

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Welsh Studies

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
Response by: 1 February 2013
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This circular requests higher education institutions and further education institutions with directly funded higher education to respond to a survey of provision in Welsh Studies.

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Introduction

1. This circular requests higher education institutions and further education institutions with directly-funded higher education to respond to a survey of provision in Welsh Studies.

Background

2. The remit letter which HEFCW has received from the Welsh Government for 2012/13 asks us to “continue to focus on the delivery of subjects of strategic importance namely Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), the maintenance of modern foreign languages (MFL), and the delivery of Welsh medium learning and the disciplines of what might be called Welsh studies, including the study of Welsh history and literature, culture, society and politics in both languages”.
3. In the light of the specific reference to Welsh Studies as an aspect of higher education provision in Wales which is of strategic importance, we are asking institutions in the first instance to help us in undertaking a survey of the current position. We can then consider whether any particular further action is needed. We would also hope that in bringing together the information from the survey, we can begin to establish a more clearly defined concept of what constitutes Welsh studies/Astudiaethau Cymreig as a distinctive aspect within higher education in Wales. We would emphasise that there are no funding implications at this stage.
4. We are concerned not to place an undue burden on institutions, so we have sought to do some preliminary work towards the survey and we will also be doing some other work to gather relevant information.
5. **Research** While the survey is primarily concerned with taught provision, we would also wish to have an indication of how the research profile and activity within relevant disciplines contributes to research and scholarship within Welsh Studies. We have drawn attention to this in the survey.

Scope of the survey

6. Determining which subject areas might be considered as falling within the scope of Welsh Studies is not straightforward, particularly for what might be covered by “culture, society and politics”. Such dimensions could be seen as featuring within elements of a great many disciplines in some way.
7. We have not attempted to define more precisely what is encompassed within Welsh Studies beyond the wording of the remit letter namely, “Welsh history and literature, culture, society and politics in both languages”. Rather we will look to institutions to make their own reasoned judgements about how the study of these aspects is reflected in their provision. While there is not a specific mention of learning the Welsh

language, we take the view that language awareness and bilingualism in Wales can be regarded as within Welsh Studies as it is described in the remit letter.

8. To make the survey manageable, we would like to focus in reasonable depth on certain subject areas which can be expected to have significant Welsh Studies content. However, we would then find it helpful if institutions could look at some of their other subject areas at a less detailed level, for the contribution which they make to an understanding and knowledge of Wales. This will enable us to see how far the notion of Welsh Studies extends across the higher education curriculum.
9. The subject areas which we have identified to look at in most detail are:
 - Politics
 - Geography
 - Law
 - Tourism
 - Linguistics
 - English literature
 - Welsh language and literature
 - Celtic studies
 - History
 - Music
 - Drama/Theatre/Film
 - Education

For ease of reference, we will call these the “**main subjects**”. Other subject areas on which institutions may provide information to us as part of the survey, we will refer to as “**other subjects**”.

10. We would emphasise that Welsh Studies is not about the language of delivery as such, but about the content of provision. Thus we would expect to see significant Welsh Studies content in certain courses delivered through the medium of English, while equally there will be some modules delivered through the medium of Welsh which have minimal or no Welsh Studies component.
11. There are two elements to the survey:
 - a) Identifying specific modules which have Welsh Studies content
 - b) Commentary by institutions on the place which Welsh Studies has in the curriculum of various disciplines and subject areas.
12. We have not included **the Open University in Wales** or **directly-funded higher education in further education (HE in FE) colleges** in the module survey. Please see paragraphs 32 and 33 for how we would like the Open University and further education colleges with directly-funded higher education provision to contribute to the survey.

