Subject Benchmark Statement

Welsh: Draft for consultation

April 2016

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How can I use this document?

This document is a Subject Benchmark Statement for Welsh that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of programmes of study in Welsh or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying Welsh, or a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate in Welsh.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) glossary.[1]

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[1] The QAA glossary is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.

About Subject Benchmark Statements

Subject Benchmark Statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) which sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.[2] They are a component of Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, which includes the Expectation that higher education providers 'consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements' in order to secure threshold academic standards.[3]

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

Subject Benchmark Statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community. Further guidance about programme design, development and approval, learning and teaching, assessment of students, and programme monitoring and review is available in Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality of the Quality Code in the following Chapters:[4]

- *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*
- *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*
- *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*
- *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.*

For some subject areas, higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to the Subject Benchmark Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing programmes. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, national occupational standards and industry or employer expectations. In such cases, the Subject Benchmark Statement may provide additional guidance around academic standards not covered by these requirements.[5] The relationship between academic and professional or regulatory requirements is made clear within individual statements, but it is the responsibility of individual higher education providers to decide how they use this information. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Subject Benchmark Statements are written and maintained by subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA. In order to ensure the continuing currency of Subject Benchmark Statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently.

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[2] The Quality Code, available at www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code, aligns with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, available at: www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf.

[3] Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a.

[4] Individual Chapters are available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b.

[5] See further Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a.

Relationship to legislation

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example, by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Subject Benchmark Statement where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.[6]

Equality and diversity

The Quality Code embeds consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, whilst also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in, and responsibility for, promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning.

In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

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[6] See further the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General Introduction*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181.

About this Subject Benchmark Statement

This Subject Benchmark Statement refers to bachelor's degrees in the subject.[7]

This version of the statement forms its third edition, following initial publication of the Subject Benchmark Statement in 2002 and review and revision in 2007.[8]

Note on alignment with higher education sector coding systems

Programmes of study which use this Subject Benchmark Statement as a reference point are generally classified under the following codes in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS).[9]

Q560   (Welsh)
Q561   (Welsh literature)

Summary of changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement 2007

Welsh as a subject has not changed fundamentally since the previous version of the Subject Benchmark Statement. Recent years, however, have seen increased provision in fields such as creative writing, sociolinguistics and language planning, as well as the further development of provision with a vocational focus (commonly referred to as 'Professional Welsh'). As a result, and in view of the development of degree programmes that include Welsh as a major though not necessarily sole element, fewer core and common elements are included here as compared to previous versions.

The Statement builds on those previous versions but has been revised to be more concise and user friendly and to include recent changes in emphasis. The Statement reflects the wide range of elements that constitute Welsh as a subject, including its linguistic, literary and creative aspects.

Welsh continues to be a dynamic and relevant subject for students, providers and employers, who constitute the three inter-related audiences addressed by the Statement.

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[7] Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2008) and at level 10 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (2001).
[8] Further information is available in the *Recognition scheme for Subject Benchmark Statements*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190.
[9] Further information about JACS is available at: www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649.

1   Defining principles

1.1   Welsh is a broad and varied academic subject that encompasses the language and its literature, from its historical beginnings to the present day, methods of using and promoting the language in a modern context and ensuring that it continues to prosper in the future. Studying Welsh fosters a flexible and open-minded attitude and also the ability to evaluate different concepts and to present them using appropriate spoken and written language; it enables students to discuss and interpret the cultures and values of the past as well as developments in the modern world.

1.2   The contribution made by the subject is central in realising the aspiration of creating a bilingual country. On a national level, the subject contributes to a wide range of fields that characterise a modern civic society, from education to broadcasting, from publishing to theatre, from politics to administration, from language planning to the heritage industry, from journalism to tourism, from translating to marketing. The legislation in place to protect the Welsh language and advance its use means that there are now more employment opportunities for graduates in the subject than ever.

