

Submission to the Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales

8 January 2015



THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU

CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION
DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDL

Executive Summary

Higher Education in Wales has a long and distinguished record of research and scholarship and lists amongst its many achievements several world leading activities. With a view to improving and protecting one of Wales' greatest national assets and an important economic driver, the **Learned Society of Wales (LSW)** welcomes the current review of Higher Education funding with a view to ensuring the long term financial sustainability of the Higher Education sector.

1. The LSW considers that many of the issues relating to HE funding need to be addressed soon, as the cumulative effect of a further four or five years will lead to further damage to the **competitiveness** of Higher Education Institutions in Wales, and by extension the **quality of the student experience** in Wales.
2. The LSW does not share the optimism expressed by the Minister for Education and Skills in February 2014 that the financial position of the Higher Education sector in Wales is "healthy". The Society is concerned at the large and increasing funding gap compared to other parts of the UK. Despite sustained efforts from Welsh HEIs, continued levels of underfunding per student will result in a less competitive sector, where the future learning environment and support for students will be comparatively under-resourced. This is likely to increase the number of students leaving Wales to study in England, and therefore applications from Welsh-domiciled students to study in Wales will decrease.
3. Many of those leaving Wales are better qualified students, with a high portion from more advantaged social classes. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including widening access students, who stay in Wales do not benefit from the comparatively better facilities and learning support elsewhere. This is not equitable if one believes that choice of course and institution should be based on academic criteria rather than affordability.
4. Without significant change soon, the current fee-grant support leaving Wales is likely to grow and cannot be controlled, with the result that less central funding will be available to support the crucially important activities such as innovation and engagement, premiums for expensive subjects such as medicine, part-time studies, the protection of endangered but strategically important subjects (including Welsh-medium provision and Wales-related studies), and full time postgraduate taught courses.
5. The Society has concerns that studying in Wales will be increasingly seen as a less attractive option for postgraduate students, given the lack of core funding compared to England, where, in addition to core funding, a loan system for fees is now to be implemented. **In summary, the current system of funding Welsh students and Universities is unsustainable and damaging to the sector's future prospects. A change is required quickly.**
6. We have serious concerns that the fee-grant demand, if not addressed, might inevitably encroach upon the crucially important (and relatively low) QR funding, which underpins much of Wales' productive research and economic development.
7. In the interests of equity, we propose that Welsh Government fee-grant support should be confined to those most in need. Consequently, we suggest that all Welsh-domiciled students should bear the burden of full fees, wherever they choose to study, but with means tested bursaries available in Wales, administered by the HEIs, to support all full and part-time students in most need. Students leaving Wales should qualify for existing bursaries in their HEI of choice outside Wales, but if not, they should be able to qualify for means tested support from the Welsh government.
8. Such funds as would be released should be made available to provide direct funding to universities in Wales, which will reduce the funding gap, lessen the current uncertainty and help ensure the long term sustainability of the sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Learned Society of Wales (LSW) is an all-Wales, pan-discipline educational charity, operating on an independent basis and providing public benefit including expert scholarly advice on a variety of public policy issues related to science, engineering, medicine, arts, humanities and social sciences. Established in 2010, the society has access to the considerable strengths of over 350 distinguished Fellows based in Wales, the UK and beyond.

The Mission of the Learned Society of Wales is to:

- *Celebrate and encourage excellence in all of the scholarly disciplines including the professions, industry and commerce, the arts and public service;*
- *Promote the advancement of learning and scholarship and the dissemination and application of the results of academic enquiry and research; and*
- *Act as an independent source of expert scholarly advice and commentary on matters affecting the wellbeing of Wales and its people*

The LSW welcomes the current **Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements** in Wales [the Diamond Review] and also this opportunity to respond to the formal review panel.

The funding of HE, and student finance more generally is extremely important and this review is timely given the significant long term impact on education, research, culture and the wider economy of Wales.

The Society recognises that changes to the current systems are required, but remains concerned that as the Review will not be completed until after the next Welsh Assembly elections, the implementation of recommendations are unlikely to take place for four years (2018) at the earliest.

The Society considers that many of the issues relating to HE funding could, and need, to be addressed quickly as the cumulative effect of a further four or five years will lead to future damage to both the competitiveness of Higher Education Institutions in Wales and by extension, the quality of the student experience in Wales.

2. PERFORMANCE AND AMBITIONS FOR WELSH HIGHER EDUCATION

Wales has a proud tradition of achievement in science, engineering, medicine, the arts, humanities and the social sciences. The theory of natural selection, the early development of crystallography, the discovery of free radicals and meson decay, the invention of the microphone, the fuel cell and the teleprinter, and more recently, ground-breaking research into embryonic stem cells, are all part of Wales' scientific tradition.¹ Several of Wales' universities boast examples of outstanding research – from Nobel Laureates in the life sciences research at Cardiff University, to the award-winning Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) in Aberystwyth, Bangor's impressive work in the fields of environmental protection, and Swansea's innovative advances in materials research and testing.²

Unlike bigger economies such as that of England, Welsh Higher Education secures nearly half of all the Research & Development investment coming into Wales, and produces 84% of Wales' research outputs.³ The life science industry alone is home to over 300 companies – many of which work collaboratively with academic institutions – which advance medical diagnostics, ultrasensitive drug tests, computational biology, and wound treatment⁴

The importance of the research and knowledge exchange carried out by Welsh universities is critical for Wales and is well recognised in the Welsh Government's science and innovation policies.⁵ There are few sectors of the Welsh economy with the capacity to contribute to the national economy, reputation, and generation of export earnings as successfully as its universities. Wales' universities generates £3.6billion for the Welsh economy annually, producing 3% of Welsh GDP (gross domestic product), and over £400million in export earnings through overseas revenue and international students.⁶

Over the past decade there has been considerable reconfiguration, but as this period of disruption is largely over, HEIs are now focusing their energies on their core missions and means to secure the sustainable funding needed to provide a competitive, excellent service to students, research and business.

The LSW considers that the following comprise a collective ambition for Wales' HE:

- **High quality teaching** based on **excellent staff and facilities** within Wales;
- Securing **an internationally competitive HE system** and being a **destination of choice** for both home and international students;
- **Internationally competitive research**, producing new knowledge that supports culture, the economy and the quality of life of the people in Wales and elsewhere;
- **Sustainable institutions**, with strong international reputations, offering equitable access and outstanding support to all students.

To realise these ambitions, universities in Wales will need the resources to promote a strong and credible international presence in both research and teaching. This is necessary to serve the needs of home students and also to attract the best international students and recruit the best staff.

¹ [New Frontiers; Cutting Edge Science in Wales](#), Welsh Government (2012)

² [Recognising the Quality of Research at Universities in Wales](#), Robin Williams for the Learned Society of Wales, February 2013

³ [International Comparative Performance of the Welsh Research Base](#) Elsevier, February 2014

⁴ [Science in Wales](#), *Science*, April 2013

⁵ Welsh Government, [Science for Wales – A strategic agenda](#), March 2012.