a) **Module survey**

13. As a starting point for the survey, we have looked at module titles of provision at Welsh higher education institutions extracted from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data for 2010/11 for the following Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) codes, which reflect the main subjects:
- L200 to L290: Politics
 - L700 to L711, L720, L721 to L727: Geography
 - M100, M110, M112, M200: Law
 - N800, N830 to N832, N870: Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Transport
 - Q100 to Q190: Linguistics
 - Q200 to Q290: Comparative literary studies
 - Q300 to Q390: English language and literature
 - Q560, Q561: Welsh language and literature
 - Q910, Q920: Translation
 - V100 to V490: History and Archaeology
 - W300 to W390: Music
 - W400 to W490: Drama, Theatre
 - W500 to W590: Dance
 - W600 to W690: Cinematics and Photography
 - W800 to W890: Imaginative writing
 - W900 to W990: Miscellaneous creative arts.
14. We are concerned not to place an undue burden on institutions by asking them to trawl through long lists of module titles to select those with Welsh Studies content. We have therefore sought to do some of the preliminary work. From the module titles, we have extracted those modules where we consider there is or may be Welsh Studies content. For some modules, this is evident from the title, but there are others, particularly those which cover a broad or generic topic within the discipline, where this is not obvious and there may also be varying emphases in different institutions. The process is not a robustly scientific one and no doubt individual institutions will need to amend some of our selections.
15. We have not retained modules in the lists simply because their titles are in Welsh. In making our selection, we have applied the same principle as for modules with English titles of considering whether they may have Welsh Studies content.
16. We would like you to indicate for each of the modules listed for your institution the proportion of the module which you consider is taken up by Welsh Studies. The tables which we will send separately to each institution for their modules will have a number of indicative percentages. We would stress that we are looking for **approximate** proportions. We are not expecting institutions to spend significant amounts of time working out precise percentages. For example, if you judge that round about half of a

module comprises Welsh Studies, but maybe a bit more or a bit less, then record it as 50%. We have already marked on the tables where we are fairly confident that a module is 100% Welsh Studies but institutions can amend these as appropriate. You may have ceased to offer some modules or added new modules in 2011/12 or 2012/13 which you may wish to list for us separately.

17. As well as sending to each institution the extracted “Welsh Studies” module list (**Table A**), we will also include a list showing the modules which we did not include (**Table B**). Institutions can then indicate if any of these should be Welsh Studies and relevant percentages.
18. **Annex A** notes the general principles we have applied in selecting modules, together with our more specific approach to the individual JACS codes.
19. While we have noted that Education is one of the subject areas we would wish to look at in detail, we have not included a module list for this area, but will cover rather through a commentary from institutions. This is explained further in paragraphs 25 to 27.
20. We have also not included Celtic Studies in the module list. We have extracted these modules from the HESA data and are therefore able to see the range of provision offered, for example, in Celtic languages other than Welsh. However, we would welcome commentary from institutions (see paragraph 28).

b) Commentary on Welsh Studies

21. We are dividing the commentary on the place which Welsh Studies has in the curriculum of various disciplines and subject areas into the two categories of main subjects and other subjects.
22. If institutions consider that their overall institutional mission and culture contribute to supporting Welsh Studies and wish to provide a short statement illustrating this, then we would be happy for you to include this in your response.

Main subjects

23. We would be grateful if, for each of the main subjects, where they occur in your curriculum, you could provide a commentary, covering such points as:

- ***The place of Welsh Studies within the overall provision in the subject.***

For example:

- the contribution it makes to students’ understanding of the history, literature, culture, society and politics of Wales;

- its relevance to an appropriate curriculum;
- whether it is an essential or desirable component, including the extent to which some Welsh Studies provision may be compulsory;
- what steps are taken to maintain or enhance Welsh Studies, for example, in developing new provision or in recruiting replacement or new staff.

- **Popularity with students**

For example:

- the attractiveness to students of programmes which are strongly or wholly Welsh Studies based;
- where students have a choice of modules, how popular Welsh Studies modules are;
- whether students take advantage of choices for projects, extended essays, dissertations, work placements, etc to have a Welsh Studies focus.

- **Welsh medium provision**

For example:

- the balance between Welsh and English medium Welsh Studies provision;
- whether Welsh medium provision tends to have a greater Welsh Studies focus (even if it is largely mirroring English medium provision).

- **Research**

For example:

- the extent of research activity which has a Welsh Studies focus;
- its contribution to research and scholarship in the discipline overall, as well as to Wales' specific research;
- feed through into the student curriculum.

- The **challenges** which you face in maintaining or enhancing Welsh Studies provision both in the immediate and the longer term.

- **Other factors** which you may wish to draw to our attention

24. The list above is a guide only, but should give a sense of the assessment of the scope, strengths, challenges of Welsh Studies in the sector which we wish to achieve. Some of the points raised may seem self-evident for some disciplines, particularly Welsh language and literature, but there are others which can be expanded upon.

