ANNUAL REPORT ON WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

August 2023 – July 2024

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh.

BANGOR UNIVERSITY WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards at Bangor University refers to the period between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024.

The report outlines the steps that the University has put in place to ensure that it complies with the Welsh Language Standards and draws attention to some specific successes and development objectives for the coming year. There is a copy of Bangor University's Compliance Notice on our website.

DEVELOPING WELSH AND ENSURING ROBUST REPORTING SYSTEMS

Good practice in relation to the implementation of Welsh Language Standards, and ensuring that we maintain and develop opportunities to use the Welsh language, centres on compliance and development work. Both aspects are crucial to the University's success in this area.

2023-24 was a year which saw the University's procedures, in the context of its compliance with Welsh Language Standards, being tested as part of internal and external audits. The internal audit, carried out by Tiaa in November, was an assurance review of the Welsh language as one of the University's main strategic goals. The manner in which the University implements Welsh Language Standards was a large part of the review. Written and oral evidence was collected from a wide range of staff on the day-to-day implementation of the Standards, focusing on ten Standards in particular. The audit concluded that there was 'Substantial Assurance' and 'No urgent, important or routine recommendations were raised'.

The external audit, carried out by the Welsh Language Commissioner, was the result of the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by the University, a 'mystery shopper' audit and a meeting to discuss findings and developments. Once again, there was a swift response to any example of non-compliance highlighted in the mystery+ shopper report and there was a positive discussion about the University's development work. This led to an invitation to present on good practice at a seminar for the Commissioner's Education Sector Network.

As well as confirming the robustness of the compliance procedures, the year in question was one that saw further development in the way the University's Welsh language services are provided and the way in which staff and students are supported to use them. Examples and notable developments are included in this report.

In 2023-24 the Welsh Language Strategy was updated and a new Action Plan was developed to support the strategy's vision and objectives. The aim of the Welsh Language Strategy Action Plan is to ensure that a number of practical steps are taken to create a truly bilingual organisation that gives prestige to the Welsh language. These steps aim to give all our staff and students the opportunity to get

involved positively with the Welsh language and to feel ownership of its key place in the life of the University. The scheme also ensures study opportunities through Welsh for our students across all fields of study, giving them the opportunity to develop their ability to deal with their subjects confidently in Welsh. For the first time in 2023-24, the Welsh Language Awards were held as a sign of the University's intention to encourage and celebrate a positive involvement with the Welsh language across our workforce. The awards were established to celebrate the contribution of teams and individuals to the viability and development of the Welsh language at the University and to the central role of the Welsh language in our identity and our day-to-day work.

In 2022-23 43% of staff indicated that they could speak Welsh. In 2023-24, the percentage of staff who state that they speak Welsh has remained constant (43%). It is encouraging to note that the general percentage of Welsh speakers among staff remains constant (and has done so since 2021-22).

Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, the number of staff at the University has fallen from 1933 to 1768. It is fair to note that the highest fall during this period was among staff who speak Welsh - from 879 in 2019-20 to 760 in 2023-24. As the Higher Education sector faces a challenging financial context, the University is required to ensure that the bilingual skills capacity of the workforce allows it to realise its strategic objective of being a truly bilingual institution where the Welsh language thrives.

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Bangor University is confident that it has performed well in complying with the Service Delivery Standards. Essential systems are put in place that ensure:

> • that Welsh-speaking staff work in receptions and on helpdesks;
> • that the whole range of our services is available to students and staff in Welsh and to the public where relevant;
> • that signs are bilingual;
> • there is an opportunity for students and partners to use the Welsh language when submitting requests for finance or when tendering to offer a service;
> • that there is a mechanism in place to identify any shortcomings in our services

In addition to ensuring that these services are in place, we work together with our students so that they have comprehensive information about Welsh language services, that they have the confidence to use them and that they understand the value of the Welsh skills they have.