⁶ [The Economic Impact of Higher Education in Wales](#), Kelly and McNicoll, Viewforth Consulting Ltd, June 2013

We believe that Welsh-domiciled applicants should:

- Be allowed to attend the HEI, which they regard as best placed to offer them the best opportunities to fulfil their ambitions and potential.
- Be provided with financial support predicated on the principle of supporting those most in need.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Students and Staff

Following the large-scale mergers and reconfiguration over the last decade, Wales has now a smaller number of Institutions. **Table 1b** shows some of the high level figures for Wales as a sector. In 2012/13 there were 128,780 students in HE in Wales corresponding to 5.5% of the UK total and above the 4.9% standard share based on percentage of UK population. Of these 101,165 (78%) were undergraduates [5.6% of UK] and 27,620 were postgraduates [5.1% of UK]. Of the UK's non-EU students a large proportion (6.2%) come to Wales. The full-time academic staff number for 2012/13 was 5880 [4.8% of UK, of which however only 4.4% have R or R&T contracts] with part-time staff (38%) comprising 5.8% [3685].

Table 1: Summary of Students, Staff and Income in UK HE (HESA data, accessed November 2014)

Table 1a

UK Total 2012/13		
Students		2,340,275
	Undergraduates	1,803,840
	Postgraduates	536,440
Staff		382,515
	Academic	185,585
	Non-Academic	196,935
Income (£k)		29,001,324
Expenditure (£k)		27,917,931

Undergraduate Modes		
	Full-time	1,385,675
	Part-time	418,165
Undergraduate Domiciles		
	UK	1,577,440
	Other EU	79,455
	NonEU	146,945
Postgraduate Modes		
	Full-time	296,470
	Part-time	239,965
Postgraduate Domiciles		
	UK	337,575
	Other EU	45,835
	NonEU	153,025
Academic Staff Modes		
	Full-time	122,500
	Part-time	63,085

Table 1b

Wales 2012/13			% of UK
Students		128,780	5.5
	Undergraduates	101,165	5.6
	Postgraduates	27,620	5.1
Staff		20,030	5.2
	Academic	9,565	5.2
	Non-Academic	10,465	5.3
Income (£k)		1,273,006	4.4
Expenditure (£k)		1,257,464	4.5

Undergraduate Modes			% of UK
	Full-time	77,055	5.6
	Part-time	24,110	5.8
Undergraduate Domiciles			% of UK
	UK	88,120	5.6
	Other EU	3,880	4.9
	NonEU	9,160	6.2
Postgraduate Modes			% of UK
	Full-time	15,860	5.3
	Part-time	11,755	4.9
Postgraduate Domiciles			% of UK
	UK	16,235	4.8
	Other EU	1,665	3.6
	NonEU	9,715	6.3
Academic Staff Modes			% of UK
	Full-time	5,880	4.8
	Part-time	3,685	5.8

Table 1c

Scotland 2012/13		% of UK
Students	214,785	9.2
Undergraduates	162,025	9.0
Postgraduates	52,760	9.8
Undergraduate Modes		
Full-time	136,060	9.8
Part-time	25,965	6.2
Postgraduate Modes		
Full-time	30,995	10.5
Part-time	21,765	9.1
Income (£k)	3,022,883	10.4
Expenditure (£k)	2,922,519	10.5

Table 1d

England 2012/13		% of UK
Students	1,944,995	83.1
Undergraduates	1,499,870	83.1
Postgraduates	445,125	83.0
Undergraduate Modes		
Full-time	1,140,600	82.3
Part-time	359,270	85.9
Postgraduate Modes		
Full-time	244,730	82.5
Part-time	200,395	83.5
Income (£k)	24,343,663	83.5
Expenditure (£k)	23,261,096	83.3

*In the 2011 Census England accounted for 83.9% of the UK population (53 million), Scotland accounted for 8.3% of the UK population (5.3 million), Wales accounted for 4.9.% of the UK population (3 million) in 2011 Census data.

3.2 Undergraduate recruitment:

Table 1b shows that 76% of the undergraduates at Welsh Universities are full-time. **Table 2** shows the 2014/15 UCAS data for full-time undergraduate entry, demonstrating a total of 21,990 acceptances by **Welsh HEIs**, where some 52% were Welsh domiciled applicants.⁷

Of the 19,560 **Welsh-domiciled applicants** accepted at UK HEIs, 41% were accepted by **HEIs in England**.

Over the past 5 years, (**Table 2**), there has been a discernable fall of **some 20%** in the number of Welsh-domiciled acceptances in Wales, from a peak of well over 14,000 in 2009, to 11,400 in 2014; the number of acceptances of Welsh students in England increased **by 29%** over the same period. At the same time, the number of applicants accepted from England to Welsh HEIs has remained roughly constant. In Scotland, by comparison, the pattern of acceptances has remained steady save for a small decline in acceptances to England.

Table 2: UCAS Acceptances by intended entry year, country of domicile and country of institution

Domicile of Applicant	Institution	Entry Year					
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
England	England	341759	343242	361070	311630	343010	355570
	Scotland	4724	3682	3410	3830	4180	4640
	Wales	9584	10367	12030	9180	10300	10590
Scotland	England	1737	1764	1800	1400	1540	1530
	Scotland	29277	30194	27230	27550	27970	28530
	Wales	58	56	70	50	60	60
Wales	England	5710	6329	6640	7200	7380	8040
	Northern Ireland	12	8	10	0	10	10
	Scotland	133	107	90	120	110	110
	Wales	14335	12203	11490	11230	11090	11400

⁷ [Interim assessment of UCAS acceptances by intended entry year, country of institution and qualifications held](#), 23 September 2014, UCAS Analysis and Research

3.3 Income

Table 1b shows that the total income to Welsh HEIs amounts to 4.4% of the UK HE sector. To reach funding at its population level of 4.9% of the UK [Wales standard share as a proportion of UK population] would require additional funding in the order of at least £148M per annum for Wales, equivalent to around £1150 per student. To secure an estimate of the regional differences in current investment per student capita, one can divide the total HE Sector income of each nation, by the total number of students (UG and PG) of the respective nation, (Table 3).

Table 3: Potential Investment per student capita

Nation	Income of HE Sector (£)	Number of Students (UG and PG)	Investment per capita (£)
UK (baseline)	29,001,275	2,340,275	12,392
England	24,343,663	1,944,995	12,516
Scotland	3,022,883	214,785	14,074
Wales	1,273,006	128,780	9,885

If one uses the UK figure as the baseline, the Welsh HE sector calculation shows a potential investment deficit of £2,500 per student capita. By comparison, the equivalent figures for the Scottish HE Sector show additional per capita investment of over £1600, in addition to the UK baseline figure. This equates to a per capita investment of over £4000 more per student difference than the Welsh HE Sector. The English figures broadly reflect the UK baseline, which might be expected given it constitutes more than four-fifths (83.5%) of the UK HE Sector.

