



ACADEMY WALES NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

WELCOME

Welcome to the Spring 2010 edition of the Academy Wales newsletter. This newsletter provides information on our latest work in Wales and across the UK, as well as forthcoming events of interest to Welsh HEIs.

This newsletter, along with other Wales related resources and information, is available on our website at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/wales. If you have any feedback on this newsletter, do please get in touch. Send your feedback to wales@heacademy.ac.uk.

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If you require this newsletter in Welsh, please contact wales@heacademy.ac.uk.

NEWS

The future of the Academy

Our Executive Team and Board are in the process of reviewing the focus and priorities of the Academy as it faces challenges to its funding base. As part of reviewing focus, the Board has agreed that we should prioritise on three broad areas over the coming academic year on a UK-wide basis:

- better teaching (the quality and professionalisation of teaching) – promoting excellent teaching for all students; to include NSS and external examiners;
- flexibility of learning – supporting HEIs in being reactive to change and focusing on areas that will deliver excellence, with a greater emphasis on diversity of models of learning;
- graduates with impact – in relation to their contribution to the economy and society, which means looking at what people who have been through higher education draw from their time at university or college and how that then affects both their own lives and society and the economy; to include ESD and student engagement.

National policy developments

There have been some important national policy developments since our last newsletter. The Welsh Assembly Government has produced the ‘For our future: The 21st century higher education strategy and plan for Wales’ (<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/091125hedocen.pdf>) publication. This will pave the way for a new action plan for HE policy in Wales, and will impact on our work.

Academy priorities for 2010/11

Academy Wales is working closely with Higher Education Wales (HEW) on the priority areas for 2010/11. Employability and employee learning will be an overarching theme reflecting the importance of ‘For our future’. The priorities will be:

- quality enhancement;
- supporting and championing teaching;
- enhancing learning through technology.

Staffing Update

We have appointed a new Project Officer to support our work in Wales – Rachel Thomas. Rachel is based in the Cardiff office and can be contacted at wales@heacademy.ac.uk. More information here: www.heacademy.ac.uk/contacts/detail/academy_staff/rachel_thomas.

National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS)

Staff from Wales will be eligible from the next academic year (2010/11) to participate in the NTFS. Discussions are taking place between the Academy and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) on implementing the scheme in Wales. Please visit www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingindividuals/ntfs.

Academy support for institutions

This academic year Gabriel Jezierski's liaison with institutions, as part of our Institutional Partnership Programme (IPP), will be supported by Professor Sue Law who will be the Academy's key contact for Cardiff University and Bangor University.

Dr Nick Potter of Swansea Metropolitan University has recently joined our Institutional Partnership Programme (IPP) working group, the purpose of which is to improve the IPP and engagement between the Academy and Welsh HEIs.

Further information on IPP can be found at www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/ipp.

New e-bulletin on strategic issues

A new UK-wide e-bulletin 'Academy Connect' designed to inform Academy institutional contacts, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, is now being produced every two months to provide an update on a range of strategic issues across the UK. These are also publicly available at www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/ipp. In the forthcoming edition, themed around assessment and feedback, activity from Wales will be highlighted.

Change Academy

Economic and other pressures are ensuring that higher education is facing a challenging future. Change Academy is your opportunity to approach these challenges in an imaginative and creative way. Already, Bangor University, the University of Glamorgan, University Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), Glyndwr University, and the University of Wales, Newport have benefited from a year long process that includes specific development opportunities for nominated team leaders. Change Academy brings together cross-institutional teams and offers an on-going support network and a four-day residential where the whole team can focus on planning and developing strategies for lasting change. The deadline for proposals for the 2010–11 Change Academy is 1 April 2010. To find out more visit www.heacademy.ac.uk/changeacademy.

Improving quality, enhancing creativity

A new report recommends that quality assurance (QA) processes used in universities must allow more space for risk taking and failure. The report *Improving quality, enhancing creativity: change processes in European higher education institutions* is based on a two-year EC-funded project, conducted by European Universities Association in conjunction with the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute, Germany (ACQUIN), the Higher Education Academy and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The new report contains six recommendations which institutions and QA agencies should be able to apply in their current practices in order to enhance quality assurance processes that boost creativity.