1.3   The discipline that is fostered among students studying the subject considers the form, structure and language of texts, their cultural context, their historical significance and literary merit, the concepts reflected in them, and the relationship between Welsh and other fields. Students have the chance to study the inter-relationship of literary texts and the relationship between literature and other media, including the presence of Welsh in the digital world. The study of the language itself encompasses its history and development, its social context, grammar and vocabulary.

1.4   Degree schemes in Welsh:
* encourage enthusiasm for the subject by means of a broad and balanced curriculum
* enable students to appreciate the cultural and social significance of Welsh
* offer an exciting and satisfying teaching and learning experience
* foster a range of subject-specific skills together with other generic skills, i.e. a range of skills that are valuable for a variety of different vocations, including communication skills, literacy skills, analytical skills, critical skills, research skills, the ability to think in the abstract and the ability to cooperate
* help students to understand and appreciate the expressional power of language
* foster the habit of reading literature in a critical and analytical fashion
* develop an understanding of the creative process and of the value of works of literature
* lay a foundation for further study within the subject itself and within related areas
* equip graduates with a range of subject-specific and generic skills that will qualify them for the workplace.

2 The nature and scope of Welsh as a subject

2.1 It is possible to study Welsh as a single and a joint honours subject in several higher education institutions in Wales and also as part of other schemes. Welsh is usually the medium of instruction and assessment. This statement is central to degree schemes in which Welsh is a substantial element (at least 80 credits at Level 5 or 6 on the FHEQ), including distance learning schemes and lifelong learning provision. It also relates to Welsh studies schemes, where there is an emphasis on learning the language and where a number of texts are studied in the original language.

2.2 Students from a various linguistic backgrounds will study Welsh, including some without previous experience in the language. Nevertheless, the same language standards will be expected of all graduates in Welsh. A central feature of every degree scheme will be the means proposed to maintain these standards both in writing and orally.

2.3 The subject's core is the Welsh language, its nature, history and current position, and Welsh literature in all periods. Literary studies may include drama, film, television, radio, new media, journalism, folklore and creative writing. Welsh is characterised by its long history and the strength of its literary tradition. Degree schemes vary. Some offer the opportunity for detailed study of particular periods, or of types of literature, or aspects of the language's history and development. Language studies can include areas such as linguistics, dialect, bilingualism, translating, language planning and policy. There is an increasing demand in education, central and local government, the media and the business world for people who are able to work confidently through the medium of Welsh in speech and writing. There is a broad provision of modules to satisfy that demand, including translating, subtitling, language planning and business skills. In these areas, greater emphasis is placed on practical language skills than on the history of the language and its literature. The subject has an international dimension, including the language and cultures of Welsh communities across the world.

2.4 A degree in the subject can include studying one or more of the other Celtic languages and their literatures, works in other languages and similar multilingual situations. A fruitful relationship exists between Welsh and a number of other academic disciplines. The study of Welsh offers many opportunities for interdisciplinary and comparative studies and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol facilitates the study of a wide variety of subjects through the medium of Welsh, alongside the subject itself.

3   Subject knowledge and skills

Subject knowledge

3.1   Graduates who have studied the subject will have knowledge about a range of the following:

- literature from different periods from the Middle Ages to the present day
- the structure, development and history of the Welsh language, its use and its fundamental relationship with the identity of the Welsh people
- local and social variations of contemporary Welsh and attitudes towards them
- the relationship of the Welsh language and its literature with other cultures and languages
- the impact of language, culture, economics and technology on the way that texts are created and interpreted, where and by who
- the readers' role in forming the meaning of texts
- the relationship of the Welsh language with technology and media of all types
- different areas of applied linguistics, such as language planning and policy, language acquisition, bilingualism and multilingualism, discourse analysis, and translating
- linguistic, literary, critical, and theoretical concepts and terminology, including those especially associated with Welsh (for example, cynghanedd).

