

Corporate Strategy

2013-14 – 2015-16



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Chairman's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the new HEFCW Corporate Strategy setting out our plans for higher education in Wales over the next three years.

This is a time of great change in higher education (HE), which remains crucial to economic performance and to social mobility and justice. However, significant challenges arise from the new fees and funding arrangements for students; merger and reconfiguration of institutions; and increased competition for research funding. More information on the broader context is given below.

Universities in Wales contribute more than £2 billion a year¹ to the economy and they perform well in UK measures covering the range of joint working between universities and industry, business and communities². In addition, universities in Wales have been commended for their collaborative partnership working in widening access, with institutions acting as agents of economic and social change to deliver social justice and support a buoyant economy.³ Over the period of our previous corporate strategy, universities increased the proportion of students from the *Communities First* most disadvantaged areas of Wales⁴.

University graduates contribute to society and public life in many ways. We produce high quality graduates in Wales, with around 93% employed or in further study within six months of leaving university, and the 'graduate premium' continues to mean that graduates are more likely than those with lower level qualifications to be employed⁵. Students support their communities through voluntary and other work and their expenditure supports businesses.⁶

That is an excellent return on the public money invested in higher education in Wales by the Welsh Government through HEFCW, the National Health Service, which funds nursing and other provision in higher education, and other public bodies.

Part of the benefit brought by higher education to Wales relates to how our universities perform internationally. Universities in Wales have links around the world. These links promote the rich exchange of people and ideas; bring international students into Wales; and contribute more than £237m⁷ annually to the economy of Wales.

Although universities receive part of their funding from us and other public bodies, they are autonomous bodies, run independently from Government. It is our role in HEFCW to work with universities to enable them to meet Welsh Government priorities for higher education in Wales. We also work with the Welsh Government to shape higher education policy, providing advice to Government which is informed by

a university perspective, so that policy can be implemented as effectively as possible.

Our role is changing as more of our funding is used to support student fees. Our role as regulator is likely to increase, with new powers from the National Assembly to monitor universities and private providers. Our role will also change to take on board responsibilities arising from the proposed Sustainable Development Bill which will be introducing mandatory changes to both the way we work and to planning and reporting processes in the HE sector. We will continue to oversee performance across higher education in Wales, including through universities' and colleges' fee plans, as well as promoting the benefits of higher education. The inter-dependent themes of this strategy provide a framework for our work.

As noted above, this is a time of great change for higher education, particularly in Wales. HEFCW will work with the Welsh Government, universities and colleges to develop a longer term vision for higher education to 2020. Before we can finalise this, the Welsh Government will publish a new strategic statement for higher education. In the light of this, it is likely that we will need to review this corporate strategy before the end of the strategy period, and we welcome any comments from readers which could contribute to that process.

Roger Thomas, OBE.

Review of broader context and performance against the last strategy

In 2010 we published our three year corporate strategy 2010-11 – 2012-13. That was based on the new strategy *For our Future, the higher education strategy for the 21st century*, which was published in November 2009. Our strategy set out twelve 'For our Future' measures to be achieved by 2013. These are included in Annex A to that strategy, [Corporate Strategy 2010 - 2013](#)⁸. Further explanation of these areas is included in the document

Some of the data underpinning those measures are only available to 2012 at the present time but we also have forecasts from institutions as to their likely performance to 2013. Other targets are comparative with the UK position and we await information on some of those areas. We consider below the current performance against these measures, including forecasts to 2013 under each of the themes of our Corporate Strategy 2010-13. We will continue to monitor these figures until we can include the 2012/13 dataset, and reports will be available on our website.

Of those targets which can be assessed at present, four of the six targets are forecast to be met in relation to Communities First (M1), Retention (M2), Spin-out (M9) and Governance (M12). Overall, this reflects a positive performance for universities and colleges in Wales with a further four of the five comparative targets, for the National Student Survey (M3); Overseas students (M5); Employability (M6) and Research income (M10) showing a generally positive performance, although the latest data is showing that there are additional challenges. On the basis of the latest participation data available, the target for higher education participation from the Heads of the Valleys (M7) is forecast to be met. As noted above, this has been a period of great change for universities, with the impact of the recession, as well as changes to the fees and funding arrangements for higher education bringing challenges in terms of the management of change. The achievement of targets indicates a positive performance by the sector in a number of contexts.

Widening Access

Our focus on the Welsh Government's flagship 'tackling poverty' programme, Communities First, has continued during the period of the strategy. We have encouraged and incentivised universities to recruit from Communities First areas and forecasts indicate that our target for such recruitment will be met by 2013. The Communities First programme has been reviewed and communities' support restructured into new Communities First clusters⁹, and our Reaching Wider partnerships continue to engage directly with those areas. The introduction of fee

plans from 2012/13 onwards has also placed an emphasis on equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education¹⁰

As well as widening access we also wish to see an increase in the retention of students in higher education. Our measure of retention based on module completion is forecast to be met and we look forward to an improvement in universities' performance in UK performance indicators for retention.