When considering the developments and activities that have taken place in delivering, supporting and recognising Welsh language services in 2023-24, attention is given to the following examples:

DELIVERING AND PROMOTING SERVICES

- There was a specific category at the Welsh Language Awards for Professional Services. The Student Well-being and Support Team were awarded for their work in ensuring a Welsh-language service for students and for their contribution towards developing Welsh-medium capacity in the field of well-being. Also, a Special Recognition Award was given to the Deputy Director of IT Services for his contribution over many years to the University's bilingual digital infrastructure.

- A project to update the University's website reached its final stages in 2023-24. Its primary focus was to ensure that different systems that feed into the website are compatible with one another and that information is up to date at every stage. A special effort was made by the project team to ensure that the information is available entirely bilingually and in an accessible and meaningful way for students who speak Welsh and who wish to follow their courses in Welsh

- In order to promote the use of Welsh language services, new lanyards were designed for staff who speak Welsh and those staff members who are learning the language. The design incorporates the 'Iaith Gwaith' symbol with the University's branding. Around 500 'Welsh' and 300 'Learning Welsh' lanyards have been distributed during 2023-24, including in induction sessions for new staff. In addition, it was ensured that staff members in receptions had a supply of the new lanyards and Iaith Gwaith posters as part of a distribution activity at the start of the 2023-24 season. Iaith Gwaith badges were issued to members of staff who do not wear lanyards for practical or security reasons. It is interesting to note that students have also been offered the lanyards and that many of them choose to wear them on campus.

- An information booklet was developed regarding the Welsh language at the University in all its contexts - from the presence of the language in the surrounding area to information about the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol scholarships and much more. A new page was developed on the University website with the same information, centralising the information in one accessible place for the use of students, staff, prospective students and their parents.

- Reference was made to the development of a training package on the language policy in the report for 2022-23. That work was completed in August 2023 but there was a delay before its publication as a result of work on the University's digital infrastructure. It was, however, utilised with specific groups of staff members when presenting training on the provision of bilingual services.

- The Teaching and Learning Support Team has created a resource for students on the 'Effective Use of Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT'. This timely resource is included on Blackboard sites in the School of Education and the School of Health Sciences as well as the 'Study Skills - Aim Higher' Blackboard site, which is open to all students. Team members have also presented at Teaching and Learning conferences on their experiences of working on creating bilingual platforms with international companies. They have also presented training sessions for students as part of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Research Skills programme.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO SEE VALUE IN THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND IN DEVELOPING THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS

- As part of the effort to link the Welsh language with employability, a special event was held during the University's 'Employability Week'. 'Welsh in the Workplace - celebrating

bilingualism' was an opportunity to reward those students who had obtained the Language Skills Certificate and for prominent guest speakers to share their experiences of using the Welsh language at work.

- In order to ensure that students who speak Welsh take an active part in planning events that encourage them to see the value of their language skills, 3 students were employed through the University's internship program to organise and deliver a Welsh Jobs Fair in 2024. With the support of staff from Canolfan Bedwyr and the Careers and Employability Service, it resulted in an extremely successful event with 33 external employers present and 78 students attending.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE UNIVERSITY'S WIDER COMMUNITY

The University is fully aware of its responsibility in contributing to the prosperity of the Welsh language in the wider community and that its relevance to life is reinforced and supported by its work. To this end, we ensure:

- that the Welsh language is present, visible and used in our events when engaging with the local community
- that we develop teaching and learning resources that deepen our students' ability to deal with their subject in Welsh at University and after graduating
- that we develop practical resources to support the Welsh language

Here are some of the highlights of 2023-24:

- As part of the 3 year agreement with the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA), a conference event – 'Pweru Ynys Ynni a'i phobl' was held at M-SParc science park in October 2023. With panel members representing enterprises private and public organisations on Anglesey, the discussion was in Welsh, with a simultaneous translation service for non-Welsh speaking attendees and contributors. In March 2024, another significant event took place, this time discussing community ownership at Tŷ Gwyrddfai, Penygroes, with panel members made up of representatives of community enterprises in the catchment area as well as economic experts from the University. This was also a naturally Welsh event, with a simultaneous translation service available.
- The University held its first Community Day in October 2023, with around a thousand attendees taking part in a wide range of workshops, exhibitions, sessions and stall activities. There were a number of Welsh medium sessions during the day e.g. reading session for children; an opportunity for children to take part in a football commentary session; Canolfan Bedwyr had stand there to discuss research, services and technology in Welsh. A specific effort was made to ensure that the Welsh language was prominent throughout the event - from a marketing, content and staffing point of view.
- Podcasts were produced which identified gaps in Welsh language provision and supported professional fields through the language. Examples include the 'Llond Ceg' project by the School of Environmental and Natural Sciences discussing sustainable

Welsh food and the podcast 'Am Waith Cymdeithasol', which is the first Welsh resource of its kind to focus on contemporary issues related to Social Work practice.

- Canolfan Bedwyr's Language Technologies team, in collaboration with Cereproc from Scotland, provided 16 synthetic Welsh voices for the Welsh Health Service, to be used by children and teenagers. This development will help break down the barriers to communication that Welsh children face when using technological communication devices, by giving them voices that reflect who they are.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Ensuring that the Welsh language is central to the digitisation of services and to the development of a one-stop shop for professional services.	Chief Executive Officer and Heads of Professional Services
Re-introduce a University-wide regime of default enrolment in preparation for the 2025/26 academic year.	Student Services / Canolfan Bedwyr / Digital Services
Ensure that the Welsh language remains prominent in the University's employability activities.	Employability Team / Canolfan Bedwyr
Collaborate with students to understand their use and perception of Welsh language services.	Canolfan Bedwyr / Students' Union and UMCB
Ensure that information about the Welsh language in Bangor (e.g. on promotional materials) continues to evolve by collaborating with students on creating new and relevant content.	Marketing Team / Canolfan Bedwyr
Ensure that the Welsh language is prominent when reviewing Open Days arrangements.	Recruitment Team / PVC for Welsh

POLICY MAKING STANDARDS

Bangor University has clear reporting processes as new policies, strategies and plans are developed. The role of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Welsh has been one that has existed for several years. The post holder is a member of the University's Executive Committee and chairs the Welsh Language and Culture Committee. This committee is a central committee of the University and the minutes go before the Executive. The Secretary of the University is also a member of that committee and the Executive Committee. This means that Welsh language issues can be highlighted and advocated for at the highest tier of University management. The Council's Welsh Affairs Committee, chaired by a lay member of the Council, also oversees our compliance with the Standards and the minutes of that sub-group go to the full Council committee.

During 2023-24, the following developments occurred in the context of the Policy Making Standards:

STRUCTURES

- With the establishment of a Welsh Language Policy Group following the reorganisation of the University's committees (and the consequent dissolution of the Welsh Language Standards Review Panel), there has been an opportunity to look at the membership of the new group and ensure that all of the University's professional services are represented. The group is chaired by the Head of Policy and Development at Canolfan Bedwyr and reports to the University's Welsh Language and Culture Committee. The chair of the Language Policy Group sits on the University's Compliance Committee.

- In 2023/24, the role of Dean of Welsh was filled at all three University Colleges. This role helps to ensure visibility of Welsh language issues at College level. The three Deans are members of their Colleges' Executive Committees and ensure that the Welsh language and provision through the Welsh language are key considerations in all developments and plans.

- A Welsh recruitment sub-group has been set up to ensure a focus on attracting Welsh students to study at the University. The group chair sits on the main recruitment group chaired by the Chief Marketing Officer, who is a member of the University's Executive.

- Following the appointment of the Welsh Language Development and Promotion Officer in 22-23, a new methodology was established for reporting and analysing enquiries and general complaints from members of staff in relation to compliance matters. This has enabled the team to identify any gaps in knowledge and introduce specific training interventions to address them.