Subject-specific skills

3.2   Graduates who have studied the subject will be able to:

- write standard Welsh in a clear and effective way
- produce spoken and written Welsh that is appropriate for a range of situations
- read texts in detail and in a critical fashion
- analyse texts and discourses using appropriate methodologies, theories and terminology
- respond critically to the expressional power of language
- develop independent and intelligent interpretations of literary, linguistic, critical, creative and digital texts
- convey a critical understanding of complex texts and ideas (and relate them to their specific historic context, where appropriate)
- understand, describe and evaluate the impact of diverse economic, social, political and cultural developments on the Welsh language
- apply bibliographical, literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to the subject
- produce/adapt creative texts and/or texts intended for different media and situations
- understand material produced in another language or other languages and translate and/or translanguage it into Welsh in a way that is consistent with the characteristics of the language.

Generic skills and graduate skills

3.3   Graduates who have studied Welsh will be effective researchers, proficient communicators and active learners. They will have the ability to contribute strongly to the culture of the Welsh language and will be in demand from employers in a multitude of fields.

3.4   Graduates who have studied Welsh will be effective researchers.
They will be able to:

- find and analyse complex and diverse information, opinions and arguments by employing suitable information technology skills
- respond to research tasks in a creative and intelligent way
- realise their own projects
- present information within wider contexts
- test, interpret, and analyse information in an independent, thorough and critical fashion, drawing convincing conclusions and making decisive judgements
- plan, organise, produce, edit and submit work in a professional form within specified time limits.

3.5   Graduates who have studied Welsh will possess well-developed communication skills.
They will be able to:

- express their own ideas and the ideas of others in a concise, proficient, accurate and convincing fashion, both orally and in writing
- develop effective working relationships with others in teams by means of constructive discussions (for example, through listening, asking and answering questions)
- demonstrate cultural and linguistic sensitivity in working with others.

3.6   Graduates who have studied Welsh will be active and keen lifelong learners.
They will be able to:

- adapt to meet the requirements of various tasks
- appreciate the importance of giving and receiving feedback
- evaluate their own practices and hypotheses and reflect upon them
- look beyond the actual task at hand to see the wider context, including the social and/or commercial effects of their work
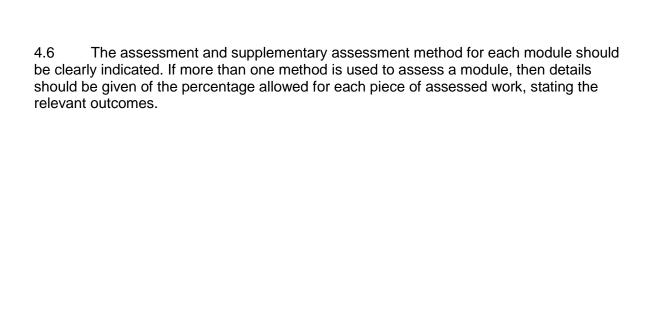- initiate their own work and take responsibility for it.

4　Learning, teaching and assessment

Learning and teaching methods

4.1　The subject makes use of a range of various learning methods. Discussion and interaction are an essential part of the educational process as regards the subject itself and they give students an opportunity to nurture generic skills. Reading lists are also essential for promoting independent learning.

4.2　Electronic means of teaching and learning are also appropriate in most contexts, including distance learning.

4.3　The programme specification of each scheme will clearly show the breadth of learning and teaching methods provided for students. They will include a diverse range of the following, depending on the aim of the individual module:

- lectures
- seminars
- tutorials
- language classes
- text-reading classes
- fieldwork
- work experience
- workshops
- directing a dissertation or project
- directed learning
- independent learning
- e-learning.

Assessment

4.4　Assessment may be either formative or summative and the process should provide constructive and timely feedback to students. For that reason, every degree scheme in the subject should have the following:

- an assessment strategy that complements the aims of modules
- a variety of assessment methods that enable students to demonstrate a range of attainments and skills
- clear assessment criteria, especially in relation to the assessment of oral presentations and collaborative work.