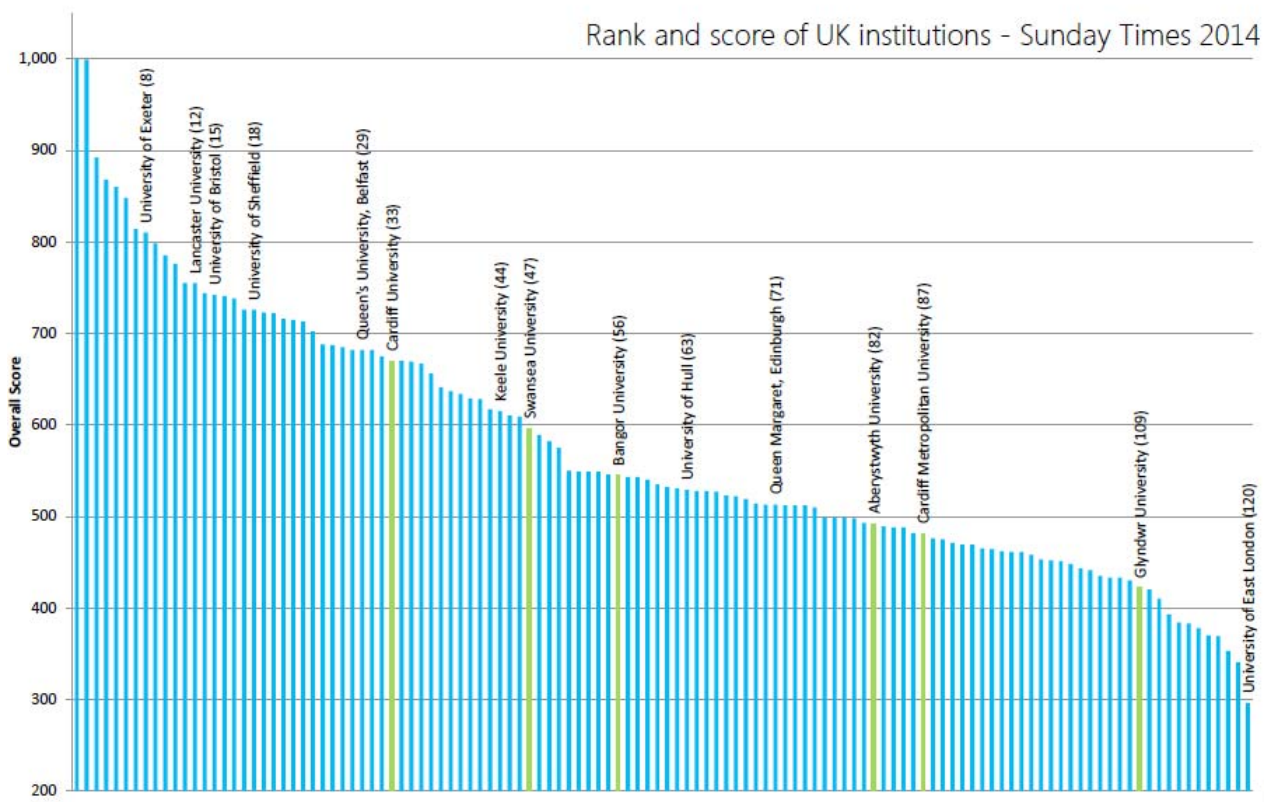
The overall picture of Wales relative to other UK regions, is of a sector which recruits more than its expected share of home and overseas students, but secures a significantly smaller share of income resource.

4. SECTOR REPUTATION AND SECURING AN INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE HE SYSTEM FOR WALES

4.1 Few issues are more important in the competition for good students, at a time of tight economic and political challenge, than reputation. The reputation of universities constitutes their most valuable asset, and remains a marker of intrinsic quality and future potential. Universities exist in a highly competitive marketplace, competing for students, staff and money to deliver and demonstrate excellence.

Despite comprising a wide and diverse range of universities where mission, discipline mix, history, student/staff size and income largely determine the extent of teaching and research intensity, universities in Wales have been at a significant comparative funding disadvantage to other UK countries throughout most of the preceding decade (See Figure 1 from Sunday Times 2014 below).

Figure 1: Sunday Times Ranking of Welsh HEIs



4.2 Whilst there has been some individual improvement in Wales’ performance in UK league tables, as well as international facing tables such that of the *Times Higher Education*, and the more influential QS ranking, overall it remains modest, with some universities falling in recent years.

4.3 Since a major element of success on international tables relates to comparative levels of investment, together with the perception of international academics and large employers, it is hoped that this Review will provide a constructive opportunity, and impetus, for all parties to work collectively to build a strong, recognisable sector brand that can be used alongside individual institutional and UK brands, to help promote Wales’ high-quality performance, and help its efficient research base compete more successfully in the global economy.⁸

4.4 Greater recognition for the value of Welsh universities on the world stage has much to offer Wales economic and cultural ambitions as a nation, but to get a hearing in the crowded global education marketplace, Wales’ need to have a clear, strong and distinctive brand facilitated by a joined up strategy. With this in mind, we note *Universities Wales* recently launched a dedicated Wales Higher Education Academic Destinations Microsite on the prestigious international *Chronicle of Higher Education* web site.⁹

⁸ [‘Welsh research: punching above its weight’](#), Halligan, May 2014 *Times Higher Education Supplement* and [Recognising the Quality of Research at Universities in Wales](#), Williams for the Learned Society of Wales, February 2013

⁹ <http://chronicle.com/academicDestination/Wales/73/>

5. UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT, TUITION FEE POLICY AND CROSS BORDER ISSUES

5.1 The UK government's decision to raise the fees cap for full-time undergraduate courses in England to £9,000 from 2012/13 created the largest shift from direct taxpayer funding to contributions made retrospectively from graduates. The introduction created great unknown risks for universities, and it was feared that the numbers applying for places in the UK would plummet. The subsequent removal of the cap on AAB+ recruitment in England, together with annual decline in the population of 18 year olds, created understandable perturbation in the UK student market. This fuelled even greater competition among universities. The recent evidence, however, has shown that many of these fears were unfounded and that the proportion of the 18 year old cohort taking up places at universities has returned to the pre-2012 level, albeit with regional variations.¹⁰ Furthermore, the gap in application and entry rates between advantaged and disadvantaged students has not grown, though it remains unacceptably large. Recent years however, have shown a significant decline in the number of mature and part-time students.

5.2 The UK government's decision regarding fees produced different responses from the mainland devolved administrations. The Scottish government chose to protect home-domiciled students by continuing to provide free Higher Education for students who choose universities in Scotland. Universities in Northern Ireland are able to charge fees of up to £9000, but home-domiciled students pay fees at the pre-2012 level, adjusted for inflation. Recognising that Welsh HEIs were not immune to the growing English competitive market, the Welsh Government's more "planned approach" tried to mitigate the effects of the fee increase on Welsh-domiciled students, by providing them with a non-means-tested tuition fee-grant which ensured that Welsh students paid no more in real terms, wherever they chose to study in the UK. Unlike Wales, Scotland did not subsidize students who chose to study outside Scotland. However, the proportion of students that leave Scotland tends to be much smaller than the proportion of Welsh students that cross the border to study at English universities each year (See Table 2).

Welsh-domiciled students currently receive grants to pay for fees in excess of £3465 wherever in the UK they study. This funding comes from the Welsh Government allocation administered through HEFCW with the consequence that the traditional [HEFCW grant to HEIs](#) in Wales has been considerably reduced. As such Welsh government funding follows Welsh students across the border. According to Cardiff University, by 2015/16 the Welsh government will pay English institutions up to £94.5M per year as a direct result of this tuition fee policy.¹¹ Previously this funding would have been directed to support HEIs in Wales.

The future sustainability of universities in Wales will be dependent on revising the current Higher Education fees policy, given the significant cross-border flow of students between England and Wales.

5.3 Cross-border trends

One of the main issues surrounding the current fee grant hinges on the effects it has on cross-border flows. Among the devolved nations of the UK, the level of cross-border flow for HE between England and Wales remains exceptional. The Committee will be well aware of the latest figures for cross border flow to and from Wales. As shown in **Table 2**, just over half of the 21,990, full-time undergraduate acceptances to Welsh institutions in 2014 were domiciled in Wales; 10,590 of the acceptances were English-domiciled students, down substantially from 2011.¹²

¹⁰ [Analysis of trends in Higher Education applications, admissions and enrolments](#), August 2014, The Independent Commission on Fees

¹¹ National Assembly for Wales; Draft budget 2014/15 Budget Report by the Advisor to the Finance committee.