Student Experience

During the period of the strategy, institutions in Wales have continued to deliver high scores in the National Student Survey, which is a measure of the perceptions of students across the UK about their student experience. Scores for 2012 increased, but not to the extent of those in the UK, and therefore the three year rolling average dipped for the first time by 0.3% below the UK average. We will see an increased emphasis on student experience in our new strategy.

Welsh medium provision continues to be a key priority for the Welsh Government¹¹, including in higher education. During the period of the strategy, we have seen the establishment of the new Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, which is a virtual college working with universities to plan and promote Welsh medium provision. This development is helping to extend the supply of Welsh medium provision but this has yet to impact on the numbers of students studying some element of their course through the medium of Welsh and Forecasts indicate that our target (M4) will not be met.

However, our comparative target for the recruitment of overseas students who, as explained above, have a major positive impact on the Welsh economy, has been met thus far, and Wales has exceeded the UK growth target in each year of the strategy, although figures for 2011/12 indicate a stronger position at UK level.

Skills

Despite the impact of the recession, institutions in Wales continue to ensure the employability of their students and our target for the employment of graduates, which compares with the UK performance, has been met in each year of the strategy.

During the period of the strategy, the Welsh Government has provided additional funding to support the establishment and development of the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI)¹². Operated as part of the Heads of the Valleys Education Partnership, this has increased the opportunities available for learners from the most deprived communities in Wales and assisted regeneration. Our target (M7), which measures the increase in the participation of learners from the Heads of the Valleys in universities across Wales, is forecast to be met.

Despite being a key Welsh Government priority, the period of this corporate strategy has seen a major reduction in part-time provision, and demand from both students and employers appears to have generally decreased,. The part-time target (M8) is not forecast to be met and this will be a key area of priority in our new strategy, recognising that any changes in the fees and funding arrangements for part-time students both in Wales and in the rest of the UK are likely to have an impact.

Knowledge Transfer

Universities in Wales continue to punch above their UK weight in measures of their interaction with business and communities. Our corporate strategy measure of performance in this area focussed on ‘spin-out companies’, that is those companies established by university staff and students as a result of ideas developed within universities, which continue to be viable for at least three years. This target has been exceeded, indicating the strong contribution of universities to innovation and enterprise in Wales.

Research

Our measure of performance in the area of research has focussed on the income from the UK Research Councils (RC). Investigation of the spread of subjects in Wales has shown that they are more likely to be in areas which gain less RC funding (ie those outside of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics areas). However, this target, which tracks growth in income generally against the UK, has been met in each year of the strategy thus far.

Reconfiguration and Collaboration

This area of our corporate strategy relates to the key priority of the Minister to see stronger and more sustainable universities, of a size which enables them to compete nationally and internationally. Our target has focussed on universities positioning themselves in the best place to compete through merger, to ensure that their income exceeds the UK median. Although this target (M11) is unlikely to be met, we have seen two mergers over the period (University of Wales, Lampeter and Trinity University College Carmarthen; Swansea Metropolitan University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David) with a further merger (University of Wales, Newport and the University of Glamorgan) scheduled for April 2013. In addition, our funding has promoted research collaborations and shared services developments which have enhanced research performance and encouraged efficiency savings.

Governance

During the period of the strategy, no institution has been classified as ‘high risk’ in accordance with the HEFCW institutional risk review processes. Under these

processes institutions are monitored twice a year and feedback is given on areas of concern, as well as areas of positive performance.

Our Vision:

Sustainable, accessible, internationally excellent higher education in Wales

We will work with institutions to develop and sustain accessible, internationally excellent higher education in Wales, for the benefit of individuals, society and the economy, in Wales and more widely

