 

**HEFCW and the Learned Society of Wales**

**Partners’ memorandum of understanding**

1. **Scope**

This memorandum sets out the overarching principles for a long-term strategic relationship between HEFCW and the Learned Society of Wales (LSW). It outlines the synergies between the two organisations’ ambitions and describes in broad terms the areas of work which HEFCW will fund LSW to deliver.

Building on the existing successful partnership established in 2021, this memorandum provides the ongoing basis on which partners will move towards implementing the Welsh Government’s acceptance of the recommendation in the Diamond Review (2016). Annual core funding to LSW will be agreed on an annual basis, within the expectations of this memorandum of understanding.

1. **Our ambitions**

HEFCW and LSW share a number of ambitions as articulated in the following proposed **Statement of shared principles:**

“Excellent research and innovation in Wales is a cornerstone of the nation’s social, economic, and cultural health. The better we can promote and recognise excellent research, support the people undertaking it, broaden its application and understanding, and build links between research producers and users inside and outside Wales, the greater a contribution our outstanding research can make to the future prosperity of the nation.

“The Learned Society of Wales is the national academy for arts and sciences. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is the funder and regulator for higher education in Wales. Both organisations support research, innovation, and collaboration, and the contributions these make to Welsh society. By working together for the future health of research and innovation in Wales, HEFCW and LSW will jointly create and build ways to support a thriving research ecosystem while adding value to their activities as independent organisations.”

At a more detailed level, LSW’s new strategic plan for 2023-2028 aligns with many of the objectives in HEFCW’s Vision for Research and Innovation in Wales, as outlined in Annex A.

1. **Purpose and aims of partnership**

The overarching aims of the partnership are to enable LSW to:

* + 1. Develop the Society, support the delivery of its 2023-2025 strategy and fulfil effectively the role and responsibilities of a national academy
		2. Provide national, collaborative activities to encourage excellence and enhance the work of individual institutions, and support delivery of HEFCW’s Vision
		3. Strengthen its role as an independent actor and voice of expertise within the higher education sector in Wales and beyond
1. **Range of activities**

Each year, HEFCW and LSW will agree areas of activities that will be delivered using LSW’s core funding. These activities will contribute to the delivery of the two organisations’ shared ambitions as outlined above. It is anticipated that the broad areas of activity will remain relatively consistent from year to year to promote sustainable growth.

The areas of activities to be funded may include:

* External engagement e.g. events, comms and reports, to increase policy-makers’ understanding of the importance of excellent research, across all disciplines, in benefitting Wales.
* Scoping, commissioning, publishing and promoting reports that provide independent expert advice to policymakers.
* Joint work with other national academies e.g. the Celtic Academies Alliance, to raise the profile of Welsh research and innovation outside Wales.
* Support for researchers in Wales, within the context of delivering on the Researcher Development Concordat.
* Supporting the development of research networks and collaborations across institutions.
* Funding and administering grants, bursaries, scholarships and fellowships for Welsh researchers.
* Delivery and sponsorship of events and other activities to promote excellent research from Wales.

New areas that align with the strategic objectives of the partnership may also emerge, and be funded as new activity streams, preferably through increased core funding, although both partners agree to explore specific project funded activity in addition to core funding, if necessary.

1. **Terms of this framework**
2. This agreement will be active once approved by the Councils of HEFCW and LSW.
3. It will remain active until amended, superseded or terminated by agreement of the partners. Each partner will give a minimum of 6 months’ notice of their intention to terminate or substantially alter the agreement.
4. A funding agreement with formal monitoring expectations will be agreed separately, within the expectations of this memorandum, on an annual basis. However, the intention of this memorandum is to establish a relationship in which both parties engage frequently and will not be solely reliant on formal reporting mechanisms to facilitate the partnership.

**Signed by:**



**David Blaney**   **Olivia Harrison**

**Chief Executive Officer,** **Chief Executive Officer**
**Higher Education Funding Council for Wales HEFCW**  **Learned Society of Wales**

**on the 24th of July 2023**

**Annex A**

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| **HEFCW Vision – Pillars / Objectives** | **LSW aims and priorities**  |
| **Excellence** | Wales recognised for high-quality research which advances knowledge and generates ideas.All activity, from curiosity-driven research to highly applied development, will be recognised for its quality and contribution. | Celebrate the value of excellent research and diverse contributions, including through supporting and delivering events and our annual medal awards.Use our connections, and work with government, industry, public sector organisations and others, to increase policy-makers’ understanding of the importance of excellent research, across all disciplines, in benefitting Wales. |
| A culture that promotes and supports integrity, diversity, inclusivity and researcher mobility.Wales’ research groups will attract and retain the best researchers from across the world. | We will build a welcoming Society whose Fellows, and their contributions, represent the diversity of our nation, and work in partnership with others to promote inclusivity.Continue to build a diverse participation of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in our ECR Network and provide leadership opportunities for ECRs to take an active role in its development.Grow the capacity of the research sector in Wales for growth, leadership and collaboration by developing our partnership with HEFCW (and longer-term with CTER) and working with others to become integral part of the sector that supports researcher development. |
| Interdisciplinary teams will flourish, applying a range of expertise (arts, humanities and social sciences as well as STEMM) to real-world challenges. | Provide funding and other support to initiate interdisciplinary connections and scale-up collaborations across Wales.  |
| **Place** | We will support areas of distinctive strength and expertise to build further on these in communities, regions, national and international places.Exploiting our local expertise and worldwide reach…[clear] role in civic mission and community engagement.  | Support for, and promotion of, Wales Studies; research and the dissemination of knowledge distinct and strategically important to Wales. |
| **Innovation** | Underpinned by a strong research base and excellent practice in knowledge exchange, Wales will be recognised as a leader in innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship and skills development. | We will contribute to major policy solutions by providing independent advice and facilitating knowledge exchange. Grow our role as a convening power and knowledge broker for scrutiny and debate of complex, real-world issues. Apply these expert insights to grow the Society’s role and reputation for producing trusted, independent policy advice that enables policy-makers to tackle challenges at a Wales, UK and international level. We will grow opportunities for researchers at all career stages to gain a greater understanding of policy and its impact on their work, and to contribute to policy-making. |
| **Collaboration** | Researchers in Wales will tackle grand challenges through collaborations…Ensure a sustainable critical mass (both strength and depth) in our research base | We will use our Fellows to support the next generations of researchers, by promoting collaboration between researchers at all career stages and sectors. |
| Outward-looking and global in perspective, building new and strengthening existing partnerships across the UK and collaborating … via European and international networks | Grow our support for Welsh researchers to initiate interdisciplinary collaborations outside Wales. Build our links with other national academies, including the Celtic Academies Alliance, as well as international partners, to ensure Wales is a key-player in UK-wide initiatives and campaigns. |