

Widening Access

Objective: *Ensure inclusion, progression and success in higher education*

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure improved access and progression for people in locations where such opportunities are low:

- 1. A 10% rise in the proportion of all Welsh domiciled students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales who are domiciled in the Welsh Communities First Areas from 15.6% in 2008/09 to 17.2% in 2012/13.**

Proposals:

We expect to retain a Communities First (CF) Measure, dependent on how the CF clusters develop and whether they are able to be measured. Although the current target is likely to be met, we would expect to extend the ambition within the target objective.

If a CF Measure proves impractical, a measure of participation in Wales would be appropriate. Using Welsh domiciled data only, this could either make use of

- (a) the UK performance indicator, which uses POLAR¹ for young participation plus a calculation of previous HE experience to capture mature entrants;
- (b) the low participation measure used in HEFCW's current funding method, which uses POLAR for young participation plus a calculation of mature participation based on the level of skills within the area at level 4 and above (using the two lowest quintiles).

We would aim to see an increase in participation against the adopted measure. We could create a measure which picks up both young and mature participation separately.

We considered whether we should include a measure of progression for students with the Education Maintenance Allowance into HE, the

¹ www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/2379/#lowpart

measure included within the Welsh Government's Programme of Government. However, this is already subject to monitoring by the Welsh Government and, in addition, we don't currently have data available to model this, and would not therefore wish to include it within the measures.

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure the increase in the number of students who successfully complete their learning objectives

- 2. A 2.7%% rise in the module completion rate for undergraduate enrolments in Welsh higher education institutions from 87.6% in 2008/09 to 90% in 2012/13**

Proposals:

We would wish to retain a measure which covers successful completion for both full-time and part-time students. Given the move away from credit based funding, we considered whether we should move away from module completion and utilise the UK performance indicators for course level completions – however, these would only cover full-time students. The current target, which is likely to be met, covers successful completion of modules but not successful completion of learning objectives. We would like to amend the above measure to include only those modules where learning objectives are successfully completed and credit is achieved. In order to do this, given the HESA timescales, we would need to measure those modules completed in the year, not those started in the year. Alternatively, we could measure those modules with results recorded in the previous year (ie a year behind). Whilst this would focus the measure on learning success, it could cause unintended consequences, for example by incentivising institutions to increase pass rates. This would therefore be a significant amendment to this measure and we would welcome views on this change.

Other measures: We will also monitor sector performance against other widening access indicators, including the recruitment of disabled students; those from ethnic minorities; age profile; care leavers; learners in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance; socio economic class; and male participation.

Student Experience

Objective: *Ensure that the student experience is of excellent quality and is enhanced by the student voice*

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure 'continuing efforts are made to deliver an excellent student experience' and ensuring that 'the student voice strengthens higher education'

- 3. The three year rolling average score for Wales in the National Student Survey 'overall satisfaction' question will be equal to, or greater than the comparative score for the UK.**

Proposals: We expect to retain the current NSS target, which is comparative to the rest of the UK. We may also want something focussed on other areas of the survey questionnaire and would welcome views on this, including if there is a strong case for any particular area to be included.

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure 'study through the medium of Welsh to take place in a wider range of programmes and locations in Wales'

- 4. The number of Welsh domiciled students at Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh will rise from 4,667 in 2008/09 to 5600 in 2012/13.**

Proposals:

We expect to amend this target both in relation to the number to be achieved of those undertaking some element of their course through the medium of Welsh (which is proposed to rise, given the additional support provided through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol) and through an additional component to reflect the volume of study. This latter element is being modelled but is likely to cover those studying a minimum of 40 credits or more per annum. As we are using an absolute number, we could now remove the reference to 'Welsh domiciled' from the definition and would welcome views on this.

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure the internationalisation of higher education in Wales, by continuing to see Wales outperform UK-wide movement in the recruitment of overseas students

- 5. The percentage growth in the number of overseas students attending higher education courses in Welsh higher education institutions will be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding London and the South East).**

Proposals:

We expect to retain the current overseas student recruitment target, which is comparative to the rest of the UK and in effect measures the attractiveness of Welsh institutions as providers of higher education for international students.

