



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT ON WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

August 2020 – July 2021

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 2020 to 31 July 2021.

The report outlines the steps that the University has put in place to ensure that it complies with the Language Standards and highlights some specific successes and development objectives for the coming year. A copy of Bangor University's [Compliance Notice](#) can be found on our website.

A FULL YEAR OF IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARDS DURING A PANDEMIC

The period in question was one that was entirely under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. Between August 2020 and July 2021, lockdowns were in place as well as periods of working under various restrictions. The University's priority during this time was to ensure the richest possible student experience and the safety of students and staff. The Welsh language was a consideration in relation to these two matters. That is, as new patterns of teaching and learning and new ways of providing support services were implemented, steps were put in place to ensure that the Welsh language could be used and that the Welsh language was treated no less favourably than the English language. Similarly, as the University ensured that Health, Safety and Wellbeing information and systems were developed, they were made available bilingually. The reporting period 2020-2021 is, therefore, one where the University has responded proactively to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The period in question was also a period of significant internal changes for the University. A restructuring process was undertaken, and a new corporate strategy developed. Again, the Welsh language has been a consideration during these two processes. Our data shows that the percentage of staff who speak Welsh has fallen. In 19/20 45% of staff indicated that they spoke Welsh. In 20/21 44% of staff indicate that they speak Welsh and the University is aware of the need to monitor Welsh-medium capacity in the workforce following this period of change.

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 bilingual;
- students and partners have an opportunity to use Welsh when submitting applications for funding or when tendering to offer a service.

Last year, we noted in our Annual Report that we were keen to ensure that the Welsh language was central to any new approach to offering services as the challenges of lockdown continued.

The developments below are highlighted:

- The teaching and learning context has been revolutionised during the pandemic as online learning becomes a central element of module delivery. Alongside this, legal requirements are in place for public organisations to ensure that learning materials are accessible. During the period under review, significant work was undertaken, through Welsh Government funding, by the Language Technologies Unit at Canolfan Bedwyr to develop the *Trawsgrifiwr*. The *Trawsgrifiwr* has been developed with a view to ensuring that Welsh subtitles can be produced automatically for videos and audio clips. Although this work has not yet been completed, it is a significant step towards ensuring that the process of preparing accessible learning materials is equally convenient in both English and Welsh. This work will help staff and students across Wales.
- During September 2020, *Welcome 2020* activities were underway at the University. *Welcome 2020* replaced the traditional Welcome Week with all information online and all activities virtual. In terms of the Welsh language, live online sessions were held highlighting resources and opportunities to use Welsh as well as sessions giving a taste of the Welsh language. New online resources were developed promoting the Welsh language for fluent speakers, for students learning Welsh and for students with no prior knowledge of Welsh. These resources included:
 - Information on the bilingual study context, including videos from students and lecturers: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/welcome2020/bilingual.php.cy>
 - Information on the support and the opportunities available through the medium of Welsh in Bangor, including videos about student associations: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/welcome2020/y-gymraeg.php.cy>
 - Video presenting the history of the Welsh language and the way in which the language is used at the University: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/welcome2020/y-gymraeg.php.en>
 - Video introducing simple words and phrases: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/welcome2020/y-gymraeg.php.en>

- Cymorth Cymraeg – Resources for fluent speakers and learners: [Cymorth Cymraeg – Help with Welsh \(bangor.ac.uk\)](#)
- The Welsh Language Commissioner's *Diwrnod Hawliau* (Rights Day) on 7 December 2020 was again an opportunity to emphasise to students the opportunities for them to use Welsh at Bangor. In 2020, we decided to focus on the rights of students to receive support through the medium of Welsh within the University. Staff profiles were created to highlight the fact that Welsh speaking members of staff were available to support students in departments across the University, and not just within the Academic Schools.
- In addition, a video was created highlighting the services available to help students through the medium of Welsh with mental health issues: [Cymorth Iechyd Meddwl cyfrwng Cymraeg - YouTube](#). Work continued on the HEFCW funded project to develop a website with a wide range of mental health resources in Welsh for students across Wales.
- In ensuring that Covid procedures were in place for the start of the academic year, a range of signs, materials and resources were developed in Welsh to support students, including: Video explaining health and safety arrangements; an app to register positive test results; app to register attendance and assist with the identification of close contacts. See, for example: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/cy/astudio/cwestiynau-covid19>.
- Throughout the academic year, student issues and student news were communicated to all students through the Student Bulletin available in Welsh and English.
- In addition to the service developments noted above, academic staff also of course prepared Welsh-medium learning materials to address the need for digital content in Welsh in a range of subject areas. An example of this is the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Digital Resources Project. Bangor staff developed units of work in Sociology under this scheme: <https://www.porth.ac.uk/cy/collection/gwyddorau-cymdeithas-theori-gymdeithasegol> As with the Trawsgrifiwr referred to above, this work will support teaching and learning across Wales. The relationship between Welsh-medium academic provision and comprehensive and meaningful services in Welsh for our students is key to Bangor University's vision and its aim of supporting a thoroughly bilingual ethos.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