The report can be downloaded from www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/learning/QAHECA_report.pdf.

Higher Education Student Volunteering Awards (HESVA)

HESVA is now open for entries. The Awards celebrate the diversity of the student learning experience and recognises the outstanding contributions to community volunteering made by students in higher education across the UK. HESVA is open to all UK higher education institutions. Fifteen awards are available in total. Welsh further education colleges may submit a joint nomination with a sponsoring higher education institution. Entries can be submitted across two categories:

- student volunteering awards (up to two entries per institution);
- outstanding project awards (one entry per institution).

The deadline for entries is 5pm, 31 March 2010. Entry forms, promotional materials and guidance notes can be found at www.heacademy.ac.uk/hesva.

Postgraduate student experience research

The results of our 2009 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) are now available. The two surveys offer the most extensive portrait of postgraduate student experience available, putting the Academy at the forefront of research in this area in the UK.

Looking to the future, we will run PRES and PTES on alternate years, so that each respective survey runs on a two-year cycle. This gives institutions time to interpret and respond to survey results for their students in the year after each survey has run. The next national administration of PTES will take place between February and May 2010, with PRES to run in Spring 2011.

More information on the survey and recent reports available from www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingresearch/postgraduatework.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

The all Wales ESDGC HE Group met at Glyndwr University last month. The day included presentations by the National Union of Students, and on interdisciplinarity.

In July 2009, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) hosted a conference on ESDGC to inform the future activities of HEFCW and the Welsh Assembly Government, at Glyndwr University. Academy Wales provided the conference with an ESDGC curriculum audit analysis. More information can be found here: www.hefcw.ac.uk/news/events/events_2009.aspx.

Routes into Languages, Wales

The Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies is working with the Routes into Languages programme, funded by Government and designed to encourage more young people to study languages at school and beyond, at university.

HEFCW agreed in 2009 to make £750,000 available over three years to enable collaboration between universities, The National Centre for Languages (CILT Cymru), schools and colleges to promote language learning. The scheme was launched at Cardiff City Hall on 9 February 2010. Visit www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru.

EvidenceNet

The Academy's EvidenceNet service promotes and supports the use of evidence in higher education learning and teaching: www.heacademy.ac.uk/evidencenet.

The website contains resources, events and networks, and is designed to provide individuals working in higher education with easy access to relevant evidence that can inform their practice. Since its launch in July 2009 the vast majority of content has been added by the Academy and our subject centres. From February 2010, however, the service has been expanded to allow EvidenceNet users to upload their own content as well as create case studies.

This new development will allow you to share a single item or a set of resources, or to create a dynamic link to routinely share your website's content through EvidenceNet. Visit www.heacademy.ac.uk/EvidenceNet/contribute to share your content or to make material you have found useful available on EvidenceNet. In addition, we are keen to include your experiences of using an innovative tool or technique in your capacity as a teaching and learning practitioner, and we have developed a case study submission form to make this easy. Pilots are being identified from Wales to be included in EvidenceNet.

To keep updated on future EvidenceNet developments and new content added, follow EvidenceNet on Twitter ([@hea_evidencenet](https://twitter.com/hea_evidencenet)) or sign up to our mailing list by emailing evidencenet@heacademy.ac.uk.

Capacity building in Wales

Welsh HEIs have recently received invitations to bid for funding under a JISC-led RSC Wales/HEFCW/Academy supported project on capacity building. The Building Capacity programme will enhance the application of JISC outputs and outcomes in the higher education sector. The programme will work with senior change agents in HEIs to create senior management-led change in a number of key strategic concerns that are facing institutions. More information: www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedolprogrammes/bcap.aspx.

Welsh medium

Dr Dafydd Tristan from the Centre for Welsh Medium in Higher Education is working with the Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) Subject Centre to develop a research methods (for social sciences) online programme. Visit www.porth.ac.uk.

Discussions are ongoing with Dr Ioan Matthews, Director for the Centre for Welsh Medium in Higher Education, in identifying the priority disciplines to be supported in regard to Welsh medium. Once these disciplines have been identified, the work will be linked to the relevant subject centres.