We have also considered introducing an additional measure to cover the quality of the overseas student experience or the internationalisation of HE in Wales, and would welcome views on whether this would be useful and how this might be measured from publicly available data.

Proposed additional target under Student Experience:

To measure 'To make the most appropriate use of digital technologies in the delivery of education, training and support for learners' (Digital Wales Delivery Plan (2011))²

We would like to introduce a target based on digital learning/flexibility for part-time and full-time students. One possibility would be the use of HESA data on distance learning provision. We may also wish to pick up the area of digital literacies. We would welcome views on how this might be measured or other possible measures (which could relate more strongly to widening access or skills).

Other measures: We will also monitor institutional performance in other ways, including through the National Student Survey results and Quality Assurance Agency Institutional Review outcomes. We will also monitor recruitment against initial teacher training intake targets.

² wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandconomy/digitalwales/publications/110330delivery/?lang=en

Skills

Objective: *Ensure that graduates are equipped for life and work and that universities deliver an upskilled workforce*

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure 'employability is a key outcome of the HE experience'

- 6. The proportion of leavers obtaining first degrees from full-time courses who were employed, studying or both six months after leaving, will be equal to, or greater than the UK average by 2012/13.**

Proposals:

We expect to retain this measure, which is comparative to the rest of the UK. However, this is essentially a measure of employment rather than employability. We would welcome views on how 'employability' might be measured. We also note that this measure relates only to full-time students. Should we include something for part-time students and, if so, how might this be measured from publicly available data? Should we use GO Wales targets? Should we consider data from the longitudinal Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) survey and, if so, how? Could we make use of a bank of additional questions in the National Student Survey? We would welcome views on this.

Outcome in current strategy:

- 7. To measure the extent to which more people in Wales, including in the Heads of the Valleys, experience higher education and are 'equipped with higher level skills':**

The absolute participation rate within Welsh higher education providers of students in the five UHOVI unitary authorities will rise by 8% to the current national average by 2012/13 (from 2.5% to 2.7%).

Proposals:

We expect to retain this measure, which has not yet been achieved, to cover participation in the Heads of the Valleys (in terms of student enrolments in HE across Wales) relative to other areas of Wales. We

would welcome views on any other measures which might cover participation.

Outcome in current strategy:

To measure the extent to which 'improved part-time learning opportunities are offered'

- 8. The total number of part-time students studying higher education courses in higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales will rise from 57,714 in 2008/09 to 59,000 in 2012/13**

Proposals:

Given our remit advice to the Minister in 2012-13, and subsequent part-time action plan, based on widening access developments, we aim to move this target to the widening access theme. This target is unlikely to be met and we will need to take account of the introduction of the new part-time fees and funding arrangements. We expect to develop a target which will track growth or decline in part-time numbers against performance in other parts of the UK. We have considered whether it would be more realistic to exclude those with equivalent or higher level qualifications, who may not be eligible for student support, from the data.

We have also considered whether a more appropriate target in relation to part-time skills development would be focussed on HEI provision of continuing professional development for those in work. The relevant data would be the CPD figures within HEBCIS (see below), which are already utilised in our Innovation & Engagement funding method.

Our remit, and the new Science Strategy, emphasise the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education at graduate level. We have considered whether, in the light of the Science Strategy, it would be appropriate to introduce a STEM higher education target related to our strategic objectives on Skills, Employability and Enterprise, to ensure the maintenance and extension of STEM education in Wales.

Other measures. We will also monitor the achievement of qualifications (credit) at level 4 and above; the proportion of the workforce with qualifications at level 4 and above; STEM and Modern Foreign Language (MFL) recruitment; Destinations of Leavers from Higher

Education (DLHE); DLHE longitudinal survey; relevant UK Performance Indicators, GO Wales targets, and measures in our Skills and Employability Framework.