¹² [Interim assessment of UCAS acceptances by intended entry year, country of institution and qualifications held](#), 23 September 2014, UCAS Analysis and Research

Figure 2 Wales – England cross-border flow of UCAS acceptances, by intended year of entry

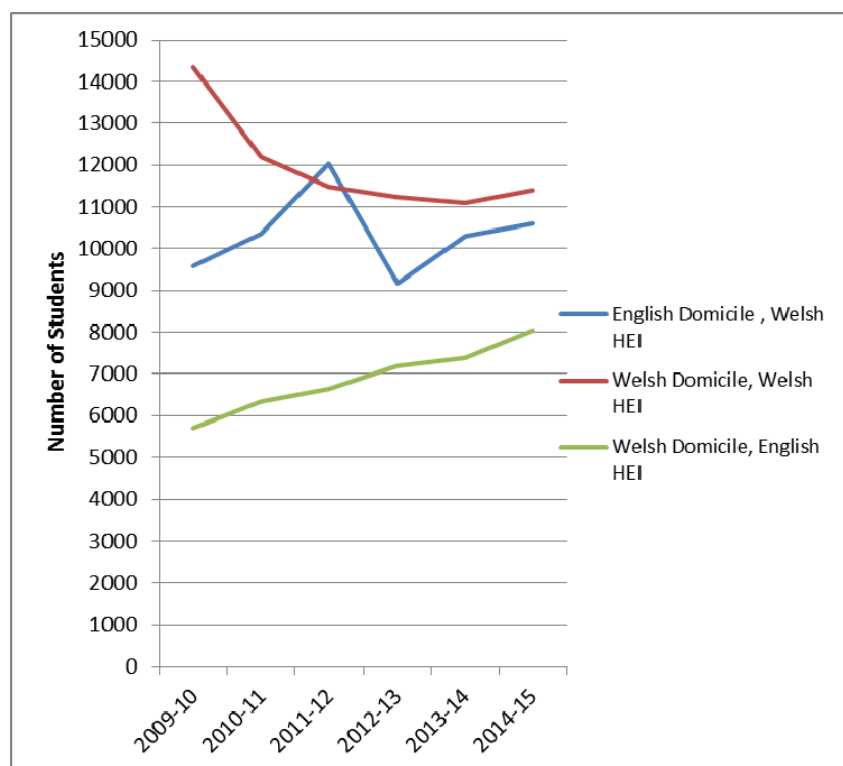


Figure 2 shows a **fall of some 14%** in the English-domiciled students accepted in Wales *between* 2011 (pre fee policy change) and 2014, but an **increase of 21%** in the number of Welsh-domiciled students accepted in England over the same period. The number of Welsh-domiciled students accepted in Wales fell by 3.5% between 2011 and 2013, but appears to have partially recovered in 2014.

Furthermore, Figure 2 also shows a concerning rise (9%) of Welsh-domiciled students accepted in England in 2014 compared to 2013. This continuous and accelerating trend of Welsh-domiciled students leaving Wales is also reflected in the growing fraction of the total fee-grant support going to English HEIs. Interestingly, the growing exodus of students from Wales is not seen in Northern Ireland, where the fee regime is very different. Consequently, changes to English HE policy have repercussions for Welsh students choosing to study in England.

5.4 The social characteristics of Welsh students who study in England

Cross border flow studies from Scotland have shown that students studying outwith Scotland are from wealthier backgrounds than those who study in Scotland.¹³ This research showed that 45% of Scottish students who study elsewhere in the UK came from higher and managerial professional backgrounds, whereas only 9% of Scottish students who leave Scotland to study elsewhere in the UK come from working class backgrounds. In Wales, in 2013, most of undergraduates (58%) who studied at English HEIs come from higher and managerial professional backgrounds (Figure 3a) whereas (21%) come from working class backgrounds. Comparable figures (Figure 3b) for Welsh students at Welsh universities reveal less of a difference, with 33% from working class and 44% from higher and managerial professional backgrounds.¹⁴

¹³ Raffe, D. and Croxford, L. (2013) [One system or four? Cross-border applications and entries to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK since devolution](#), *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(2), pp.111-134

¹⁴Note that there is high proportion for whom socio-economic classification is not classified or unknown, but for the purposes of an overview, this data has been excluded.

Figure 3a: Welsh-domiciled undergraduates at English HEIs (by socio-economic classification)

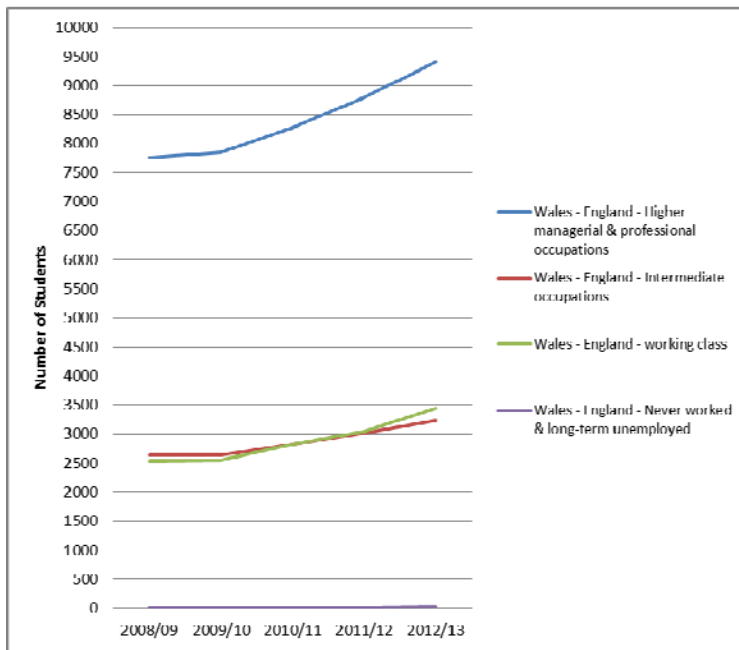
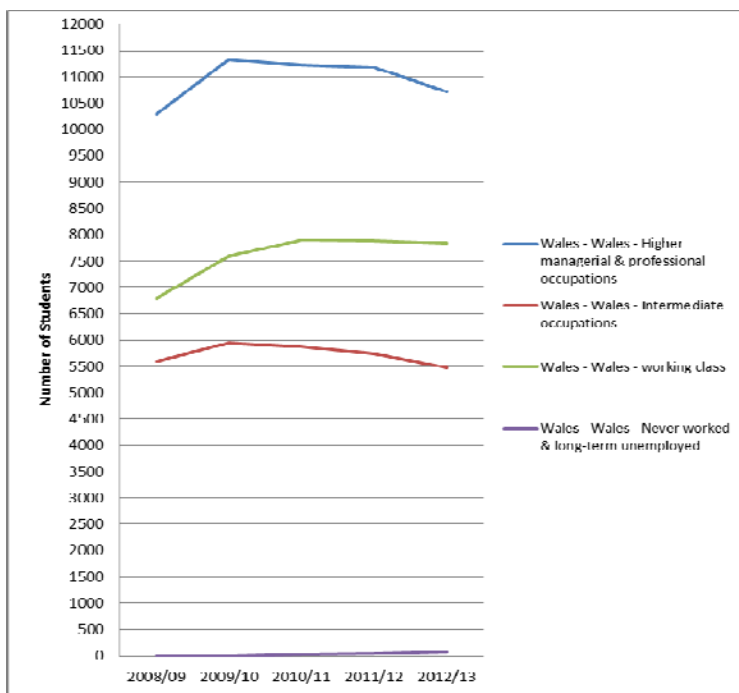


Figure 3b: Welsh-domiciled undergraduates at Welsh HEIs (by socio-economic classification)



Interestingly, Figure 3a shows a higher proportion of those leaving Wales are from the more advantaged background while a greater percentage from the more disadvantaged backgrounds, including ‘widening access students’, remain to study in Wales. The weight of evidence from the Welsh sector (See Table 2 above) suggests that the current Welsh Government policy for tuition fee-grant (although well intended), is not equitable for Welsh students (and the HEI sector) as it appears to disproportionately benefit students from predominantly advantaged background to study in England where tuition is better resourced. This is concerning if one believes that choice of course and institution should be based on academic criteria rather than issues of affordability. At the same time, it does little for those students who opt to stay in Wales, many from disadvantaged backgrounds and many studying part-time, given the comparatively poorer learning support.