Our Mission

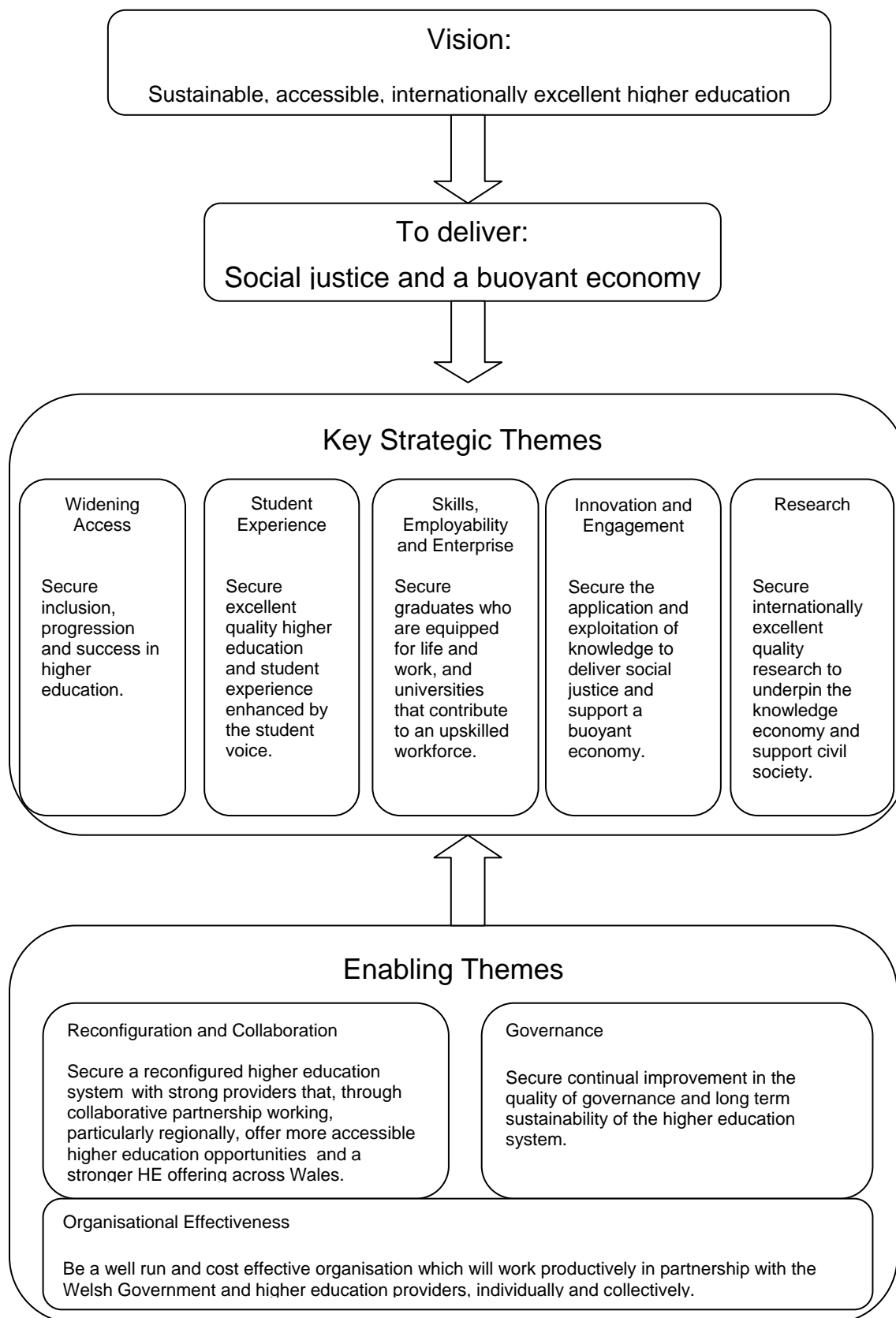
We aim to

- *Secure an excellent quality higher education student experience and internationally excellent quality research;*
- *Promote the contribution of higher education, in Wales, the UK and internationally;*
- *Enable higher education providers to deliver Welsh Government and UK priorities for higher education*
- *Inform and shape Government policy to be relevant and appropriate for delivery by higher education providers*

In order to

- *Enhance social justice;*
- *Support a buoyant economy*

Our strategic framework



Key Strategic Themes

Widening Access

Objective: secure inclusion, progression and success in higher education

Social justice is a key Welsh Government priority and widening access to higher level learning and skills has an important contribution to make to this aim. We will work with the Welsh Government, higher education providers and our partners to promote widening access and equality of opportunity.

We will prioritise the further development of inclusive learning, retention and progression opportunities to contribute to social justice and mobility for learners of all ages and backgrounds. We will encourage HE providers to resource effectively interventions that raise educational aspirations to all levels and modes of learning and support successful learning outcomes. Excellent practice has been identified in widening access in Wales related to partnership and regional working and work with looked-after young people and care leavers.¹³ We will support collaborative partnerships and provision, including the regional 'Reaching Wider' widening access programme, and we will expect HE providers to improve the evidence base to support widening access to and through higher education.

There will be increased emphasis on innovative flexible learning, community and work-based provision, fair access, including fair access to the professions, higher level skills, the priority sectors and postgraduate study, retention and learner success. Building on Welsh Government priorities and our advice to the Minister on part-time employer focussed provision and progression from FE, we will implement our part-time action plan and develop new innovative approaches for supporting flexible and part-time provision. We will maintain our focus on under-represented communities and individuals, including the Communities First clusters and care leavers, to address inconsistencies in inclusion, progression, social mobility and learner success for those from areas of multiple deprivation in Wales, as well as addressing the aims of our Child Poverty Strategy.