MAINSTREAMING WELSH IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

With the establishment of the North Wales Medical School, a conscious effort was made to ensure that Welsh-medium learning and support staff were part of the school's staffing structure. In addition, a compulsory language course was developed for Welsh speaking and

non-Welsh-speaking students as part of their first year studies. Alongside the language sessions, information on language awareness and the wider statutory context will be presented to prepare aspiring doctors to work in the NHS in Wales.

- As the University developed its Student Ambassador scheme, the digital platform was made available bilingually. Policy advice, translation and proofreading services were provided to the developers as the software was built. Alongside these technological advances, language awareness training sessions were provided to all those students registering to become Ambassadors in 2023-24.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The University is aware of the Welsh Language Commissioner's priorities in the area of Policy Making Standards and is keen to develop its work in this context. Over the coming year we will aim to further strengthen the work of ensuring that our new policies and developments protect the core principles of the Standards – ensuring opportunities to use Welsh and not treating Welsh less favourably than English.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Deliver training at all leadership / managerial levels on the Policy Making Standards and their implementation	Canolfan Bedwyr / University Secretary
Ensure that the University's work in the field of Welsh is highlighted as part of the QAA Quality Improvement Review.	Student Services / Canolfan Bedwyr / Digital Services
Implement the recommendations of the review into membership and simultaneous translation provision within University committees.	University Secretary
Implementing a 10 Standard Monitoring Plan	Canolfan Bedwyr

Promoting the use of Welsh at work has been a priority for Bangor University for several years. As previously mentioned, the Welsh Language Awards were held in April 2024, as part of the University's 140th anniversary celebrations programme. Accompanied by the Vice-Chancellor and led by Aled Hughes, a well-known presenter and alumnus of the University, a number of awards were presented, recognising the special efforts of staff supporting the use of Welsh throughout the institution.

In terms of implementing the Operational Standards and supporting staff to use Welsh, relevant developments are highlighted below:

RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

- The University took an active role – both at a regional and national level – in tackling the challenge of recruiting Welsh speakers into workplaces and encouraging Welsh speakers to make use of their skills. Through the Welsh language subgroup of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Services Board, a report and checklist has been produced for the use of Language Officers and Human Resources Officers. Through ARFOR sponsorship, a research team from the University's School of History, Law and Social Sciences produced a Bilingual Workforce Recruitment Pack sharing good practice in recruiting Welsh speakers and constructing a typology to support employers.

INCREASING USAGE

- Working in collaboration with the Deans of Welsh at their colleges, training was provided on chairing bilingual meetings. This was in response to comments from members of staff who felt the linguistic dynamic of certain meetings was threatened by chairing through English only. Following the training, feedback was received from members of staff indicating that the situation had improved and opportunities for them to use their Welsh had increased.

- There were opportunities during the year for staff to come together to celebrate the Welsh language and to support their colleagues' efforts in learning the language. An event was held over lunch in Pontio to celebrate Shumae Sumae day in 2023, with over 70 staff dropping in during the hour to socialise with their colleagues. Similar numbers attended the St David's Day Celebration event in 2024.

- Welsh 'Sesiynau Sgwrsio' (Conversation Sessions) are regularly held between pairs of staff who are confident to speak Welsh and those who are learning. This provides opportunities to use Welsh outside of formal lessons.

- Developments in the ARFer programme were piloted with teams within the University and across Wales to change language habits. Funding was secured through the ARFOR programme to develop an app to incorporate the programme methodology and RONDO was commissioned to undertake the work.

- In 2023-24 149 staff enrolled in Welsh courses and continued to pursue them after initial expressions of interest. There is a 20% increase on the previous year in enrolment on the Cymraeg Gwaith (Work Welsh) programme. A total of 60% learners achieved a WJEC Welsh for Adults qualification or achieved a Work Welsh certificate ranging from levels 1-7. The level of continuous progression through the language learning levels is outstanding and testament to the effectiveness of courses tailored to the specific needs of the workplace.

