GO Wales has given them. This is not just a work experience programme. Feedback has shown that this impacts on so many aspects of the students' lives, giving them confidence and building their skills, as well as placing them in a work

setting. We know that universities are continually refining how they engage with harder-to-reach students, and we hope that they will continue to embrace the benefits of this programme to continue to make a positive difference to as many students' lives as possible over the coming years."

Lis Owen, GO Wales programme manager at Bangor University, said: "The programme has proved to be a lifeline for students with mental health conditions. My team has seen an increase in students contacting us for support as they approach the end of their studies, as anxiety around their future can increase immensely at this time."

A Cardiff Metropolitan University BSc Health and Social Care student and GO Wales user said: "If I hadn't done this work experience then I'd be lost. I'd finish university with a degree and not know where to go. Doing the GO Wales programme has helped me to step into the next journey of my life."

The ethos of the programme is to help those facing barriers to gaining work experience by providing a tailored and flexible work experience with employers, as well as offering some financial support including travel expenses, reasonable adjustments in the workplace and care/childcare costs.

The programme recruits black and minority ethnic students; disabled students and those with a work-limiting health condition; students with caring responsibilities or care leavers; and students from areas with a low higher education participation rate. Over 400 employers from all sectors across Wales have hosted work experience to date.

## **Ends**

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## **Notes**

Look out for GO Wales case studies in HEFCW's forthcoming *Higher Education for a Healthy Nation* report, due to be published in June 2019.

The GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience programme started delivery on 1 April 2016 and finishes in 2022. The total value of the programme is £9.6 million.

The target to the end of the programme is 2,161 students accepted onto the programme and 1,839 students undertaking work experience. The programme also has a target for participants at reduced risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), which is 1,745.

The operations are a partnership of the HEFCW and the nine universities in Wales. The operations provide tailored work experience opportunities for eligible full time students under the age of 25 years, and associated support to help them get the best out of their experience and plan their next steps.

The programme helps those students who, because of their circumstances or needs, find it difficult to access work experience and who need more support than they can get from embedded employability provision and other initiatives available to all students. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with disabilities or caring responsibilities, care leavers, and from black and minority ethnic backgrounds will benefit from the scheme.

The participating universities are: Bangor University, Aberystwyth University, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea University, University of South Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, the Open University in Wales and Wrexham Glyndŵr University. [www.gowales.co.uk](http://www.gowales.co.uk)

### **About HEFCW**

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales – HEFCW – is the public body operating between Welsh Government and higher education providers. We regulate fee levels at higher education providers, ensure a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education and scrutinise the performance of universities and other designated providers. We also provide funding for higher education teaching and research, and apply our influence and expertise to help deliver Welsh Government priorities for higher education that also have wider societal and economic benefits.