We want to see the regional dimension to the planning and delivery of higher education deliver further clear articulation and progression to, through and beyond, higher education, including in the Heads of the Valleys area, and responding to specific rural and/or urban learning priorities. This will include further work to embed HE in FE provision and enable progression opportunities for apprentices into higher education. We see Reaching Wider as a key mechanism for widening access regionally. Productive partnership working, cross sectoral and multi-agency approaches, including franchised provision with further education, and other post-16 providers will be further developed.

We will work with the Welsh Government and higher education providers to advance equality of opportunity, including through going beyond statutory duties, new fee planning requirements and support arrangements. We will engage with higher education institutions and other partners to broaden the diversity of the student population, having due regard for the provisions of the Equalities Act.

In the area of Widening Access we will work particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations¹⁴ that:

- Participation is maximised through different and more flexible ways to experience higher education, including through part time study
- Improved part-time learning opportunities are offered
- Inconsistencies in access and opportunity are addressed

Outcomes¹⁵

To measure improved access and progression for people in locations where such opportunities are low, including the Heads of the Valleys

T1. Widening Access

A 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 bottom quintile of wards in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas, from 20.0% in 2011/12 to 22.4% in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.8%)

T2. Participation

An increase in the proportion of all UK domiciled students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales who are from UK low participation areas from 33.2% in 2011/12 to 35.3% in 2015/16 (a rise of 6.3%).

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

T3. Retention

(a) A decrease in the percentage of full-time undergraduate students no longer in higher education following year of entry from 9.2% in 2011/12 to 8.2% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%); and

(b) a decrease in the percentage of part-time first degree students no longer in higher education two years following year of entry from 33.7% in 2011/12 to 30.1% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%).

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

T4. Part-time

The percentage change in the number of part-time students attending higher education courses in Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions to be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for the UK.

Monitor

UK Widening Access performance indicators; recruitment of disabled students; ethnic minorities; age profile, care leavers, learners in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance and Assembly Learning Grant, socio economic class, male participation

Student Experience

Objective: Secure excellent quality higher education and student experience, enhanced by the student voice

A high priority is placed in Wales on the quality of higher education provision and of teaching, learning and the student experience. National Student Survey results for Wales have traditionally indicated high levels of student satisfaction¹⁶. Similarly high levels of satisfaction have been found in surveys of the international student experience in Wales. The results also reflect close working with students as partners in their learning experience. *For our Future* puts a particular emphasis on the student voice. We will continue to ensure that the voice of the diverse student population enhances higher education, including through partnership working with the National Union of Students (NUS) Wales, and others supporting the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE). This includes our work on Student Charters and arrangements for funding student unions. In our work we will focus on the student experience of those studying in all parts of higher education, including both undergraduate and postgraduate.

We deliver our statutory responsibilities for quality assessment through the Institutional Review: Wales reviews, which indicate that the quality and standards of provision at Welsh higher education institutions meet UK expectations.

Through our approach to quality enhancement¹⁷, we will encourage institutions to continuously enhance the student experience for the diverse student population, including through responding to the student voice, for example via the National Student Survey, and supporting sector agencies which are able to provide UK wide approaches to working with the Welsh higher education system. We encourage institutions to work together on quality enhancement including through the 'Future Directions' quality enhancement themes. We will work with higher education providers to ensure that they engage effectively with the UK Professional Standards Framework and the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education. We will also work with partners to ensure that prospective and current students have appropriate information about higher education, including through Key Information Sets, and on the costs of study. Institutions in Wales will be producing the Higher Education Achievement Record for each graduate, which will increase the information available to inform employers.

We will continue to review our strategy for enhancing learning and teaching through technology¹⁸ to reflect new and innovative forms of learning, including working jointly with higher education providers to engage with open educational practices and ensuring that the sector enhances learning and teaching through technology, including its application to flexible learning. We will continue to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through sector networks. We will work with providers to encourage innovation in programme design and modular approaches to improve the flexibility of provision, building on the existing advantages

of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and accreditation of prior learning.

We will continue to support Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to extend the range of Welsh medium provision and increase student participation in Welsh medium higher education, including in more vocational subjects. During the period of the strategy we will undertake an evaluation of the outcome of the activities of Y Coleg.

All this work will be underpinned by fee plan requirements in relation to the student experience.

Working with the Welsh Government and our partners, we will support the sector's delivery of the International Action Plan for Wales, particularly in respect of making Wales a destination of choice for international students and staff, as well as promoting internationalisation across HE, and international exchanges, for the benefit of the student community as a whole.

In line with our statutory responsibilities, we will fund and accredit initial teacher training and work with partners to secure high quality provision to meet Welsh Government targets.

In terms of the Student Experience, we will work particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations to:

- Make continuing efforts to deliver an excellent student experience
- Enable study through the medium of Welsh to take place in a wider range of programmes and locations in Wales
- Ensure that the student voice strengthens higher education

Outcomes

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

T5. National Student Survey

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.