Staff learning levels 2023-24	
Level 1 / Beginners	47
Level 2 / Entry	24
Level 3 / Foundation	22
Level 4 / Intermediate	22
Level 5 & 6 / Higher	21
Level 7 / Proficiency	13

- There was an increase of around 30% in the number of staff who started learning and reached level 1 (pronouncing correctly and using basic phrases in their work). In addition, the increase in numbers at Foundation level this year (22 compared to 15 at 22-23) shows that the pattern of continuity through the levels, that has been built up over the years, continues. The flexibility of the programme and its learning methods enables staff to balance their work with learning and to make good progress. This helps to ensure that a high percentage of staff progress to the higher levels in due course.

- For those staff members who had reached the higher levels on the learning continuum, a tutor worked regularly with 12 individuals to provide grammar sessions. The tutor also worked with them on written tasks that were part of their day-to-day work at the time.

- In terms of the academic context in particular, 4 members of staff followed the 'Cymraeg Gwaith+' pathway, developed especially for those who have reached fluency and are in a position to start teaching in Welsh and thereby extend the Welsh medium offering available to students.

- A pilot of a new project has been developed and undertaken for first-language staff who have low self-confidence in their written Welsh. Prosiect X uses a unique methodology which, alongside the language sessions, includes elements of psychological training and lectures on Welsh in various contexts. Project tutors worked intensively with 6 members of staff and managed to maintain full attendance at sessions as well as seeing an increase in willingness to use Welsh at work.

- Not only do these developments show an increase in the numbers of staff starting their language journey by learning Welsh at work, they also highlight efforts to strengthen the provision for those at higher levels, including first-language Welsh speakers.

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH SPEAKING SKILLS

	Speak Welsh	Don't Speak Welsh	Speak a little	Total
Academic	214	264	180	**658**
	33%	40%	27%	**100%**
Academic Related	134	39	92	**265**
	50%	15%	35%	**100%**
Clerical	226	43	84	**353**
	64%	12%	24%	**100%**
Manual	100	69	51	**220**
	45%	31%	23%	**100%**
Technical	46	20	29	**95**
	48%	21%	31%	**100%**
Research	40	84	53	**177**
	23%	47%	30%	**100%**
Total	**760**	**519**	**489**	**1768**
	43%	**29%**	**28%**	**100%**

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH READING SKILLS

	Read Welsh	Can't read Welsh	Read a little Welsh	Total
Academic	223	285	173	**681**
	33%	42%	25%	**100%**
Academic Related	140	48	88	**276**
	51%	17%	32%	**100%**
Clerical	234	62	82	**378**

	62%	16%	22%	**100%**
Manual	92	61	49	**202**
	46%	30%	24%	**100%**
Technical	47	24	30	**101**
	47%	24%	30%	**100%**
Research	43	83	53	**179**
	24%	46%	30%	**100%**
Total	**779**	**563**	**475**	**1817**
	43%	**31%**	**26%**	**100%**

ALL UNIVERSITY STAFF: WELSH WRITING SKILLS

	Write in Welsh	Can't write in Welsh	Write a little in Welsh	Total
Academic	208	316	147	**671**
	31%	47%	22%	**100%**
Academic Related	130	69	76	**275**
	47%	25%	28%	**100%**
Clerical	218	73	87	**378**
	58%	19%	23%	**100%**
Manual	81	74	44	**199**
	41%	37%	22%	**100%**
Technical	44	31	26	**101**
	44%	31%	26%	**100%**
Research	39	95	43	**177**
	22%	54%	24%	**100%**
Total	**720**	**658**	**423**	**1801**
	40%	**37%**	**23%**	**100%**

DEVELOPMENT COURSES THROUGH WELSH

The University's Staff Development Team continues to offer all courses developed in-house through the medium of Welsh; in addition, the Health and Safety team and the Information Technology team provide workshops in English and Welsh as needed. Many of the courses offered are run as bilingual workshops so recording the exact numbers of staff who received professional training through Welsh can be challenging.

- The reintroduction of the new staff inductions on campus has been a success during 2023-24. This has allowed us to emphasise the more practical elements of working in a bilingual organisation – such as simultaneous translation and the natural flow of bilingual meetings and presentations.