Innovation and Engagement

Objective: *Ensure strengthened productive relationships between higher education institutions and the public, private and third sectors*

Current strategy outcome:

To evidence 'knowledge transfer and exploitation of intellectual property in ways which can impact on Welsh economic transformation'

- 9. The number of staff and graduate spin-out companies still active which have survived at least three years will increase by 10% from 182 in 2008/09 to 200 in 2012/13**

Proposals:

This measure has been achieved. The choice of a single measure to cover the range of activity under this objective was difficult in the current strategy, and we would ideally prefer to include a basket of measures to cover this. One suggestion is to focus on the normal 5% UK proportion and set a target of achievement of this proportion across a range of, say 50%, of the HEBCIS indicators.

We would like to invite views about the scope of measures for performance in this area and whether a measure taking account of the range of HEBCIS indicators would be practical.

Other measures: We will also continue to use a basket of indicators from the annual Higher Education Business and Community Interactions Survey (HEBCIS), particularly: Consultancy; Contract research; Commercialisation of intellectual property (including via spinouts); Facilities and equipment hire; CPD and continuing education; Academic time spent on public engagement activity; and Participation in regeneration and development programmes.

Research

Objective: *Ensure excellent quality research to underpin the knowledge economy and support civil society*

Current strategy outcome:

To encourage more effective research through focussing investment on areas of strength

- 10. The annual percentage growth in income from Research Councils will be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London).**

Proposals:

We expect to retain this measure, which is comparative to the rest of the UK. We are also cognisant of the Research Council income target which is included in the Science Strategy, but which is a longer term objective.

We have modelled an additional measure based on total research income across the UK relative to quality research (QR) funding. We expect to see an increase in the position in Wales by the end of the strategy period.

We are also interested in a measure of research quality. Citation indices would provide such a measure but would need to rely on data purchased annually from a commercial supplier and this may not be affordable in the long term. An alternative would be to include a measure related to Research Excellence Framework (REF) performance, which would be reported once at the end of the strategy.

We would welcome views on a second measure under the Research objective, focussed on research quality.

Other measures: We will also monitor Postgraduate Research Student numbers; research income from sources other than Research Councils; and the amount of public research funding gained as a proportion of HEFCW QR funding allocated against UK comparators

Reconfiguration and Collaboration
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Objective: *Deliver a reconfigured higher education system with strong providers that, through partnership working, particularly regionally, offers more accessible higher education opportunities*

Current strategy outcome:

Purpose: To encourage further reconfiguration of the higher education sector including 'institutional mergers and collaborations, where this will underpin strength, capacity, and availability of high quality higher education'.

- 11. At least 75% of the Welsh higher education institutions will have an annual income in excess of the UK median, with no institution to be below the lower quartile by 2012/13.**

Proposals:

We expect to retain this target for the corporate strategy to 2015-16.

Governance:

Objective: *Deliver continual improvement in the quality of governance and long term sustainability of the higher education system*

Outcomes:

To encourage improving effectiveness of governing bodies in guiding the strategic direction of their institution

12. No higher education institution to be classified as ‘high risk’ under HEFCW institutional risk review processes.

Proposals:

We expect to retain this measure for the new corporate strategy.

Other measures: We will also monitor the financial performance and forecasts of institutions; Estates record data; and the performance of the sector in relation to sustainability.

Feedback is invited on any other measures we should monitor including in particular in the area of sustainable development and well-being.

Organisational Effectiveness:

Objective: *Be a well run and cost effective organisation which will work productively with the Welsh Government and the sector.*

Proposals:

We expect to measure our performance in this area against a basket of measures included within our organisational effectiveness scorecard. As well as covering the full range of corporate strategy targets, this will also include indicators such as staff turnover and sickness absence levels, staff survey, procurement and running cost savings. We will also take account of external assessments such as maintaining Investors in People; ISO 27001 and Welsh Government performance reviews and monitoring. We conducted a second survey of our stakeholders in 2012, which has informed this strategy, and we will conduct a further stakeholder survey to assess our progress in 2015.