5.5 Quality recruitment

Wales' universities, with some exceptions, recruit well in terms of international and home students, having 5.6% of the UK home undergraduates. For the 18 year old cohort there is concern, however, regarding the overall quality with an A-level point score which appears below the UK average.¹⁵ Using a simple quality threshold of **360 tariff points** (3 A grades at A level) and above, it can be seen from **Table 4** that at 57%, the number of Welsh-domiciled students leaving to study in England is 15% greater than those staying to study in Wales (42%).

Table 4: Tariff band attainment

HESA Student Record 2012/13					
Country of domicile	Country of institution	Tariff band	Total	Percentage	
Wales to	England	1-119	292	1.7%	
		120-239	1637	9.6%	
		240-359	5414	32%	
		360-479	6090	36%	
		480-540 and over	3658	21%	
	>360 : 57%				
	Total			17091	
	Wales	1-119	892	3.9%	
		120-239	4037	17.6%	
		240-359	9100	39.8%	
		360-479	6583	28.8%	
480-540 and over		3027	13.2%		
>360 : 42%					
Total			22840		
England to	Wales	1-119	558	2.2%	
		120-239	3183	12.3%	
		240-359	10544	41%	
		360-479	8360	32.3%	
		480-540 and over	3208	12.4%	
> 360: 44.7%					
Total			25853		

6. EFFECTS OF POLICY ON STUDENT CHOICE

Without control over the number of students that could be recruited by UK universities, an obvious but neglected factor that has contributed to the observed changes in cross border student flows has been the Welsh government policy of providing a tuition fee-grant for Welsh-domiciled to study **anywhere** in the UK. No other devolved administration chose to adopt this policy option. One unintended consequence of this policy is to actively encourage Welsh students, and particularly well-qualified students, to consider study at English universities. Evidence in support of such a conclusion comes from data on Welsh students considering university when the fee change policy became operational.

At the end of 2011, and before the first year's implementation of the new Welsh Government fee policy in September 2012, Cardiff University carried out a survey of 900 Year 13 students at 17 schools in south Wales. The aim of the survey was to provide a better understanding of the effect of UK fee changes and Welsh Government responses on

¹⁵ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-29099712> and <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/high-achieving-welsh-teenagers-choosing-8118477>

the perceptions and expectations of Welsh students. The survey found that 39% of the Welsh students were likely/very likely to choose a university in England as a result of the tuition fee-grant provided by the Welsh Government. Later in July 2013, the National Assembly for Wales Finance committee set up a consultation to consider the funding of HEIs in Wales and in particular the financial impact of the Welsh Government's tuition fee-grant policy on HEIs and students in Wales. With a view to securing a more complete understanding of the impact that the tuition fee-grant policy had on **student choice**, the consultation considered feedback from 580 prospective students (Year 12 and 13 Welsh-domiciled pupils). The Finance Committee questionnaire (launched in early July and closing in October 2013) found that while 81% considered that the Welsh Government tuition fee encouraged them to go to university, 48% indicated that had the tuition fee-grant only applied to Welsh students studying at Welsh universities, they would have changed their plans to study outside Wales, or would have no longer applied to go to university and sought to follow another education / employment route.

7. CROSS-BORDER FLOW IMPACT ON SKILLS

The existence of a 'brain drain' of graduate labour from Wales has long been a focus of debate.¹⁶ A recent study revealed that Wales is a net loser of graduates each year.¹⁷ Wales has lower retention rates than the other devolved UK nations, in terms of both the proportion of students who remain to study in Wales, and also the proportion of graduates from Welsh HEIs who subsequently gain employment within Wales. Welsh-domiciled graduates who migrate from Wales generally possess higher levels of educational attainment (such as postgraduate qualifications) and (particularly in the case of Wales) degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subject areas.

8. THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND STUDIES RELATING TO WALES

The Welsh Government and Universities in Wales have a unique responsibility for Welsh language and cultural matters. It is important that teaching and research through the medium of Welsh across all academic disciplines are properly funded and developed. For Welsh medium provision the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is providing outstanding work and the importance of long term commitment cannot be over-emphasised. It is likewise critically important that Welsh HE Institutions are expected and encouraged to safeguard and promote Welsh studies through the medium of English in both its national and international contexts by developing teaching, research and publication across a wide spectrum of academic disciplines.

At present, HEIs in Wales are not required to ensure that the studies relating to Wales itself (past and present) form an integral (if modest) part of their programmes of study. This situation is anomalous and manifestly harmful to national well-being when comparison is made with the practice in other mature, established nations. In Scotland, for example, the Government specifically endorses and under-writes every initiative at HE level to review the state of the nation, recognizing this to be a valuable resource of substantial international as well as national significance. In the absence of any such expectation and related enabling framework in Wales, studies relating to Wales have always suffered a very haphazard and precarious existence at HE level, and remain correspondingly relatively underdeveloped, despite the vigour and innovativeness of many current practitioners and participating institutions.

¹⁶ See Drinkwater and Blackaby, 2004, c.f. Fevre, 2004

<http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/files/4613/6567/2980/WelshGraduateMobilitySKOPEWISERDReport.pdf>

¹⁷ Bristow et al. (2011) <http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/education/completed-projects/welsh-graduate-migration/>

9. THE FUNDING GAP

9.1 The LSW has published a range of documents demonstrating the consequences of the conspicuous funding differential of Higher Education resource provision in Wales relative to England and Scotland. In a paper published in 2011, it calculated that for the period 2000 to 2009 the cumulative funding gap relative to England had reached £362M [and £1061M relative to Scotland].¹⁸ Seen from another perspective, the negative funding gap per student has grown from £20 in 2000-01 to almost £900 in 2008-09. The funding shortfall has inevitably resulted in poorer infrastructure, lower teaching and staff support numbers, all of which has collectively contributed to the perception of a neglected, and less-than-competitive sector. A simple regional analysis of the publicly available data from the [Complete University League Table website](#), (see below), widely used by students (and those advising them) when choosing prospective universities, confirms the cumulative effects of this funding gap.

Table 5: Comparative data on HEIs by Nation/ Region from the Complete University League Table (2014)

Nation / Region (number of HEIs included in the study)	Entry standards ^A	Staff student Ratio ^B	Academic services ^C	Facilities Spend ^D
Wales (7)	325	18.3	926	388
Northern Ireland (2)	350	17.3	1062	551
Scotland (14)	403	17.7	1151	410
North East England (5)	387	17.2	1118	537

^A The average UCAS tariff score of new students. The results are then adjusted to take account of the subject mix at the university.
^B A measure of the average staffing level in the university; Calculated using HESA data for 2012–13.
^C The expenditure per student on all academic services using HESA data for 2010–11, 2011–12, and 2012–13.
^D The expenditure per student on staff and student facilities using HESA data for 2010–11, 2011–12, and 2012–13.