4.5　The various approved assessment methods may include:

- examinations
- language tests and exercises
- coursework (including essays and reviews)
- project work (which may be collaborative)
- extended essay
- oral assessment (including formal presentations and seminar contributions)
- work experience (including formal reports, keeping a reflective diary)
- activities that assess particular skills (including information technology, appropriate referencing, producing bibliographies, designing questionnaires, organising fieldwork)
- folio work, including creative writing and translation exercises.

4.6   The assessment and supplementary assessment method for each module should be clearly indicated. If more than one method is used to assess a module, then details should be given of the percentage allowed for each piece of assessed work, stating the relevant outcomes.

5   Benchmark standards

Introduction

5.1   In this section attainment levels are expressed in terms of learning outcomes. They describe what students are expected to be able to achieve after graduating with an honours degree in the subject.

5.2   Three levels of attainment are described:

- threshold, or the minimum attainment expected for the award of an honours degree
- typical, or the attainment expected from the majority of honours students
- excellence, or the attainment expected from excellent students.

5.3   Normally, a hierarchy of terms is used such as 'ability', 'sound ability' and 'developed ability' to differentiate between the attainment levels.

5.4   It is hereby acknowledged, and is also acknowledged in Section 3, 'Subject knowledge and skills', that there is more than one type of degree course in Welsh, and that the focus on skills and expertise can vary. For example, in some degree courses the students will develop creative writing skills or specific skills relating to historical aspects of the language: yet, not every student will choose the same path. In this section, therefore, attention is given to those elements that are considered to be at the core of the range of courses.

5.5   In determining the class to be awarded, weak performance in one aspect may be counterbalanced by a stronger performance in another. Consideration will be given to language attainment when determining the mark for each module.

5.6   Students may gain an honours degree in the subject if they possess the necessary knowledge and understanding to enable them to present facts and arguments at threshold level, but an honours degree scheme in the subject aims to encourage students to reach the typical level, at least, and to produce students who will:

- be able to gather and evaluate information independently
- be able to reason and analyse critically
- be able to present facts and arguments proficiently and effectively
- possess a good number of personal and generic skills, for example in communication, research, interpersonal skills and information and communication technology.

5.7   Students who are judged outstanding will perform at a level significantly higher than typical and will demonstrate elements of mastery and exact understanding of their subject, as well as originality and discernment.

Threshold level

5.8   Graduates (honours) for whom Welsh was a substantial part of their degree courses will be able to demonstrate:

- a knowledge of the subject, over the breadth of the curriculum as defined in section 3, 'Subject knowledge and skills'
- a grasp of the syntax and attributes of Welsh
- an ability to recognise, appreciate and employ the expressional power of language
- standard communication skills in speech and writing
- a grasp of the technical terms and vocabulary of the discipline

- a knowledge and understanding of a range of authors, texts and literary genres in Welsh literature from different periods
- an ability to employ language for creative and imaginative purposes
- familiarity with the chief information sources in the field and an ability to gather information from a variety of sources
- familiarity with a number of the ideas and values presented through the language and its literature, from different periods
- an ability to evaluate primary and secondary sources
- an ability to analyse familiar literary texts
- an ability to respond to an opinion and to express a personal opinion
- an ability to summarise the ideas and arguments of others.

