



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT ON WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

August 2019 – July 2020

BANGOR UNIVERSITY WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards at Bangor University refers to the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

The report outlines the steps that the University has taken to ensure that it complies with the Language Standards and highlights some specific successes and development objectives for the coming year.

MAINTAINING THE WELSH LANGUAGE THROUGH LOCKDOWN

Much of the period featured in this report has been an extremely challenging one for all organisations due to Covid-19 and lockdown. Bangor University has taken proactive steps to try to ensure that students, staff and the public can continue to use Welsh despite the major changes to working patterns and practices in the context of teaching, learning and research, administration and service delivery.

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Bangor University is confident that it has performed well in complying with the Service Delivery Standards. Since the days of our Language Scheme we have, for example, ensured that:

- Welsh speaking staff work in reception areas;
- the whole range of our services are available to students in Welsh;
- signs are bilingually;
- students and partners have an opportunity to use Welsh when submitting applications for funding or when tendering to offer a service.

Last year, we reported that we wanted to develop the student mental health resources available through the medium of Welsh and develop CymorthCymraeg (our Welsh Language Support website) to ensure that staff have up-to-date resources to provide services in Welsh. Due to Covid, there have been additional challenges and additional factors to consider in the context of service delivery.

The following developments are highlighted:

- Through a HEFCW grant, work has begun on developing of a website with a wide range of mental health resources in Welsh for students across Wales. Consultation with Welsh speaking students about their needs was an important part of this project. During lockdown,

the fact that Welsh-speaking counsellors work at the University means that a one-to-one service through the medium of Welsh has been available to students.

- For the Welsh Language Commissioner's Rights Day in December 2019, a video was produced highlighting the range of Welsh language services the University provides to students. During lockdown, Welsh speaking staff have continued to be available to students and have responded to their queries and provided a service in Welsh. In some contexts, this has been more challenging (e.g. in the context of online open days) because 'reaching out to' and 'identifying' Welsh speakers in a virtual context can be more difficult.
- Through a Student Internship, the University's Welsh Language Support website has been updated to ensure that staff and students have access to a one-stop shop of resources to help them offer services in Welsh. The context of remote working was addressed on the website. <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/cymorthcymraeg/index.php.en>
- As the University prepared for a Welcome Week (Welcome 2020) which would be held entirely online, it was ensured that the structure of the website highlighted information about the use of Welsh at the University as well as the bilingual context – for fluent Welsh-speaking students, students learning Welsh and students with no knowledge of the bilingual context before arriving in Bangor.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

As the challenges of lockdown continue in 20/21, our priority will be to ensure that the Welsh language is central to any new approach to service delivery.

POLICY MAKING STANDARDS

Bangor University is confident that it has performed well in complying with the Policy Making Standards. Robust structures are in place to ensure that Welsh language issues are fully considered as new policies and initiatives are developed. Individuals with responsibility for the Welsh language sit on key University committees where relevant policy decisions are discussed (e.g. University Executive Committee, Teaching and Learning Strategy Group, Compliance Task Group, Human Resources Strategy Group, Student Experience Strategy Group).

The University's Executive Committee was re-modelled during the period under review with responsibilities re-distributed. It was ensured that a Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh language was appointed.

One of the steps that had to be taken in the wake of Covid was to develop a *force majeure* policy for the University. It was ensured that the policy stated as one of its core principles that students' right to be assessed in Welsh will be protected and that work submitted for assessment in Welsh will be treated on a basis equal to work submitted in English. The University therefore ensured that these fundamental rights remained relevant in exceptional circumstances.

During 19/20 work began on developing the University's Health and Well-being Strategy and information was provided on the relevance of maintaining and developing the Welsh language to this area.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

As lockdown periods place new requirements on the University, the University will continue to ensure that our new policies and developments protect the core principles of the Standards – ensuring opportunities to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Bangor University is confident that it has performed well in complying with the Operating Standards. Promoting the use of Welsh at work has been a priority for Bangor University for several years.