9.2 Further recent evidence demonstrates that this funding gap has continued to grow since 2011. With the introduction of the £9000 maximum tuition fees, Universities in Wales are better funded than would have been the case had the previous funding regime continued. However, relative to the competition in other parts of the UK, Wales is rapidly falling further behind in terms of the level of average funding per student. Following the introduction of tuition fees the levels of direct grants from Funding Councils to Universities has been reduced in England and Wales. Figures provided by HEFCW show a reduction of 40% in England, and nearly 60% in Wales [See Table 6]. It should be remembered that this funding gap is in addition to that which existed in 2011.¹⁹

9.3 **Table 6** illustrates some of the major differences in HEFCE and HEFCW funding to HEIs. In England, for 2014/15, funding for teaching capital has nearly doubled whereas in Wales it is zero. Funding to promote Innovation and Engagement, where traditionally HEIs in Wales perform well, was increased in England but again reduced to zero in Wales. HEIs in Wales are expected to subsidize these activities from the student fee income, putting even further pressure on support for learning and teaching. For each student in high cost subjects such as Medicine and STEM in England there is substantial additional funding compared to Wales. Other high cost and vulnerable subjects, such as modern languages, are at a considerable disadvantage in Wales.

¹⁸ [The Funding Gap](#), the Learned Society of Wales, October 2011, and letter from Sir John Cadogan (then President of the Society) to the Minister dated 20 February 2014

¹⁹ Data from HEFCW

Table 6: Comparison of changes to HEFCW and HEFCE Funding (from HEFCW)

Funding Council	Funding category	Funding allocated to institution				Percentage difference 2011/12- 2014/15
		2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
HEFCE	Teaching	4,317	3,233	2,325	1,582	-63%
	Research	1,558	1,558	1,558	1,558	0%
	HEIF	150	156	160	160	7%
	Capital	223	265	280	440	97%
	Other	237	177	149	143	-40%
	Total	6,485	5,390	4,472	3,883	-40%
HEFCW	Teaching	260	137	94	53	-79%
	Research	77	77	77	77	0%
	HEIF	9	11	6	0	-100%
	Capital (T&R)	0	0	0	0	
	Other	39	35	39	28	-30%
	Total	385	259	215	158	-59%

9.4 The conclusion is that HEIs in Wales cannot remain competitive in terms of the learning experience of students, as shown in Table 5. The legacy of historical under-resourcing needs to be recognised as one of the major drivers why more high quality Welsh-domiciled students, particularly from the most advantaged social groups, are choosing to study in England where the facilities and the support are rightly seen as better funded.

Furthermore, a disproportionate number of those English-domiciled students enrolled at Welsh HEIs study STEM disciplines, and as such the additional teaching costs will have to be met by cross subsidies from fees in the Arts and Humanities subjects, depriving students in these disciplines of equitable support at the level they deserve and expect.

The effects of the longstanding under-resourcing in Wales needs to be acknowledged. Given the current competitive UK student market there is a genuine concern that the funding gap will grow and lead to a downward spiral which if not actioned soon will be substantially more difficult to redress by 2018. Consequently the LSW believe that the issue needs urgent attention, with action required in advance of 2018.

9.5 The Welsh Government can exercise control over the fee-grants in Wales but has no such control over the fee-grants of Welsh-domiciled students moving out of Wales. We understand that the fee-grants paid to English HEIs are increasing, and now stand at 40% of the total pot.²⁰ Welsh ‘widening access students’ are seen as ‘gold dust’ by many border English HEIs given that they arrive with their fee-grants and do not require substantial additional bursaries which must be awarded to similar English-domiciled students.²¹

In summary, the LSW believes that the current funding arrangements in Wales are unsustainable and need to change, given the compelling evidence that Welsh HE is competitively disadvantaged.

The LSW recommends that the fee-grant support should be reserved to those most in need, and the money allocated to better fund HEIs in Wales, through HEFCW, with the aim of creating a more sustainable and competitive Welsh university sector. Students leaving Wales should qualify for existing bursaries in their HEI of choice outside Wales, but if not, they should be able to qualify for means tested support from the Welsh government.

²⁰ Information from HEFCW

²¹ BBC Wales news story, February 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-25121049>

10. POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND SUPPORT

10.1 The importance of postgraduate students for all HEIs is well established and cannot be overstated given the numbers in the UK have grown substantially over the past couple of decades.²² Many specialist post graduate taught [PGT] courses are directed at professional qualifications with a large number often directed at the skills need of a region and or international students. Higher degree courses, such as the very successful EngD programme in Wales, are organized in close collaboration with industry and targeted to meet their needs. Many postgraduate courses are accessed by mature and work placed individuals, often to learn about new methods and technologies, and the courses play an important role in up-skilling the workforce. High quality postgraduate training can help attract high technology companies to Wales and many start-up companies, where Wales performs relatively well have involved PGT and PGR graduates.²³ Many PGT and PGR students are from outside the EU and bring significant economic benefits to Wales.

The LSW has established a panel, chaired by Professor Graham Richards of the University of Oxford, to review the role and the importance of postgraduate research students in Wales and this Report will be available on completion later this year.

10.2 HESA data reveal that in 2012, PGT students at Welsh HEIs constituted 5.8% FT and 4.9% PT of UK PGT enrolments, up from 4.7% in 2007. Furthermore, there is a favourable cross border flow for the PGT (FT) sector with 581 Welsh-domiciled students going to England from Wales and 665 coming from England to Wales (2012/13), and this pattern is roughly stable year on year. This is an area which Welsh HEIs appear to have successfully prioritized.

However, the share of PGR enrolments at Welsh HEIs, is lower. HESA data reveal that in 2012, Welsh HEIs had 4.1% of FT and 4.5% of PT UK PGR students. These figures may reflect the deficit of STEM academics in Wales since these are the subject areas of greatest PGR recruitment in the UK as a whole.²⁴ On a more positive note, the high numbers of PGT enrolments may have been helped by the availability of EU Structural Funds in parts of Wales. PGR numbers were also boosted through schemes such as KESS with financial support from EU structural funding. This source of funding is likely to end in 2020 and sustainable mechanisms need to be considered now. The Sêr Cymru initiative is aimed at increasing the number of academics and PGR students in specific STEM areas and, though extremely welcome it is not of a sufficient scale to fully address the STEM deficit.

10.3 A major recent concern regarding PGT however remains the complete removal of HEFCW per capita funding for Full-time courses in Welsh HEIs.²⁵ This is in sharp contrast to the situation in England, where support to HEIs of £2600 per capita applies.²⁶ This will inevitably influence the recruitment of postgraduate students in Wales. For HEIs in Wales to compete, they will need to consider subsidising such courses using fees paid by undergraduates, which potentially makes an unsustainable situation even worse, or else require enrolling students to cover the full costs.

The LSW believes that all efforts should be made to ensure quality provision in Welsh HEIs so as to attract the best students as PGT courses are crucial and provide a throughput of excellent young people to support the economy and the social needs of Wales. We would urge the Review Panel to consider the implications of the November budget statement regarding loans for taught postgraduate students in England. The absence of a similar scheme in Wales will no doubt contribute to a poor sector perception with damaging consequences on recruitment.