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

T6. Welsh Medium

The number of students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales undertaking at least 5 credits of their course through the medium of Welsh, per annum, will rise from 4,335 in 2011/12 to 5,600 in 2015/16, including a rise from 2,269 to 3,030 in the number of those studying at least 40 credits per annum.

To measure the internationalisation of higher education in Wales

T7. Overseas Students

The percentage change year on year 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).

To measure the delivery of HEFCW's statutory responsibilities in relation to quality assessment

T8. Quality

All institutions being reviewed in the Corporate Strategy period to meet the UK thresholds for quality and standards in the QAA Institutional Review

To measure the delivery of HEFCW's statutory responsibility to allocate Welsh Government intake targets for ITT

T9. Initial Teacher Training

Welsh Government intake targets for ITT undergraduate primary, postgraduate primary, undergraduate secondary, postgraduate secondary priority and postgraduate secondary other subjects to be met annually.

Monitor

Implementation of the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF); proportion of international staff; numbers of Trans National Education (TNE) partnerships/campuses

Skills, Employability and Enterprise

Objective: Secure graduates who are equipped for life and work, and universities that contribute to an upskilled workforce.

In partnership with Higher Education Wales, CBI Wales and NUS Wales and institutions we will implement the Agreement on Skills and Employability, underpinning it with a Skills and Employability Action Plan (SEAP)¹⁹. The Agreement has been published in the context of the Welsh Government's ambitions to give students of Welsh HE an extra 'edge' to make them more attractive to employers and more able to compete in the global economy.

The Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales commits us to work in partnership to improve the job-related and entrepreneurial skills of all our students and offer new opportunities to re-skill and up-skill the current workforce including through revitalising part time study and continuing professional development options

The SEAP will stimulate activity designed to increase the availability of:

- Work placements and work experience opportunities;
- Employer approved courses;
- Curricula embedded employability training and development.

The action plan will be underpinned by fee plan requirements.

Our GO Wales programme is a key aspect of our mission to enhance the employability of graduates in Wales. We will continue to deliver GO Wales in its current format until the end of 2013 and at the same time look for opportunities for further European funding to re-invigorate the programme so that it continues to play an important part, aligned with Jobs Growth Wales, in enhancing the skills and employability of students and graduates in Wales.

We will implement our action plan for part-time provision which supports the upskilling of those in work, including for postgraduates, through employer-led courses and bite-sized provision, and advancing continuing professional development as well as higher level apprenticeships.

We will continue to support flexible HE provision (including foundation degrees and work-based learning) particularly via our regional agenda. We will continue to work in partnership with the Welsh Government in the delivery of its *Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy* as well as incorporating an understanding of enterprise into the skills agenda. We will also work to ensure that both prospective and current students as well as graduates have access to high quality careers advice, information and guidance services.

We will continue our focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), responding to the Science for Wales (SfW) strategy and on Modern Foreign Languages through our support for the Welsh Government's *Making Languages*

Count Strategy. In addition, we will work with higher education providers to develop and advance Welsh Studies.

We will work with partners to deliver the International Action Plan for Wales, which recognises the value of an international mobility experience in developing employability skills.

In the area of Skills, we will work particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations that:

- A greater proportion of the population achieves higher level skills
- Greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery is developed, to match need and demand
- Employability is a key outcome of the higher education experience
- The contribution of higher education to workforce development is strengthened

Outcomes

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

T10. Employment

The proportion of leavers from Welsh higher education institutions obtaining undergraduate qualifications through full-time and part-time study who were employed, studying or both six months after leaving will be equal to, or greater than, the UK proportion.

T11. Employability

The proportion of leavers who were working, or working and studying, who were working in a managerial/professional job six months after leaving to rise from 67.5% in 2010/11 to 72.7% in 2015/16 (a rise of 7.7%)

To measure the contribution of higher education to workforce development

T12. Continuing Professional Development

The total number of learner days delivered by Welsh higher education institutions for continuing professional development will rise from 202,498 in 2011/12 to 226,000 in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.6%).

Monitor

UK Performance Indicators for employment (including current measure); Skills and Employability Action Plans; GO Wales and Jobs Growth Wales targets; STEM, MFL and other shortage subjects; Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)

Innovation and Engagement

Objective: Secure the application and exploitation of knowledge to deliver social justice and a buoyant economy

Higher education already plays a key role in supporting both economic and social well-being in Wales. The annual UK Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS) shows that Wales performs above its 5% share across a number of key indicator areas. However, more needs to be done to ensure that knowledge exchange between higher education, employers and the wider society, both in Wales and further afield, is as effective as possible.

