

# Corporate Strategy 2017-2020



Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Sponsored by  
**Welsh Government**

## Corporate Strategy 2017-2020

### ***Sustainable, accessible, internationally excellent higher education***

This Corporate Strategy sets out our priorities over the next three years. It is certain that those three years are going to be a period of very substantial uncertainty. Public resources, already under pressure, will be subject to further perturbation as a result of the decision for the UK to leave the European Union. More locally, the next three years will see the early stages of the transition from the current to a completely revised approach for funding and student finance in higher education in Wales. It will also, subject to government consultation, see our transition from a higher education funding body to the new intermediary body for post-compulsory education, following the acceptance by the Welsh Government of the recommendations of the Hazelkorn review.

Delivery of the Welsh Government's priorities for higher education (HE) will rely substantially on HE providers - universities and further education institutions - and on a range of other stakeholders, all of whom will have to play their part. We, too, have an important role to play, as a funder, a regulator and an influencer, working in partnership with students. We recognise that HEFCW is not the only source of income for HE providers: other funding organisations will support discrete activity; commercial income is sourced where appropriate; and, of course, a substantial contribution is provided via student fees.

Higher education providers are rooted in their communities and provide services to the people of Wales. They are also significant net contributors to the Welsh economy, working locally, across the UK and internationally. The greater the level of public investment in higher education, the greater the return. Availability of funding is important, but performance can be strengthened by increasingly targeting its use through setting and monitoring explicit performance measures, and by promoting good practice, based on sound evidence of what works. Our monitoring processes will ensure that the Welsh higher education system delivers sustainable outcomes for Wales.

This Corporate Strategy is different from previous HEFCW strategies. Given the range of contextual uncertainties outlined above, it is of necessity cast at a high level – succinct and avoiding unnecessary detail. It focuses on what we will do as an organisation, rather than what we expect providers to deliver. This is deliberate: our Corporate Strategy should set out the expectations for our own performance. It does not, however, signal any diminution in our ambition for Wales to have the best performing higher education system possible, given the context within which we are working. Through funding, regulation and influence, and working in partnership with students, we will create the environment within which HE providers deliver sustainable, accessible and internationally excellent higher education in Wales.

*David Allen*

**David Allen**  
Chair



## Corporate Strategy 2017-2020

### Our Vision:

*Sustainable, accessible, internationally excellent higher education in Wales*

### Our Mission:

*In pursuit of this vision we*

- *Fund higher education in Wales*
- *Regulate higher education providers in Wales*
- *Influence higher education with evidence-based advice and strong partnership working*
- *Work in partnership with students*
- *Operate effectively as an organisation*

All five of these objectives contribute to:

### Our Well-being Objectives<sup>1</sup>

Ensure that higher education in Wales is relevant and accessible to all who could benefit from it, or contribute to it	A prosperous Wales, A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales, A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language.
Champion internationally excellent higher education that also works to support global well-being, and sustainable development	A prosperous Wales, A resilient Wales, A healthier Wales, A globally responsible Wales,
Promote a system of HE that is financially, economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.	A resilient Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities.
Ensure that HEFCW is an exemplar organisation where equality, partnership and sustainability are fundamental to delivery of our mission.	A more equal Wales, A prosperous Wales, A globally responsible Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities.

<sup>1</sup> For further information see HEFCW's Well-being Statement (March 2017) on our website.

We commit to working in accordance with the sustainable development principle in a manner that seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, specifically:

- **Long term approach** - balancing short-term needs with the desire to safeguard the ability to address longer-term needs.
- **Prevention** - how taking action may prevent problems from occurring or getting worse.
- **Integration** - how our well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
- **Collaboration** - How acting in collaboration may help us to meet our well-being objectives.
- **Involvement** - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

## **We fund higher education in Wales**

Our funding objectives: between now and 2020, we will:

- Fund research, teaching (with an initial emphasis on expensive subjects and part-time provision) and other activities, including widening access, in universities and further education institutions in support of meeting Welsh Government higher education policy priorities;
- Fund higher education provision in further education institutions;
- Fund the provision of services to assist institutions;
- Implement HEFCW actions arising from the Welsh Government's response to the Review of the Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (the Diamond Review);
- Review our funding methods to take account of the Diamond Review;
- Develop arrangements for the assessment of the quality of research in partnership with other funding bodies, to inform future funding;
- Fund the development and delivery of Degree level Apprenticeships, subject to our remit, and funding, from Welsh Government;
- Monitor the use and impact of our funding.