²² See [The Post-Graduate Crisis, 1994 Policy Group Report Feb 2012](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/economic-fears-as-postgraduates-down-by-one-fifth.25906632), [Exploring Student demand for Postgraduate Study, BIS Dec 2013](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/economic-fears-as-postgraduates-down-by-one-fifth.25906632), and <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/economic-fears-as-postgraduates-down-by-one-fifth.25906632>

²³ See HEFCW HEBCIS Report and Elsevier Report on [International Comparative Performance of the Welsh Research Base](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2014/201406/Guide%20to%20funding%20and%20SNCs%202013-14%20and%202014-15.pdf)

²⁴ HEFCW Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee Research subgroup Report, January 2011

²⁵ http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2014/W14%2018HE%20HEFCW%20funding%20allocations%202014_15.pdf

²⁶ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2014/201406/Guide%20to%20funding%20and%20SNCs%202013-14%20and%202014-15.pdf>

11. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

11.1. In 2013, the LSW published a detailed report highlighting the quality and quantity of research in HEIs in Wales.²⁷ More recently the Welsh Government, Higher Education Funding Council and Welsh Universities commissioned an independent review of the comparative standing of the Welsh research base which confirmed that while under-resourced, Wales' research outputs were nevertheless highly productive and efficient outranking most comparator countries of similar size ([Elsevier 2014](#)). Moreover, by linking research output productivity to economic metrics, and relating these outputs to measures of relevant research inputs, the report demonstrated that the Welsh research base over the past decade was the **most efficient country in the UK**. The report identified research collaboration and mobility as key factors behind Wales' success, having the highest percentage of international collaboration of all UK constituent countries.

While there is much in the Elsevier report that was positive, concerns were raised regarding Wales' future competitiveness and sustainability. Although its research has performed better than that of many similar-sized countries, maintaining Wales low research intensity was not considered a healthy future strategy, given that the scale of a research base remains a key driver for growing research output, impact, grant capture and innovation.

11.2 QR funding:

Recognising its paramount importance, HEFCW has, (despite enormous pressures), thus far avoided cutting the annual spend on QR funding that underpins much research in Welsh HEIs. Despite this, the Welsh percentage of the UK QR has been steadily falling to 3.9% in 2013, way below the 4.9% share that might be expected on the basis of the share of the UK population. Furthermore the detailed HEFCW Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee²⁸ report demonstrates that the large and mainly historical deficiency in STEM staff was a major contributory factor as to why Wales had not secured its proportion of competitive Research Council funding.

A forthcoming Leadership Foundation report by Halligan and Bright, using HESA cost centre data, estimates that in terms of standard share of UK academic researcher this deficiency is as high as 600 STEM staff.²⁹ When allowances are made for Wales' QR and capacity issues, as in the LSW report on the quality of research at universities in Wales, it is revealed that Wales' performance in the 2008 RAE and in gaining research grants was better than often portrayed.³⁰ These findings found strong support in the Elsevier report where a range of different bibliometric metrics were considered in relation to other countries. This found that Wales has 0.14% of the world's researchers, but produces 0.3% of the world's published articles and has a 0.7% share of the world's top 1% most cited articles. Additionally, in the 2008 RAE, of the UKs 4* and 3* publications 4.6% were from Wales despite the relatively low QR funding.

Recently, the 2014 REF results confirmed that Welsh universities had managed to produce high levels of world leading research despite many years of under-resourcing. More than **three-quarters** of the research submitted was assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent with Welsh universities scoring particularly well on the new 'impact' part of the REF. With nearly half of the research submitted by Welsh universities producing the highest percentage of research whose impact was rated as 'world leading' in the UK, **Welsh universities demonstrate that they are capable of delivering efficient, sustainable research with wider economic, social and cultural benefits.** It is however worth noting that compared to 2008, Welsh universities submitted 28% fewer staff (3.6% share of all staff across the UK) with the result that Wales' proportion of the UK 4* and 3* outputs were 3.6 and 3.7% respectively, down from 4.0% and 4.7%.

²⁷ [Recognising the Quality of Research at Universities in Wales](#), Robin Williams for the Learned Society of Wales, February 2013

²⁸ [HEFCW Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee Research subgroup Report, January 2011](#)

²⁹ Halligan and Bright, forthcoming

³⁰ [Recognising the Quality of Research at Universities in Wales](#), Robin Williams for the Learned Society of Wales, February 2013

11.3 Given Wales' track record for producing more with less, as evidenced by the 2013 Elsevier report, the importance of protecting QR funding to Welsh Universities cannot be overemphasized. The HE sector is by far the largest provider of research output in Wales and for every one pound of QR invested, the Universities bring in more than three pounds from external sources. It is this fund that provides the foundation for innovation and applied research which bring significant economic benefits.

The LSW suggests that as a minimum the maintenance of the level of current QR funding should be retained, but that an uplift from its current 3.9% of the UK should be a priority, in view of the benefits it brings to Wales. Without addressing the current fee-grant arrangements, there is genuine concern that the uncontrolled demand for undergraduate fee-grants outside Wales will encroach upon, and impact on, the current funding available for QR. Any such move would be both short sighted and deeply damaging for the sector.

11.4 In terms of Innovation and Engagement, two recent Reports demonstrate that Wales performs well, and highly efficiently as summarized in HEBCIS data.³¹ Wales has traditionally placed great emphasis on ensuring that it's Universities are central in supporting the economy and there has been excellent interaction between the Welsh Government [and the former Welsh Development Agency], business and industry and the HEIs, over several decades. **The LSW has concerns that the termination of HEFCW Innovation and Engagement funding could lead to a rapid deterioration in the performance of Welsh HEIs in this vitally important area.** We note the increase in the I&E grant in England [See Table 6], whereas in Wales I&E activities will have to be cross-subsidized from income such as undergraduate fee-grant.

11.5 The appointment of a Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales [CSA] has been an important step forward, leading to the Science Advisory Council for Wales and to an influential policy document Science for Wales. Recently, an Innovation Advisory Council has also been established. Led by the CSA, the £50M Sêr Cymru funding has enabled the appointment of several world-leading researchers and provided support for the development of significant groups around them. In addition three major research networks have been established with funding for a number of postgraduate research students. The CSA is currently actively driving a new related programme of capacity building (Spearhead) where Welsh Government and HEFCW funding will be used to lever in additional support for underpinning research from the European Structural Funds. In the past, many excellent Business–University collaborative projects have been funded through the A4B, programme involving the Economic Development arm of the Welsh Government. The HEFCW I&E support, together with A4B and related programmes, were undoubtedly crucial in establishing Welsh HEIs as leaders in the exploitation of research as demonstrated in the HEBCIS annual reports and the Elsevier review³².

11.6 All HEIs in Wales have forward looking schemes intended to promote employability and entrepreneurship. Many good programmes, such as GoWales coordinated by HEFCW, have been initiated to offer opportunities for graduates to work in business to develop appropriate skills. The GOWales scheme however, has closed, and a new scheme with similar objectives will be required given the potential to contribute to economic development. An imaginative and forward thinking scheme organized by the Alacrity Foundation offers a twelve month fully funded entrepreneurship programme where high quality graduates can start their own companies with close mentoring by a range of experienced experts. It might be timely to review the range of schemes offered in Wales to learn which of the many approaches are particularly successful.