The University is keen to develop its dashboard systems within *Power BI* to monitor the numbers of Welsh speakers among students and also their involvement in academic provision through the medium of Welsh.

The University will develop training sessions on delivering services in Welsh to ensure that staff in new roles are aware of their responsibilities.

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 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, Teaching and Learning Strategy Group, Compliance Task Group). Furthermore, the University has taken steps to strengthen Welsh language representation on committees at College level.

During 2020-21, the University developed a new strategy *Strategy 2030 – A Sustainable World for Future Generations*. The Welsh language is one of the 'four pillars' of this strategy (along with 'Research Excellence', 'Transformative Learning Experiences' and 'An Excellent Student Experience'). Furthermore, an Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor has been appointed to develop a specific sub-strategy for the Welsh language.

Between September 2020 and July 2021 a process of restructuring was underway at the University. During the time that the University was going through this process, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued his Good Practice Advice Document on the Policy Making Standards. In the consultation on the restructuring, the University ensured that specific questions about the Welsh language were part of the process. In addition to using impact assessment documents for the Welsh language, an expert group was established to assess the impact of restructuring decisions on Welsh.

Much was learned about the impact assessment process in undertaking this exercise. It is fair to say that the process of assessing impact on the Welsh language across all its policies is a new area for the University and there is still work to be done to ensure that this happens systematically in all domains. Positive steps have already been taken, however, as a specific Welsh Language Impact Assessment form has been adopted and has begun to be placed on the website with the equality impact assessment as policies and regulations are developed and updated.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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. We will look at ways of further developing our work in the field of impact assessment and the Welsh 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.

In the period under review, the University continued to ensure that staff could continue to use Welsh at work and that they received clear messages that the University encourages them to do so. Some relevant developments are highlighted below:

- A *Guide for Managers* was developed. The guide refers to the University's Language Policy and the responsibility of managers to encourage the use of Welsh among staff.
- 2020/21 was a busy year in supporting staff to learn Welsh and encouraging them to use Welsh at work. Teaching methods were changed completely, and all aspects of learning was online. It was encouraging to see that a good number of staff had continued to learn Welsh and some had chosen to sit examinations and assessments. A large number of tutorials were held beyond the group lessons to support this and put staff in the strongest possible position to use Welsh at work.
- As there are far fewer opportunities for staff learning Welsh to use the language informally when working from home, it was ensured that the conversation scheme continued to provide speaking opportunities outside lessons. On the scheme, fluent speakers regularly arrange conversation sessions of around 20 minutes with staff learning Welsh. The sessions have proved popular with learners and fluent Welsh speakers.
- The University's translation team continued to innovate in their use of simultaneous translation in virtual situations while also preparing proactively for simultaneous translation delivery at hybrid meetings.
- The Welsh Government funded project ARFer was further developed so that the programme is suitable for a hybrid working context, as this is likely to be the reality of the world of work for many in the coming years.

WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF STAFF

The tables below outline the Welsh language skills of University staff on 31 July 2021 based on job categories:

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH SPEAKING SKILLS

	Speak Welsh	Don't speak Welsh	Speak a little Welsh	Total
Academic	206	255	179	640
	32%	40%	28%	100%
Academic Related	142	38	101	281
	51%	14%	36%	100%
Clerical	256	48	88	392
	65%	12%	22%	100%
Manual	136	62	54	252
	54%	25%	21%	100%
Technical	46	17	34	97
	47%	18%	35%	100%
Research	39	127	68	234
	17%	54%	29%	100%
Total	825	547	524	1896
	44%	29%	28%	100%

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH READING SKILLS

	Read Welsh	Don't read Welsh	Read some Welsh	Total
Academic	204	278	158	640
	32%	43%	25%	100%
Academic Related	139	43	96	278
	50%	15%	35%	100%
Clerical	256	57	83	396
	65%	14%	21%	100%
Manual	130	64	55	249
	52%	26%	22%	100%

Technical	45	23	30	98
	46%	23%	31%	100%
Research	41	133	63	237
	17%	56%	27%	100%
Total	815	598	485	1898
	43%	32%	26%	100%

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH WRITING SKILLS

	Write Welsh	Don't write Welsh	Write a little Welsh	Cyfanswm
Academic	192	307	132	631
	30%	49%	21%	100%
Academic Related	127	70	82	279
	46%	25%	29%	100%
Clerical	236	68	88	392
	60%	17%	22%	100%
Manual	115	81	49	245
	47%	33%	20%	100%
Technical	45	30	22	97
	46%	31%	23%	100%
Research	38	146	50	234
	16%	62%	21%	100%
Total	753	702	423	1878
	40%	37%	23%	100%

WELSH MEDIUM TRAINING COURSES

The University's staff development team is a bilingual team and is therefore able to offer all courses developed in-house through the medium of Welsh; so to 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.

During the period 2021/21 a large number of the University's staff have continued to work from home and therefore staff development opportunities have been provided online. The *Bangor Management Programme* has been launched which requires managers to complete 12 workshops and join an action learning group. Staff can choose to attend Welsh-medium workshops and a Welsh-medium action learning group has also been established. This has been a great way of bringing managers together to discuss the challenges of managing staff, and doing so through the medium of Welsh. Each participant is also allowed to choose to complete their Myers Briggs profile, a psychometric test looking at working styles and communication. University staff undertaking the test can receive the test feedback in Welsh.

As part of the development of a Wellbeing Strategy for staff and students, the University has invested in mental health training for a cohort of managers. This programme is i-act training and during the reporting period 100 managers received training from an external company specialising in the field. The training will give managers the confidence to discuss welfare issues with staff and ensuring, therefore, that bilingual managers received training was important given the possible nature of some of the discussions. 24 managers received this training through the medium of Welsh and there are plans to train in-house trainers to roll out this training further within the workplace. Ensuring that bilingual staff were qualified to train as in-house trainers was a key part of the strategy to ensure that Welsh-medium workshops could be offered to staff. There has also been investment in the training of Wellbeing Champions and they have received specialist training from a recognised professional body in Britain. The wellbeing champions will be available to offer 1:1 conversations with staff on well-being issues. Bilingual staff were recruited to attend the training. 21 completed the training and of those 8 are fluent in Welsh and a further 2 have learned Welsh to a good level.

VACANCIES AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

	Welsh Essential	Welsh Essential or Willingness to Learn	Welsh Desirable	No 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

As previously noted, the percentage of staff reporting that they speak Welsh has fallen in 20/21. The University is aware that this needs to be monitored and we will look at our recruitment processes. Furthermore, a new Language Awareness course will be developed along with a focus on developing training for managers. These courses will focus on the specific requirements and responsibilities arising from management in a bilingual context.

COMPLAINTS

No official complaints were received in the period under review. However, the University is aware that staff have concerns about the use of Welsh in some remote working contexts (e.g. open days). The situation was monitored throughout the year and solutions were introduced where possible. The University responded to the Welsh Language Commissioner's research in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

20/21 has been a challenging year for the University as for other institutions due to Covid-19. The organisation also faced a period of restructuring. 20/21 was also, however, a time of looking forward for the University following the publication of its new corporate strategy – *Strategy 2030 – A Sustainable World for Future Generations*.

Several proactive steps were taken during the year to promote the Welsh language and to ensure opportunities to use it. The University intends to build on this in 21/22, hopefully in a wider context that will be less tempestuous. In 21/22 the University's new Welsh Language Strategy will be implemented and an opportunity to ensure opportunities for our students, staff and wider stakeholders to use Welsh confidently in the 'new normal'.

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