As part of Professor Sue Law's review of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) progress with the Welsh pathway of the Teaching in Higher Education (tHE) programme will be reviewed. A meeting has been organised in Bangor to allow colleagues from Welsh HEIs to contribute to this work.

Two recent publications are available in Welsh: *Profiad myfyrwyr blwyddyn gyntaf Cymru: Canllaw arfer* (www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/york/documents/ourwork/nations/wales/firstyearexperiencewales_oct09_welsh.pdf) and *Adolygiad o Strategaethau Ehangu Mynediad sefydliadol Cymru o 2006/07 i 2008/09 a'r Cynigion wedi'u Hariannu Ymgynraedd yn Ehangach 2008/10* (www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/york/documents/ourwork/nations/wales/wales_wideningaccess_rw_review_welsh_oct09.pdf).

Subject centres

The Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine Subject Centre (MEDEV) has appointed a new consultant for Wales, Dr Aidan Byrne, who is based in the School of Medicine at Swansea University.

The devolution and divergence conference was held at Cardiff University in December 2009. The event was sponsored by the Academy and three of our subject centres: Health Sciences and Practice; Social Policy and Social Work; and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. Details can be found at www.devolutionconference.co.uk

Academy Wales updates available on Twitter

Follow our updates at www.twitter.com/academywales

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Swansea University acted as a focal point for student representatives from across Wales to meet last November and discuss the role of the National Student Survey (NSS). Kate Wicklow from the National Union of Students (NUS) gave a presentation detailing issues around the NSS and how student representatives can work in partnership with their own institution to enhance assessment and feedback practices. Kate also explained the work that the NUS were involved in nationally.

The after lunch session was devoted to small discussion groups studying and comparing last year's NSS within some discipline areas across Wales and drawing out effective practices that had led to high scores in some departments. The openness of the discussion and the willingness of the student representatives to work in partnership with staff was commendable. Thanks go to Ross Gilman (Education Officer, Swansea University Students' Union) for organising the activity. The group was then invited to attend the launch of the new Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching (SALT) (www.swan.ac.uk/university/staffinformation/swanseaacademyoflearningandteaching).

The keynote address was given by Professor Brenda Smith, Consultant of the Higher Education Academy and was followed by showcasing examples of effective learning and teaching practices within Swansea University.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA now has a new institutional review methodology for Wales from 2009 onwards, with an increased focus on enhancement and student engagement. The QAA is working to build on and extend their work with students, and has uploaded a variety of very useful resources here: www.qaa.ac.uk/students/studentengagement/default.asp. The QAA has now recruited students to be full members of review teams, as they believe that students are active participants in their own education, and therefore can and should be directly involved with the sector's approaches to quality assurance and enhancement.

Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE)

WISE was launched at the Senedd in October 2009. You can find more information here www.nus.org.uk/en/campaigns/higher-education/launch-of-wales-initiative-for-student-engagement-in-the-senedd. WISE is an NUS Wales project funded by HEFCW. The project aims to help students and students' unions get involved with shaping the learning going on at their own university. You can read about the project outputs here: www.officeronline.co.uk/nations/cymru/276686.aspx.

National Student Survey (NSS)

The high quality of the student learning experience in Wales is evidenced by the NSS results. In an effort to improve these, especially in regard to assessment feedback, Swansea University hosted the event detailed above. There is more information on the NSS at www.thestudentsurvey.com/home.asp.

PUBLICATIONS

Five publications relating to our work in Wales are now available online:

Welsh widening access strategies 2006/07 to 2008/09 and the Reaching Wider funded proposals 2008/10 report: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/nations/wales/welsh_institutional_widening_access_review. This publication is available in both English and Welsh.

Quality enhancement and assurance in Wales: a changing picture: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/nations/wales/wales_quality_enhancement_report_eng_sep09.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC): Review of a curriculum audit in Wales: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/nations/wales/wales_esdgc_review_curriculum_audit_eng_jun09.

First-year student experience Wales: a practice guide: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/nations/wales/first_year_experience_wales_oct09. This publication is available in both English and Welsh.