We will continue to place emphasis on the strengthening of partnerships between higher education and businesses as well as with the public and third sectors in delivering innovation and engagement activity. We will also maintain our focus on collaboration between higher education institutions including, for example, in promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship and in raising the international profile of HE in Wales. We will maintain our strategic approach with the Welsh Government, in particular through implementation of its innovation strategy, *Innovation Wales*²⁰, its work with key anchor companies and in its sector based approach. In this context we will jointly explore effective models of intellectual property (IP)/commercialisation appropriate to Wales and work with the National Centre for Universities and Business.

We will also work with higher education providers on a regional basis to develop their links with local employers, further education providers, local government and other public sector bodies to enhance their cultural and civic roles, as well as their contribution to economic development.

With our partners we will support the sector's delivery of the International Action Plan for Wales, in particular through its priorities for promoting international partnerships which are mutually beneficial and for developing closer links between universities and businesses operating overseas.

In the area of Innovation and Engagement we will work particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations that:

- The economy is supported by strengthened and systematic knowledge exploitation
- The cultural and civic role of higher education is enhanced

Outcomes

To measure ‘the impact of university research is increased, through targeting support on areas of strength and national priority, and especially through collaboration’ and ‘the economy is supported by strengthened and systematic knowledge exploitation’

T13. Collaborative Research Income

The total amount of income from collaborative research involving both public funding and funding from business will rise from £65,253k in 2011/12 to £72,000k in 2015/16 (a rise of 10.3%).

Monitor

Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS)

Research

Objective: Secure research of internationally excellent quality to deliver a buoyant economy and support social justice

We remain committed to securing sustainable excellent research in higher education which stands comparison internationally. To this end, we aim to strengthen the quality and quantity of the research base in Wales, while striving for more logical and coherent critical mass. We will direct funding accordingly, guided by the outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). This may well result in a consolidation of research funding and support around fewer universities which are able to demonstrate sustainable excellence in research.

We will also work with the Welsh Government to implement *Science for Wales (SfW)*, including the *Sêr Cymru* programme, with a view to increasing the sector's access to Research Council and other sources of external funding, and achieving a trajectory towards the SfW research income aspirations. The focus of activity will be on the three SfW Grand Challenge Areas (life sciences and health; low carbon, energy and environment; and advanced engineering and materials).

At the same time, we also recognise that Wales has significant strengths in the arts/humanities and social science research, which impact on culture, society and the economy, and that these also need to be maintained. Recognising the importance of postgraduates to the future of the Welsh economy and the desirability of increasing the size of the postgraduate community in Wales, we will continue to provide strategic support for postgraduate research. We will also work with the sector and the Welsh Government as the Graduate Schools are established within the SfW National Research Networks.

Consistent with the objectives of Science for Wales, we expect higher education institutions to take an increasingly strategic approach to their management of research, including by taking advantage of the training opportunities and resources offered by Vitae and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

We will also work with other bodies across the UK to implement a range of Concordats that support the effective management of research in relation to career development, public engagement and research integrity.

With our partners, including Wales Higher Education Brussels, we will support the sector's delivery of the International Action Plan for Wales, including maximising opportunities presented by European funding.

In terms of research, we will work towards the *For our Future* expectations that:

- Research activity thrives and is effective
- The impact of university research is increased, through targeting support on areas of strength and national priority, and especially through collaboration

Outcomes

To measure 'research activity thrives and is effective'

T14. Research Council Income

The annual percentage change in income from Research Councils will exceed the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London).

T15. Research Excellence Framework (REF)

An increased proportion of research submitted to REF by Welsh higher education institutions will achieve 3 and 4* in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 from a baseline of 35% at 3* and 14% at 4* in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.*

Monitor

REF outcomes; other research income; PGR numbers; disaggregated Research Council income; UK performance indicators for research, citation measures

Enabling Themes

Reconfiguration and Collaboration

Objective: Secure a reconfigured higher education system with strong providers that, through collaborative partnership working, particularly regionally, offers more accessible higher education opportunities and a stronger HE offering across Wales.

For our Future expected a step change in performance of higher education in Wales. Over the period of our previous Corporate Strategy much progress was made in reconfiguring the higher education system in Wales to deliver that step change. Two institutional mergers were achieved, which have created a stronger and more sustainable regionally-focussed university in South West Wales. That institution is also in the process of creating a 'Dual-Sector' University with local FE colleges, as well as taking under its wing the University of Wales to ensure robust quality oversight. More recently, agreement has been reached between two institutions in South East Wales. The universities in Mid and North West Wales have agreed a strategic alliance and they are already benefiting from shared services and areas of joint work. These are positive developments towards strong and sustainable higher education sector in Wales.

However, overall we remain of the view that too many of our universities are too small by UK standards, and that we still have too many institutions, raising concerns over their competitiveness, sustainability, regional coherence and range of provision. Our statement on the Future shape of the HE sector in Wales noted our aim to see six higher education institutions, with a community focused and a research intensive university in each region. That continues to be the Council's position.