## **We regulate higher education providers in Wales**

Our regulatory objectives: between now and 2020, we will:

- Approve or reject fee and access plans and monitor the outcomes of plans as they relate to equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education;
- Monitor fee levels of regulated courses;
- Develop our quality assessment framework in consultation with regulated institutions to ensure that provision where quality is inadequate, or likely to become inadequate, is dealt with;
- Monitor the financial sustainability of HE providers, and the organisation and management of their financial affairs, with particular reference to the requirements of our Financial Management Code;
- Intervene where appropriate in line with our statutory duties for regulation;
- Publicise information about our regulatory role to interested parties;
- Regulate HE providers in proportion to risk in line with our statutory duties;
- Work in partnership with other regulators to minimise burden and duplication;
- Meet our responsibilities as the monitoring authority for relevant higher education bodies' implementation of the statutory Prevent duty;
- Meet our responsibilities for initial teacher training;
- Build the student voice explicitly into regulatory processes and requirements;
- Deal with complaints made to HEFCW against higher education providers in Wales in accordance with our procedures;
- Report to Welsh Ministers on our statutory responsibilities.

## **We influence higher education with evidence-based advice and strong partnership working**

Our advisory and partnership objectives: between now and 2020, we will:

- Work with all stakeholders, providing advice and guidance to maximise delivery of Welsh Government policy priorities including for widening access, the student experience, skills and employability and research, innovation and engagement, and provision through the medium of Welsh;
- Promote the benefits of higher education to economy and society and the competitiveness of the Welsh HE system, including the value of Welsh HE providers to their local communities and economy;
- Collect and analyse data, and synthesise evidence to provide an authoritative voice on higher education;
- Develop measures by which to monitor the performance and delivery of higher education providers including publication where appropriate;
- Monitor and advise on the implications for Wales of higher education developments in other UK administrations;
- Monitor and advise on the implications of leaving the European Union on HE institutions;
- As the primary source of independent HE expertise in Wales, use evidence to advise, inform and challenge providers, external stakeholders, including at UK level, and, where appropriate, the Welsh Government;
- Promote and catalyse collaboration and the sharing of good practice between providers and with other stakeholders to best meet the needs of Wales;
- Work with HE providers to secure delivery in line with statutory responsibilities.

## **We work in partnership with students**

Our student partnership objectives: between now and 2020, we will:

- Work with NUS Wales, the sector and other stakeholders to drive the agenda of students as partners;
- Encourage providers to respond to the diversity of the student experience;
- Embed the student voice in our sector guidance and policies;
- Encourage the publishing of reliable and timely information about higher education;
- Monitor and manage unintended impacts of the changes to the fees and funding regime on student finances;
- Operate a proportionate and robust regulatory system that minimises risk to students and institutions.

## We operate effectively as an organisation

Our organisational effectiveness objectives: between now and 2020, we will:

- Work with Welsh Government, HE providers and other partners to take forward the implementation of the Welsh Government's response to the Independent Review of the Regulation and Oversight of Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Wales (the Hazelkorn Review);
- Develop an annual operating plan for Welsh Government approval based on our corporate strategy and informed by our annual remit letter;
- Work proactively in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Welsh Government;
- Keep under review our processes in order to minimise burden and maximise effectiveness;
- Continue to be an employer of choice;
- Implement our Strategic Equality Plan and ensure that equality is embedded in all our processes;
- Implement our Welsh language standards, working closely with the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner;
- Implement our *Well-being Objectives*;
- Be financially responsible and sustainable;
- Continue to improve as an organisation.

## HEFCW Performance Outcomes

By 2020, we will have:

1. Delivered annual funding allocations to HE providers which, in the context of the broader range of financial support for the delivery of higher education, maximises the delivery of policy priorities with the funding available;
2. Implemented the changes required to our processes and procedures to respond to the implementation of the Diamond review;
3. Produced a range of useful reports demonstrating the use of public funds which we have administered;
4. Fully and effectively embedded the regulatory regime developed in the HE (Wales) Act 2015 for regulated institutions;
5. Designed and implemented the operational arrangements for 'specific designation'<sup>2</sup>;
6. Published a range of public information on the contribution of higher education to society and economy;
7. Monitored the financial sustainability of the sector, deploying a range of financial and regulatory interventions to secure corrective action<sup>3</sup> where necessary;
8. Ensured that the quality of provision in the sector has been subject to assessment, deploying a range of financial and regulatory interventions to secure corrective action where necessary;
9. Worked effectively with providers of higher education, further education and work-based learning to maximise smooth transition to the post-Hazelkorn arrangements<sup>4</sup>;
10. Ensured that the student perspective is properly represented in our work and in the work of providers;
11. Delivered at least 95% of our operational plan targets except where external factors prevent delivery;
12. Maintained our performance as an effective employer, with strong employment indicators in addition to well-motivated, engaged staff.

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<sup>2</sup> Subject to Welsh Government confirming our role in this process.

<sup>3</sup> Information about regulatory interventions is included in HEFCW's Statement of Intervention (W16/37HE) on our website.

<sup>4</sup> Subject to Welsh Government consultative processes.