Transforming higher education through technology-enhanced learning: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/learningandtech/transforming_he_through_technology_enhanced_learning.

Our other recent publications include:

Reward and recognition of teaching in higher education: institutional policies and their implementation

In collaboration with the University of Leicester's GENIE Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), we have produced the second report from this project. The report recommends that funding should be made available to carry out work defining and developing criteria for recognising quality in teaching. You can download it from www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/detail/2009/rewardandrecongition2.

LINK25 – Working together in Wales: learning from the Welsh experience

The Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Network is putting together a newsletter on learning, teaching, assessment and the student experience in Wales. This publication will be available in April www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/linknewsletter.

CALLS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Practitioner Research in Higher Education

Practitioner Research in Higher Education is a peer-reviewed journal for research and evaluation papers that contribute to the understanding of innovation, theory, policy, practice and educational research methods in teaching and supporting learning in higher education settings.

The online journal aims to encourage and support new as well as experienced researchers and writers in higher education. This includes collaborative work with colleagues working in partnership with universities, for example in providing work-based learning settings for students. The journal can be viewed at <http://194.81.189.19/ojs/index.php/prhe>

Please consider submitting a paper for the next issue. The deadline for submissions is 12 April 2010. To submit your paper online, please email Linda Shore linda.shore@cumbria.ac.uk for details.

Teaching and learning for international students

We have combined forces with UK Council on International Student Affairs (UKCISA) from the Prime Minister's Initiative on International Education (PMI2 initiative) to launch a new two-year project focused on teaching and learning for international students. The project focuses on the ways that lecturers and other teaching staff can better meet the diverse learning needs of international students, and in ways that will benefit all students.

The project's website www.heacademy.ac.uk/internationalstudents aims to provide a one stop shop for staff who teach international students and who are looking for networks, events and resources (both academic and practical) to support their teaching.

If you would like to promote your own international students and lecturers experiences through a case study, or have a staff development workshop hosted at your institution, please contact the team at internationalstudents@heacademy.ac.uk to discuss further.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Second ESCalate student conference. Students as stakeholders: take an active part in your own learning

16 April 2010

University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd

This is an event for staff and students (undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral) working in all fields of education. The conference will focus on issues that relate closely to students as stakeholders in their own education, incorporating themes on:

- active participation in learning;
- employability;
- student collaboration;
- the impact of new technologies on the learning process.

There will be a keynote address from Aaron Porter, Vice President of the NUS (Higher Education) on the importance of the learner voice in the 21st century. More information and registration at <http://escalate.ac.uk/studentconference>

Improving retention and success: retaining students to and through higher education

12 May 2010

The Metropole, Llandrindod Wells

A one-day conference jointly hosted by the Academy and HEFCW. This conference will explore effective ways in which institutions can improve student retention and success throughout the student lifecycle. It will include contributions from across the UK and examples of effective practice from the Welsh sector. The conference is limited to 80 delegates and we anticipate that it will be over-subscribed. For further details and booking, please see www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2010/jointevents/12_may_2010_improving_retention_and_success.

Newport NEXUS conference
14–15 June 2010
University of Wales, Newport

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Research and Enterprise Department (RED), in association with the Academy Wales are holding the Newport NEXUS conference at the Caerleon Campus, University of Wales, Newport.

NEXUS 2010 provides a platform to develop further the links between research and teaching in higher education. Linkages between research and teaching are defined broadly to include the scholarship of learning and teaching, research-informed teaching, and the research-teaching nexus.

Registration will open in March. The conference website is <http://celt.newport.ac.uk/nexus>.

Higher Education Academy Annual Conference 2010
22–23 June 2010
University of Hertfordshire

Our annual conference aims to:

- disseminate and showcase evidence informed practice from the sector;
- facilitate discussion and debate of pertinent issues relating to the student learning experience;
- provide networking and professional development opportunities for participants.

The theme of this year's conference is 'Shaping the future', exploring impacts and changes to the student learning experience over the next five years. Early bird bookings open on 15 March 2010.

www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2010/2010_annual_conference