Higher Education Institutions in Wales collaborate in many ways with each other and with other partners. As a small country, we are good at this. However, we are keen to encourage broader and more effective collaborative partnership working, both within Wales and outside. We will continue to work with providers to gain regional coherence, eradicating unnecessary competition, to meet local and regional needs and priorities. At the same time we wish to see all our institutions competing internationally, as appropriate to their missions, which places a continuing emphasis on achieving further reconfiguration. We aim to see at least one Welsh university listed in the top 100 in the world, accompanied by others performing more effectively against international comparators.

In terms of Reconfiguration and Collaboration we will work particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations of:

- Increased collaboration among higher education providers and between higher education and other providers,
- A particular focus on appropriate reconfiguration of the higher education sector
- A regional dimension to the planning and delivery of higher education

Outcomes

To measure 'A particular focus on appropriate reconfiguration of the higher education sector'

T16. Reconfiguration and Collaboration

At least 75% of the Welsh higher education institutions to have an annual income in excess of the UK median, with no institution to be in the lower quartile by 2015/16.

Monitor

Financial sustainability; extent of collaboration, including joint REF submissions

Governance

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

We recognise the essential role of governors in setting the strategic direction of autonomous institutions and in monitoring and holding executive teams accountable for the performance of institutions. In addition to their responsibilities to their own institutions, we also believe governing bodies have an important role to play in taking a holistic view of how the higher education system can best meet the needs of Wales, as well as taking account of UK and international factors which provide opportunities for their institutions.

Governing bodies need to reflect appropriately the diversity of the communities they serve, demonstrate the necessary vision and leadership, and provide support to executive teams to move beyond the constraints of current, essentially historical, sector structures and practices where doing so will strengthen Welsh higher education provision.

We will develop further our strategic engagement process with higher education institutions, one aim of which is to strengthen governance across the sector. In so doing we will be mindful of the burden of accountability on institutions and maintain a strategic focus.

We will support collaborative work between institutions in their efforts to improve governance, leadership and management, and the sharing of resources to improve efficiency and effectiveness, gaining from UK-wide approaches. We will continue to build on existing good practice, identifying current and future governance developmental needs and promoting or encouraging new programmes of development and frameworks of support. We will work with institutions to encourage effective student representation within institutional governance arrangements.

In the area of Governance we are working particularly towards the *For our Future* expectations to:

- Promote the civic role of higher education providers and their role as corporate citizens
- Review institutional governance in higher education

Outcome

To measure institutional governance in higher education

T17. Governance

No higher education institution to be classified as 'high risk' in accordance with HEFCW institutional risk review processes.

Monitor

Financial performance and forecasts of institutions; Estates management data; performance in relation to sustainable development

Organisational Effectiveness

Objective: Be a well run and cost effective organisation which will work productively in partnership with the Welsh Government and higher education providers, individually and collectively.

HEFCW is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body with statutory responsibilities to administer funds made available by the Welsh Government to support education and research by higher education institutions in Wales, and certain higher education courses at further education colleges. We also accredit providers of initial teacher training for school teachers and commission research to improve the standards of teachers and teacher training. Our statutory responsibilities also provide for the assessment of quality

We seek to take forward the remit we are given by the Welsh Government, in a way which will secure the delivery of its priorities using mechanisms which reflect higher education missions and values. To achieve this, we work closely in partnership with HE and FE institutions, the HE sector, funded bodies and other organisations to support and advance higher education in Wales, the UK and internationally.

We strive to use the resources available to us to support the sector, through strategies and initiatives, as well as through the development of robust transparent funding methods, designed to ensure the most efficient and focussed use of those resources. We are conscious of the burden which may be placed on the sector through our processes and procedures and we aim to keep to a minimum our requests for information. Our administration of fee planning, underpinned by legislation, is an important contribution to equality of opportunity for students and the promotion of higher education by HE providers in Wales. We expect to see the fee plan become a key driver for policy in future.

We also have statutory responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity, including performance in the higher education sector. Our Strategic Equality Plan 2012-13 – 2015-16 includes equality objectives and an action plan for the period. Our statutory responsibilities also cover freedom of information and data protection. From 2016 we will take on additional statutory responsibilities which ensure that sustainable development is our central organising principle and a requirement to set objectives and report on performance.

We aim to be an employer of choice. We believe our employees are our most valuable asset. The achievement of our vision and mission can only be met if we make full use of and deploy effectively the resources and talents available through our staff. This can only be done by recognising and valuing individual differences in employees and potential employees, and how these differences may be harnessed to build a strong and diverse organisation.

Target outcomes

T1. Widening Access

A 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 bottom quintile of wards in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas, from 20.0% in 2011/12 to 22.4% in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.8%)

T2. Participation

An increase in the proportion of all UK domiciled students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales who are from UK low participation areas from 33.2% in 2011/12 to 35.3% in 2015/16 (a rise of 6.3%).