³¹ See HEFCW HEBCIS Report and the Elsevier Report on [International Comparative Performance of the Welsh Research Base](#)

³² See HEFCW HEBCIS Report and the Elsevier Report on [International Comparative Performance of the Welsh Research Base](#)

11.7 Research Leadership

In terms of scale, universities remain one of Wales' few indigenous engines of research driven innovation with Higher Education securing nearly half of all the total Research & Development investment and producing 84% of research outputs.³³ Capitalising on this, Wales' research universities, together with HEFCW, set up Welsh Crucible In 2010 to help create and exploit an "opportunistic collision space" where Wales' brightest researchers could productively exchange ideas across disciplinary and sector boundaries in a more strategic way.

Four years on, Welsh Crucible has become Wales' flagship researcher development programme; showcased at the European Commission in Brussels, winner of the *Times Higher Education* Award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development in 2013, and advisor to start-up Crucible programmes in England. Open to all Welsh Universities, the Welsh Crucible programme is now recognized internationally and featured prominently in last year's prestigious journal *Science* and this year *International Innovation*. Unlike other research development programmes, a distinctive feature of Welsh Crucible is that selection is based upon participant's research merit and ability to demonstrate a clear commitment to working with, and across, a range of disciplines.

By 2014, Welsh Crucible will have created a cross-institutional multi-disciplinary network comprising 120 researchers from across Wales and funded 25 interdisciplinary projects. Although still early days, Welsh Crucible has demonstrated how Welsh universities, working collectively can build a strong, recognisable sector brand and a unique research capacity, which in time will return future opportunities for the university, business and public sectors.

11.8 Despite the current funding problems it is essential that Welsh HEIs, HEFCW and Welsh Government identify and seek funding for I&E activities from all potential sources. There is much room for better coordination of activities across the different Government Departments, which one would hope would be straightforward in a small country like Wales. However, given limited resources **we suggest that a more strategic cross directorate, 'team Wales' approach within Welsh Government would benefit the sector's research, education and innovation taking account of all disciplines and not just STEM, and involving all the major players including the HEIs.**

12. WIDENING ACCESS

Delivering on widening access takes up a significant amount of effort and resource. Despite this, universities in Wales have traditionally performed well. Recent figures from HEFCW show that Wales' universities have a higher proportion of students from the most under-represented groups, compared to the UK as a whole.³⁴ The proportion of young full time undergraduate entrants from low participation communities is over 13% - again higher than the UK figure. Finally part-time study makes a significant contribution to Wales' success in widening access with over 10% of part-time undergraduates entrants having no previous HE experience.

³³ See *Universities Wales* new portal: www.researchwales.ac.uk

³⁴ [Welsh universities outperform UK in recruiting under-represented groups, HEFCW, April 2014](#)

13. PROPOSALS FOR STUDENT FUNDING

13.1 One of the most pressing concerns for the LSW since its foundation has been highlighting the growing gap in funding between Welsh HEIs relative to the rest of the UK.³⁵ The cumulative shortfall has already led to lower staffing levels and poorer infrastructure which in turn impacts on student support, experience and sector reputation. We are concerned that students are increasingly voting with their feet; Welsh-domiciled students, particularly the better qualified, are increasingly opting to study outside Wales. Remedial action is needed urgently and cannot be delayed for another four or five years.

13.2 Over the past decade the Welsh University system has participated in a long period of Welsh Government reorganization and now requires stability and support to provide what the Government expects – namely a world class system.³⁶ Diversity has been, and remains, a key strength of the Welsh sector. It brings with it the capacity for a differentiated mission-based group of universities that cater to the national needs of a diverse student demand base. Since the Welsh HEI sector comprises this wide range of diverse institutions, **we believe that HEI in Wales should be encouraged to play to their strengths and not to try and do everything. Expected outcomes agreed with HEFCW should be institution specific, with HEFCW coordinating the overall shape of the HE sector.**

13.3 **The current fee-grant model supporting Welsh-domiciled students is not sustainable.** Experience in England clearly demonstrates that the fee regime there has not deterred students from taking HE courses and this applies to students from deprived backgrounds just as much as those from better off backgrounds. There is no reason to think that the behaviour in Wales should be any different. The principles to be applied with regard to student fee support should be based on the following criteria:

- ***Welsh students should be free to study in the UK wherever they choose;***
- ***Welsh students should be treated equitably, with Government support going to those most in need;***
- ***Welsh students leaving Wales, who are not eligible for bursaries at their HEI of their choice should qualify for means tested support from the Welsh Government;***
- ***That funds released under this proposal would enable HEIs in Wales to be more competitive, to have better facilities and support that will attract the best students, and be able to respond to Welsh Government priorities.***

13.4 The LSW recognises that the Scottish and the Northern Ireland funding models have not adopted these criteria, but neither nation shares the levels of historical cross-border flows seen in Wales.

We therefore recommend a system which starts from the principle that all Welsh-domiciled students should bear the burden of the fees for their HE courses, wherever in the UK they choose to study. However, means tested fee bursaries should be made available for those in most need. These bursaries should be administered in Wales by the HEI at which the student has chosen to study and would comprise part of the fee-plan agreed with HEFCW. Bursaries in Wales would be available to all students who meet the criteria, no matter where they are domiciled, but the vast majority would be taken up by Welsh-domiciled students. They would not normally apply to Welsh-domiciled students studying outside Wales, as those students could qualify for existing bursaries at their HEI of choice, as part of the fair

³⁵ [The Funding Gap](#), the Learned Society of Wales, October 2011

³⁶ [Welsh Government Higher Education Statement, June 2013](#)

access policies of that HEI. However, students leaving Wales who do not qualify for bursaries in their HEI of choice should be able to qualify for means tested support from the Welsh government.

Furthermore, it seems prudent to operate a small central funding source for bursaries for the small number of students opting for courses not taught in Wales (such as veterinary sciences), but where Wales would benefit from such graduates. Such proposals are not unlike those considered in the Rees Review of University fees in 2005.³⁷ We note that 'means testing' information is already available as part of the student living cost support.

13.5 Finally, it is critically important given the case outlined above that the funding released from changing the policy of 'fee-grants for all' should be restored to HEFCW, so that it can direct support to the universities to help tackle competitiveness and reduce uncertainty regarding the sustainability of the sector.

This in turn would enable HEFCW to ensure that the sector is better resourced, and therefore better able to respond to, and deliver on, Government priorities such as the economy, Welsh language education and Welsh culture, part-time studies, STEM, other expensive subjects, modern languages and strategically important endangered subjects.

³⁷ [Rees Review of University fees](#)

The Learned Society of Wales is Wales's first national scholarly academy. It was established and launched in May 2010. It now has more than three hundred Fellows, who are prominent figures within their respective academic disciplines.

The Society's guiding ethos is Celebrating Scholarship and Serving the Nation: as well as to celebrate, recognise, safeguard and encourage excellence in every one of the scholarly disciplines, its purpose is also to harness and channel the nation's talent, as embodied in its Fellows, for the benefit, primarily, of Wales and its people.

Cymdeithas Ddysgedig Cymru yw academi ysgolheigaidd genedlaethol gyntaf Cymru. Fe'i sefydlwyd a'i lansio ym mis Mai 2010. Bellach mae iddi dros dri chant o Gymrodyr, sy'n ffigurau blaenllaw yn eu disgyblaethau academaidd perthnasol.

Ethos arweiniol y Gymdeithas yw Dathlu Ysgolheictod a Gwasanaethu'r Genedl: yn ogystal â dathlu, cydnabod, diogelu ac annog rhagoriaeth ym mhob un o'r disgyblaethau ysgolheigaidd, ei diben hefyd yw harneisio a sianelu talent y genedl, fel y'i hymgorfforir yn ei Chymrodyr, er budd, yn bennaf, Cymru a'i phobl.

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