

ColegauCymru / CollegesWales

ColegauCymru and its Mission

ColegauCymru is the representative body for all of Wales' further education colleges and institutions. It is an educational charity and company limited by guarantee. The charity's Trustees are comprised of the principals of Wales' further education colleges.

Its mission is to raise the profile of further education with key decision-makers to improve opportunities for learners in Wales.

Influencing Policy

ColegauCymru represents colleges to decision makers and their influencers on policy issues that affect post-16 education and training, including the links between education and the economy, health and wellbeing.

It develops and promotes policy responses to key issues, publishes policy statements, and takes an active role in Assembly scrutiny committees' calls for evidence and consultations by a range of organisations, and represents the sector on key committees, task & finish and advisory groups.

Current research in development includes work on the economic impact of colleges; SMEs' skills utilisation in the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors; developing suggestions for an improved quality assessment regime for higher education in colleges; and considering the impact of the three regional skills plans on poverty, economic growth and resilience.

Raising Awareness of the Value of Further Education

Repeated employer skills surveys show that Wales has skills gaps covering soft/ employability skills as well as key technical skills.

ColegauCymru supports initiatives that promote and demonstrate the value of vocational skills, including Skills Competitions Wales, WorldSkills UK, and VQ Day - in partnership with others.

Colleges are proving to be strong performers in developing vocational learners and apprentices to world class standards. In addition, most further education colleges offer A levels, and meet or exceed the UK attainment rates each year with strong university provision. Indeed, one college has been named an Oxbridge Hub.

Improving Quality in Post-16 Education & Training

CollegesWales provides a range of professional services to its members. It also extends a number of its services to non-members in the post-16 education and training sector.

For example, it:

- coordinates a wide range of professional networks on its CPD portal, Moodle, and delivers CPD programmes for practitioners and managers in FE
- focuses on raising quality in teaching and learning through a series of conferences and international study visits and recognising good practice through the ColegauCymru Awards
- assists colleges to increase the type and range of opportunities available to students through the medium of Welsh, or through a Welsh/English bilingual mix at all levels including transition to higher education, and extending to both in-class as well as social and extra-curricular opportunities.

Coordinating and Delivering Projects that Benefit Further Education

ColegauCymru acts as a coordination point and lead organisation on a range of national-level projects that help develop staff or that provide significant learning opportunities for students. Activities include:

International

ColegauCymru organises and supports opportunities for college staff to undertake overseas study visits focusing on improving quality and innovation, job shadowing with international counterparts, and developing strategic partnerships with international partners.

It also helps college students and apprentices to broaden their horizons through coordinating a programme of work placements overseas and cultural exchanges.

In addition, ColegauCymru is the lead contact point for the coordination and/or delivery of a range of European qualifications programmes in Wales. | www.skillsforeurope.wales

Sport

Thanks to part-funding by Sport Wales, ColegauCymru has been able to bring national coordination and a higher profile to physical activity and sports in Wales' colleges. The three areas of focus are: supporting opportunities to develop elite level sportsmen and women; student volunteering and peer-led developments; physical activity among under-represented groups. | www.welshcollegessport.wales

Preparing the way for Wales' new qualifications

Ahead of the introduction of the Essential Digital Literacy Skills qualification for teaching from September 2015, ColegauCymru managed the Digital Literacy Practitioners Programme, developing, piloting and delivering training for practitioners in further education, work based learning and adult & community learning.

ColegauCymru is also developing and delivering CPD for teaching staff in post-16 education and training in preparation for the introduction of the new GCSEs.

Safe college communities

Having previously revised the Safe Learning Communities Guidance and Self-Assessment Toolkit with Estyn and FE partners, ColegauCymru is now working with the Home Office's HE and FE Prevent Coordinator for Wales to deliver training to key staff on the 'Prevent Duty' (introduced in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) in order to help prevent people in further education institutions and independent training providers from being drawn into terrorism.

Leadership and management

ColegauCymru developed and delivered the University of South Wales' MA in Leadership & Management (FE), and its Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership and Management aimed at middle and senior managers within FE and HE and the wider learning and skills sector. The programmes closed for new enrolments at the end of 2015.

Financial inclusion

ColegauCymru was the Wales manager of the Money for Life – a UK-wide initiative by Lloyds Banking Group (2012-2015) that trained young people's advisors, mentors and tutors on financial inclusion matters and which coordinated a high profile UK-wide annual money management competition for young people aged 16-25.

Further Information