T3. Retention

- (a) A decrease in the percentage of full-time undergraduate students no longer in higher education following year of entry from 9.2% in 2011/12 to 8.2% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%); and*
- (b) a decrease in the percentage of part-time first degree students no longer in higher education two years following year of entry from 33.7% in 2011/12 to 30.1% in 2015/16 (a drop of 10.7%).*

T4. Part-time

The percentage change in the number of part-time students attending higher education courses in Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions to be equal to, or greater than, the comparable figure for the UK.

T5. National Student Survey

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.

T6. Welsh Medium

The number of students studying higher education courses at Welsh higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales undertaking at least 5 credits of their course through the medium of Welsh, per annum, will rise from 4,335 in 2011/12 to 5,600 in 2015/16, including a rise from 2,269 to 3,030 in the number of those studying at least 40 credits per annum.

T7. Overseas Students

The percentage change year on year 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).

T8. Quality

All institutions being reviewed in the Corporate Strategy period to meet the UK thresholds for quality and standards in the QAA Institutional Review

T9. Initial Teacher Training

Welsh Government intake targets for ITT undergraduate primary, postgraduate primary, undergraduate secondary, postgraduate secondary priority and postgraduate secondary other subjects to be met annually.

T10. Employment

The proportion of leavers from Welsh higher education institutions obtaining undergraduate qualifications who were employed, studying or both six months after leaving will be equal to, or greater than, the UK proportion.

T11. Employability

The proportion of leavers who were working or working and studying who were working in a managerial/professional job six months after leaving to rise from 67.5% in 2010/11 to 72.7% in 2015/16 (a rise of 7.7%).

T12. Continuing Professional Development

The total number of learners day delivered by Welsh higher education institutions for continuing professional development will rise from 202,498 in 2011/12 to 226,000 in 2015/16 (a rise of 11.6%).

T13. Collaborative Research Income

The total amount of income from collaborative research involving both public funding and funding from business will rise from £65,253k in 2011/12 to £72,000k in 2015/16 (a rise of 10.3%).

T14. Research Council Income

The annual percentage change in income from Research Councils will exceed the comparable figure for UK higher education institutions (excluding the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London).

T15. Research Excellence Framework

An increased proportion of research submitted to REF by Welsh higher education institutions will achieve 3 and 4* in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 from a baseline of 35% at 3* and 14% at 4* in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.*

T16. Reconfiguration and Collaboration

At least 75% of the Welsh higher education institutions to have an annual income in excess of the UK median, with no institution to be in the lower quartile by 2015/16.

T17. Governance

No higher education institution to be classified as 'high risk' in accordance with HEFCW institutional risk review processes.

Notes

Annex B

¹ assemblywales.org - business home - business committees - business committees - scrutiny committees - The Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales

² www.hefcw.ac.uk - about he in wales - statistics - business communities survey HEBCIS

³ www.heacademy.ac.uk - assets - documents - nations - wales - Review of the Widening Access and Reaching Wider Strategies in Wales

⁴ Universities increased the proportion of Welsh domiciled students from the *Communities First* most disadvantaged areas of Wales from 15.6% (2008/09) to 17.1% (2011/12).

⁵ www.jrf.org.uk - publications - monitoring poverty and social exclusion wales 2011.

⁶ www.esrc.ac.uk - my esrc - Volunteering: Supporting Transitions

⁷ www.hefcw.ac.uk - policy areas - business and communities - publications - The Impact of International and EU students in Wales

⁸ www.hefcw.ac.uk - publications - corporate documents - Corporate strategy 2010-2013

⁹ wales.gov.uk - topics - housing and community - regeneration - communities first

¹⁰ www.hefcw.ac.uk - publications - circulars 2011 W11/14HE Fee Plan Guidance

¹¹ wales.gov.uk - topics - education and skills - publications - guidance - Welsh Medium Education Strategy

¹² www.uhovi.ac.uk/

¹³ www.heacademy.ac.uk - assets - nations - wales - Review of the Widening Access and Reaching Wider Strategies in Wales

¹⁴ The *For our Future* expectations listed under each Strategic Theme are taken from the expectations given in bold in *For our Future*, or include text from *For our Future*.

¹⁵ Outcomes are phrased against the expectations given in bold in *For our Future*, text from *For our Future*, HEFCW's statutory responsibilities or other key objectives of the Council.

¹⁶ unistats.direct.gov.uk/

¹⁷ www.hefcw.ac.uk - publications - circulars- circulars 2010 - W10/02 HE Mechanisms for Supporting the Enhancement of Learning Opportunities

¹⁸ www.hefcw.ac.uk - publications - circulars - W08/12HE Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales

¹⁹ www.hefcw.ac.uk - policy areas - business and communities - skills employability

²⁰ wales.gov.uk - topics - business and economy - policy - innovation wales