

University of South Wales

1. On the 11 April 2013 the University of Glamorgan ‘merged’ with the University of Wales, Newport to create the University of South Wales. With campuses in Cardiff, Pontypridd and Newport, the University is renowned for its partnerships with major employers and makes an impact in the community by providing employment-focused higher education. Rooted in the communities of South Wales, the university makes an impact not only to the individual students educated from every part of the region, but to the businesses and organisations where our graduates are employed.
2. The School of Education, Early Years and Social Work has an excellent reputation within South Wales and beyond. The teacher training courses prepares skilled and confident teachers for the primary, secondary and post-compulsory sector whilst the wide range of Masters courses within the field of education provide the opportunity for continued professional development.

Response to the inquiry into the Welsh Government’s new Welsh Language Strategy

3. The University welcomes the principal of creating a long-term strategy for the Welsh language and agree that creating a workforce with the appropriate skills to educate and provide services through the medium of Welsh is a key objective.
 - improving workforce planning and support for practitioners for all phases of education; and

- ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education and teaching as a subject.
- 4. We would suggest that there is a need for consistency across Wales when reviewing Welsh language skills and capabilities. Although self-assessment and peer reviews are held regularly, there is a need for maintaining the skills and identifying training needs as appropriate. Aligning the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Welsh Language Certificate and the Welsh Language Competency Certificate for Teachers, alongside the Welsh Language Centre for Learning Welsh's work within the workplace is important to ensure consistency and progression across all phases of education.
- 5. A stronger collaboration between the private and public sectors is also needed. Employers are looking for a wider variety of skills than those that can be taught within the classroom. The University has historically identified the need for experience in the workplace to gain these additional skills and qualities and has a strong relationship with several local schools in South East Wales, which is an essential element of the students' experience and development while at university. However, if there is to be a significant growth in the number of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh, ensuring sufficient placements and work experience for each student is essential in order to develop an experienced and efficient workforce. Increasing the number of schools who work in partnership with the universities could be an effective way of developing a bilingual workforce, which would in turn ensure that enough Welsh-medium staff have real training and experience in the field.
- 6. To make significant progress however, there needs to be a significant investment in Welsh-medium schools across Wales, particularly in areas where there is a demand and the potential to increase the number of Welsh speakers significantly.

7. A vision that encompasses all stages of education could ensure continuity, consistency and ensure a language continuum that could address the significant decline in Welsh speakers between each phase of education. Understanding the context and the reasons behind this decline is also important to fully address the issues. Drawing on good practice across the sector and utilising skills and expertise would be essential to ensure the best outcomes and an efficient strategy for the future.
8. The University of South Wales is happy to contribute to the on-going discussion and is currently reviewing how we can incorporate changes into our Welsh-medium provision to ensure our Welsh-medium students, both fluent and non-fluent, are given every opportunity to maintain and develop their skills. The high number of Welsh speakers at the University, alongside the need to respond to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education in south east Wales is a strong driver for the University's strategic developments, and we will continue to respond positively to future developments in the field to contribute towards Welsh Government's vision and target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.