25. We do not expect a lengthy analysis here, perhaps one to two sides of A4 at most, possibly less for some subjects.

Education

26. As noted above, we have not included Education in the module list. Provision across the sector covers a wide range of aspects of education in which the Welsh context may figure to a greater or lesser degree. We therefore felt that in this subject in particular trying to extract a meaningful module list without knowledge of the curriculum content of individual institutions would be difficult. However, given the importance of this subject area to every education sector in Wales, it is vital that it is included within our survey.
27. Preparing trainees to deliver the “Cwricwlwm Cymreig” is one of the requirements for initial teacher training (ITT) for school teachers and we can reflect this in our consideration of Welsh Studies. However, it would be helpful if ITT providers could indicate briefly ways in which they fulfil this requirement.
28. It is to be expected that a focus similar to the Cwricwlwm Cymreig will exist in other provision which provides education and training for pre-school and school settings. Training for other education sectors, education-related and continuing professional development courses may include or require awareness and understanding of bilingualism, and the Welsh historical, political, legal and cultural context. Thus, in addition, to addressing the points noted in paragraph 22, we would be grateful if institutions could comment more specifically on how Welsh Studies figures in their education portfolios. You may wish to identify particular modules for us which have a strong Welsh Studies content.

Celtic studies

29. We would expect that provision relating to the Celtic languages and literature other than Welsh is on the whole delivered within the programmes of Welsh departments. We would be grateful therefore if in commenting on their Welsh language and literature provision, institutions could cover, as appropriate, the contribution of Celtic studies, including, for example, its place within various degree schemes or its enhancement of students’ knowledge and understanding of Welsh language and literature, etc.

Other subjects

30. For subjects not included within the main subjects list, we would like you, as appropriate, to provide us with a brief commentary, where you judge your provision contains Welsh Studies content, on the nature of that content and taking into account relevant points from paragraph 18. You may wish to identify particular modules for us which have a strong Welsh Studies content.
31. We have set out in **Annex B** against their JACS codes, various discipline areas where we think there might be a Welsh Studies focus. However, you

should not feel that you have to comment if there is not such a focus in your provision – simply noting “not significant” or “not relevant” will be sufficient.

Cross-curricular or interdisciplinary programmes

32. We have focused here primarily on individual subject areas. Many students will be studying joint or combined degree programmes which could include Welsh Studies from more than one discipline. However, it would also be helpful to know if there are specific interdisciplinary programmes which give students exposure across the spectrum of Welsh Studies.

The Open University in Wales

33. Given that the Open University’s courses are organised at a UK level, we have not included the Open University in Wales in the module survey. However, we are aware that there are modules or elements of modules offered by the University which have a Welsh Studies focus (and which can also be taken by students outside Wales), as well as other activities which support knowledge and understanding of Wales. We would therefore like the Open University to provide us with a commentary on its contribution to Welsh Studies, drawing on the points in paragraphs 19 to 31 as it considers appropriate. It may wish to identify specific modules.

Higher education in further education colleges

34. We would appreciate it if, in their responses, HEIs can consider Welsh Studies content within their franchise provision, in discussion with their franchise partners as appropriate.
35. For FE colleges with directly-funded higher education provision, we would welcome a commentary from you on the Welsh Studies content within your provision, taking account of paragraphs 19 to 31 as appropriate. You may also wish to identify modules for us which have a strong Welsh Studies element.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

36. We have included in our grant letter to the Coleg a request that it contributes to our consideration of Welsh Studies,” including through the provision of information and advice on provision in these disciplines through the medium of Welsh”, and that it then works “with us, as appropriate, on any actions we determine in taking forward this task”. We will be discussing these matters further with the Coleg during the period of the survey.

Timetable

37. We will be sending the module lists (Tables A and B) to individual institutions by email to the Vice-Chancellor and the institutions' data contacts by 16 November.
38. We would be grateful if you could send our responses by email to Craig Brett (craig.brett@hefcw.ac.uk) by **1 February 2013**.

Further information

We appreciate that you may wish to discuss your response with us before submitting it, including to clarify the type of information we would find helpful. This may be at an individual discipline as well as an institutional level. Please contact either Alison Allan (alison.allan@hefcw.ac.uk, telephone 029 2068 2223) or Kimberley Meringolo (kimberley.meringolo@hefcw.ac.uk, telephone 029 2068 2258).

Selection of modules – Main Subjects

We will send to each institution a list of their modules where we consider there is or may be Welsh Studies content (**Table A**) and a list of the modules we have excluded (**Table B**).

In preparing Table A, we have included modules where the titles indicate clearly that they cover Welsh Studies or that some Welsh Studies content seems likely. As noted in the paragraph 12 of the circular, there may be instances where we have excluded modules which do in fact have Welsh Studies content. We have indicated below under some subjects in particular where this may have been the case.

Where there is Welsh Studies content in modules which we have excluded from the list, institutions can record this on Table B.

However, if it is the case that there is a very small Welsh Studies element in a large number of modules in a discipline, the institution may prefer to deal with this in a narrative way through its commentary.