- Dynamic Working has continued during the period, and as a result a number of courses continue to be held online in Welsh or English. Staff are choosing their preferred language when enrolling through the iTrent HR/Learning platform introduced during 2024 and the new system is working well.

- A further 56 managers have now completed the Bangor Management Programme and an additional 40 are in the process of completing it. Staff following the programme can choose to attend Welsh-medium workshops and a dedicated Welsh-medium active learning group has been set up, which gives managers an informal and confidential space to discuss verbally amongst themselves. Managers also have the option of receiving the feedback of the Myers Briggs psychometric test in Welsh. The 'Managing in a Bilingual Environment' workshop is a core part of the Bangor Management Programme.

- During 2023-24, substantial work has taken place at the intersection of HR and Digital Services to develop a mandated training package. This is training that needs to be completed by all staff at the University, regardless of the individual's role. There are ten modules in total of which eight are available in English and Welsh.

JOB CATEGORY	LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT	Speak Welsh	Speak a little	Don't speak Welsh	No information
Academic	Essential	7			3
		70%	0%	0%	30%
Academic Related	Essential	9	1		
		90%	10%	0%	0%
Clerical	Essential	22	3		
		88%	12%	0%	0%
Manual	Essential	1			
		100%	0%	0%	0%
Technical	Essential	2			
		100%	0%	0%	0%
Research	Essential	7			
		100%	0%	0%	0%
Clerical	Essential or Willingness to Learn to a certain level	4	3		
		57%	43%	0%	0%
Manual	Essential or Willingness to Learn to a certain level	2	1		
		67%	33%	0%	0%
Research	Essential or Willingness to Learn to a certain level	1			
		100%	0%	0%	0%
Academic	Desirable	8	10	12	4
		24%	29%	35%	12%

Academic Related	Desirable	6	11	1	2
		30%	55%	5%	10%
Clerical	Desirable	7	12	6	2
		26%	44%	22%	7%
Manual	Desirable	7	3		
		70%	30%	0%	0%
Technical	Desirable	3	2	2	
		43%	29%	29%	0%
Research	Desirable	2	12	12	
		8%	46%	46%	0%
Academic	No specific language requirement		1	1	21
		0%	4%	4%	91%
Research	No specific language requirement		3	13	3
		0%	16%	68%	16%
Total		88	62	47	10
		38%	27%	20%	15%

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Ensure that the mandatory course on the University's Welsh Language Policy for staff is operational and participation is monitored.	HR / Canolfan Bedwyr
Collaborate with UCISA to create a new Welsh mandatory training course in Information Security.	IT Services / Canolfan Bedwyr

Consider how our recruitment and Welsh language processes could be strengthened based on the evidence and recommendations in the projects undertaken in 23-24.	HR / Canolfan Bedwyr
Build on the positive results of the first year of Prosiect X (a project to build the confidence of fluent speakers) by working with further groups of staff and ensuring continuity.	Canolfan Bedwyr
Pilot the ARFer app with teams within the University.	Canolfan Bedwyr

COMPLAINTS

Three formal complaints were received under the Service Delivery Standards.

CONCLUSIONS

As noted at the beginning of the report, good practice in relation to the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards relates to compliance and development work. During 2023-24 the University took positive steps in testing and developing its compliance systems. It also built on the number of initiatives to develop opportunities to use Welsh. This work will continue in 2024-25 by focusing on key strategic issues. This includes:

- strengthening how the Welsh language is mainstreamed in the University's activities by focusing on the priorities of the Welsh Language Commissioner in the context of the Policy Making Standards;
- strengthening the voice of our students by working with them to understand their involvement with Welsh language services and to give them the opportunity to co-design those services;
- further refinement of language training for staff and the structured opportunities to use Welsh beyond language classes.

By implementing these steps, in the context of the Welsh Language Standards and the Action Plan for its Welsh Language Strategy, the University looks forward to further progress in 2024-25.

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