Typical level

5.9 Graduates (honours) for whom Welsh was a substantial part of their degree courses will be able to demonstrate:

- an extensive and sound knowledge of the subject, over the breadth of the curriculum as defined in section 3, 'Subject knowledge and skills'
- a sound grasp of the syntax and attributes of the Welsh language, together with an extensive, rich and detailed vocabulary
- a sound ability to recognise, appreciate and employ the expressional power of language
- clear and effective communication skills, in an appropriate style, in speech and writing, across a range of contexts
- a good grasp of the technical terms and vocabulary of the discipline
- a sound knowledge and understanding of a range of authors, texts and literary genres in Welsh literature from different periods, and the ability to compare them and place them in their broader historical, literary and linguistic context
- a sound knowledge of the standard information sources in the field and an ability to gather relevant and reliable information from a substantial number of written, oral and electronic sources and use it intelligently and to effect
- familiarity with a good number of the ideas and values presented through the language and its literature from different periods and the ability to respond critically to them
- an ability to evaluate primary and secondary sources in a sound and balanced way and to use them to effect
- an ability to analyse familiar and unfamiliar literary texts critically and in detail, and to respond to them in an intelligent and balanced way
- an ability to respond to an opinion, to express a balanced personal opinion, and to present and develop an argument in a clear and logical fashion
- an ability to summarise the ideas and arguments of others in a fair and balanced way.

Excellence level

5.10 Graduates (honours) for whom Welsh was a substantial part of their degree courses will be able to demonstrate:

- an excellent grasp of the syntax and attributes of Welsh
- a developed ability to recognise, appreciate and employ the expressional power of language
- accurate, clear and effective communication skills, in an appropriate style, in speech and writing, across a wide range of contexts
- an excellent grasp of the technical terms and vocabulary of the discipline

- an excellent knowledge and understanding of a range of authors, texts and literary genres in Welsh literature from different periods, and a developed ability to compare them and place them in their broader historical, literary and linguistic context
- an excellent knowledge of the standard information sources in the field and an ability to gather relevant and reliable information from a wide range of written, oral and electronic sources and use it incisively and to effect
- a mastery of a wide range of the ideas and values presented through the language and its literature and a developed ability to respond critically to them
- a developed ability to evaluate primary and secondary sources in an incisive and balanced way and use them to effect
- a developed ability to analyse familiar and unfamiliar literary texts critically and in detail, and to respond to them in an incisive and balanced way
- a developed ability to respond to an opinion and to express a mature personal opinion, and present and develop an extended argument clearly, logically and coherently
- a developed ability to summarise the ideas and arguments of others in a fair and balanced way.

Appendix 1: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the Subject Benchmark Statement Welsh

Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement Welsh (2015)

Dr Cathryn Charnell-White	Aberystwyth University
Dr Dylan Foster Evans	Cardiff University
Professor Jane Cartrwright	University of Wales Trinity St David
Dr Aled Llion Jones	Bangor University
Dr Cynfael Lake	Swansea University
Professor Peredur I Lynch	Cymdeithas Astudiaethau'r Gymraeg
Professor Gerwyn Wiliams (Chair)	Bangor Univesity
Dr Rhiannon Heledd Williams	University of South Wales
Employers' representatives	Dr Huw Meirion Edwards, Welsh Books Council
	Mr Andrew Hawke (Secretary), University of Wales Dictionary
Student reader	Steffan Bryn
QAA officer	Dan Murch

Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement Welsh (2007)

Details below appear as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement.

Dr Dylan Foster Evans	Cardiff University
Dr Ian Hughes	Aberystwyth University
Dr Christine Jones	University of Wales, Lampeter
Dr Cynfael Lake	Swansea University
Professor Peredur I Lynch (Secretary)	Association for the Study of Welsh Language and Literature/Bangor University
Professor Gerwyn Wiliams	Bangor University
Professor Gruffydd Aled Williams (Chair)	Association for the Study of Welsh Language and Literature/Aberystwyth University

Membership of the original benchmark statement group for Welsh (2002)

Details below appear as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement for Welsh.

Professor Sioned Davies	Cardiff University
Dr Bleddyn Owen Huws	University of Wales, Aberystwyth
Dr E Wyn James	Cardiff University
Professor Branwen Jarvis	University of Wales, Bangor
Professor Dafydd Johnston	University of Wales, Swansea
Professor Glyn E Jones	Cardiff University
Dr Brynley F Roberts (Chair)	
Professor D A Thorne	University of Wales, Lampeter
Professor Gruffydd Aled Williams	University of Wales, Aberystwyth