In general we have not included modules covering extended projects, special subjects dissertations, work experience, etc, unless it is clear from the titles that these are Welsh Studies modules. We have also excluded entries for postgraduate research. Rather it will be for institutions to tell us about Welsh Studies aspects in their commentaries.

Politics (L200 to L290)

We have included modules with a British or UK context. We have excluded modules concerned with international matters and on Europe/European Union, and modules on particular topics or aspects of the discipline unless the module title makes clear Welsh Studies content.

Geography (L700 to L711, L720, L721 to L727)

We have not generally excluded modules under the codes above, as the module titles indicate core areas of the discipline which can be expected to include British and Welsh geography within these.

Law (M100, M110, M112, M200)

We have included modules where the titles indicate that they are likely to cover the legal system in England and Wales. We have excluded modules which deal with particular aspects of the law, eg, contract law, company law.

Tourism (N800, N830 to N832, N870)

In looking at these codes which cover Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Transport our main focus was tourism. We have generally excluded modules which appeared under these codes covering leisure and sports management etc.

Linguistics (Q100 to Q190)

We have generally only included modules where the title indicates a Welsh language or bilingualism focus. We appreciate though that there are an extensive range of topics dealt with under this discipline and within the curricula of the individual institutions some of these modules may include reference to the Welsh language or context.

English literature (Q300 to Q390)

In general we have excluded all modules except those which have a specific reference to Wales, Welsh or Anglo-Welsh literature. We recognise though that within the study of particular periods or genres, Welsh authors and poets, etc, can be expected to be included.

Welsh language and literature (Q560, Q561)

As might be expected we have excluded very few modules here, except perhaps for some Welsh medium modules on study skills or personal development, etc, which are likely to be generic modules without specific Welsh Studies content.

Translation (Q910, Q920)

Generally we have only included modules involving Welsh as one of the languages. It may be, however, that modules dealing with generic principles or specialised aspects of translation may include reference to the Welsh language/context.

History and Archaeology (V100 to V490)

As well as specific Welsh history modules, we have included modules which cover periods of British or European history as these can be expected to include Welsh history. We have taken a similar approach with archaeology.

Music (W300 to W390)

Many of the modules under these codes cover instrumental studies, composition, orchestration etc or did not otherwise suggest a Welsh Studies context or component. These modules have been excluded.

Drama/Theatre/Film (W400 to W490, W500 to W590, W600 to W690, W900 to W990)

Generally, we have only included modules where the Welsh Studies content is fairly evident. For Welsh medium modules, we have sought to look at these in the context of the overall range of modules offered by an institution. We have often excluded these where they seem to mirror English modules which we have also excluded. However, we appreciate that some of the modules in both English and Welsh may have Welsh Studies content.

Imaginative writing (W800 to W890)

We have only included Welsh medium creative writing modules. However, we recognise that there may be some English medium modules which incorporate a Wales or Welsh context.

A Medicine and Dentistry
B Subjects Allied to Medicine

Within these disciplines, students may need understanding of the legal and political context in Wales, including devolution and its implications for the organisation of the health service. Another aspect may be cultural and language awareness and bilingualism in relation to the Welsh language.

C Biological Sciences

Fieldwork or special studies, may, for example, involve Welsh locations or situations, which in turn require students to have an understanding of the historical, legal and political context in Wales. Aspects of Psychology may require cultural and language awareness in relation to the Welsh language.

D Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture and Related Subjects

Within these disciplines, students may need understanding of the legal, political, cultural and historical context in Wales, including devolution, particularly for agriculture, forestry, environmental management, heritage management, etc

K Architecture, Building and Planning

These subjects could involve the study of Welsh environments and case studies with some associated historical or cultural context, as well as a knowledge of the legal and political implications of devolution for planning and development, etc.

L Social Studies

Aspects of Welsh Studies could occur to a greater or lesser extent in the subjects within this grouping, beyond Politics and Geography which were identified as main subjects, for example, in Economics and Sociology. Social Policy in particular can be expected to require an understanding of the cultural, legal and political context in Wales. Within Social Work and related areas, Welsh language familiarisation and awareness can be required for professional qualifications.

P Mass Communication and Documentation

Information Services (including Library, Museum and Archive Studies) and Journalism may have Welsh Studies aspects, particularly if the course is preparing students to work in these professions in Wales if they wish to do. For the other disciplines within this grouping, such as Media Studies, we think that any Welsh Studies aspects are more likely to be covered under W Creative Arts which we have identified as a main subject.