Lockdown presented additional challenges as the majority of staff moved to working from home. The University's aim was to ensure that the Welsh language remained as central as possible in these new circumstances. Three relevant developments are highlighted below:

- Bangor University was one of the very first institutions in Wales to ensure that simultaneous translation was available at formal meetings over Zoom. Additionally, due to their investment over a period of years in technology, the translation team was able to move seamlessly to providing proofreading and translation service for staff when working remotely.
- Language training was successfully maintained for staff throughout the organisation and also the language assessments that the University has developed. A new emphasis was placed on facilitating conversation sessions for learners as the 'informal' opportunities to use Welsh become scarcer in the remote working context. Around 120 staff were learning Welsh in the period under review.
- The focus of the ARFer research programme and the use of Welsh at work was changed to begin to look at the impact of remote working on the use of Welsh at work.

WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF STAFF

The tables below outline the Welsh language skills of University staff on 31 July 2020 based on job categories:

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF – Welsh Language Speaking Skills

Speaking Skills				
	Speak Welsh	Don't Speak Welsh	Speak a Little Welsh	Total
Academic	205	258	173	636
	32%	41%	27%	100%
Academic Related	147	30	101	278
	53%	11%	36%	100%
Clerical	283	49	87	419
	68%	12%	21%	100%
Manual	164	67	63	294
	56%	23%	21%	100%
Technical	45	18	31	94

	48%	19%	33%	100%
Research	35	107	70	212
	17%	50%	33%	100%
Total	879	529	525	1933
	45%	27%	27%	100%

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF – Welsh Language Reading Skills

Reading Skills				
	Can read Welsh	Cannot read Welsh	Can read a little Welsh	Total
Academic	203	277	155	635
	32%	44%	24%	100%
Academic Related	146	36	94	276
	53%	13%	34%	100%
Clerical	282	57	85	424
	67%	13%	20%	100%
Manual	156	71	63	290
	54%	24%	22%	100%
Technical	43	24	28	95
	45%	25%	29%	100%
Research	37	114	62	213
	17%	54%	29%	100%
Total	867	579	487	1933
	45%	30%	25%	100%

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF – Welsh Language Writing Skills

Writing Skills				
	Can write Welsh	Cannot write Welsh	Can write a little Welsh	Total

Academic	191	306	130	627
	30%	49%	21%	100%
Academic Related	135	63	80	278
	49%	23%	29%	100%
Clerical	259	71	90	420
	62%	17%	21%	100%
Manual	141	88	57	286
	49%	31%	20%	100%
Technical	43	30	20	93
	46%	32%	22%	100%
Research	33	127	50	210
	16%	60%	24%	100%
Total	802	685	427	1914
	42%	36%	22%	100%

WELSH MEDIUM TRAINING COURSES

The University's staff development team is a bilingual team and is therefore able to offer all courses developed internally through the medium of Welsh, as is the Health and Safety team and the information technology team. It is difficult to record the exact numbers / percentages of staff who received professional training through the medium of Welsh as much of that training is offered bilingually.

The importance of having staff with the ability to train bilingually has been very evident during lockdown as the organisation had to cope with a number of new challenges and had to develop and tailor training material at short notice. The staff development team held one-to-one and group support sessions across the organisation (e.g. in the Business School, a parent group). The information technology team was able to provide one-to-one training and training for specific cohorts of staff bilingually as well as producing a number of videos and training guides bilingually. As some staff prepared to teach face to face for a while, they were able to discuss their needs and receive guidance through the medium of Welsh from the Health and Safety team.

VACANCIES AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

	Welsh Essential	Welsh Essential or Willingness to Learn	Welsh Desirable	No specific Language requirement
Academic	9		46	8
Academic Related	3		12	
Clerical	25	6	25	1
Manual	5		7	
Technical	1		9	
Research	6		12	31
TOTAL	49	6	111	40

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

The University will develop its understanding of the needs of staff when using Welsh in a remote working context and feed into the national discussion on this. We will further develop online resources to support the use of Welsh at work and facilitate the bilingual context.

COMPLAINTS

The number of internal complaints / correspondence about an issue from the Welsh Language Commissioner received was as follows:

- Service Delivery Standards – 2
- Policy Making Standards – 1
- Operating Standards – 2

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the challenges of 19/20 Bangor University has been able to maintain its services in Welsh, has considered the Welsh language when formulating policies and putting procedures in place and has assisted staff to continue to use Welsh when working from home. This proactive approach will continue in 20/21.

If you would like further information about this report please contact:

Dr Lowri Angharad Hughes

Head of Policy and Development

Canolfan Bedwyr

Prifysgol Bangor

l.a.hughes@bangor.ac.uk

(01248) 383293