



Coleg
Cymraeg
Cenedlaethol
Dathlu'r 10

@colegcymraeg

10 Years and counting

the story of the
Coleg Cymraeg
Cenedlaethol's first
decade



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COLEG CYMRAEG

CENEDLAETHOL



The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is the strategic and funding body that ensures that the Welsh language is part of the lifelong learning landscape of the people of Wales through our universities, colleges and apprenticeship providers. The aim is to offer students and learners the opportunity to experience education and training through the medium of Welsh leading to the development of a confident Welsh language and bilingual workforce across a variety of sectors.

At the turn of the century, the demand for a Welsh language college, from academics, language campaigners and the students themselves, was noisy and powerful. The initial goal was to create a Federal College. Some were keen to see a new university being built that only provided courses through the medium of Welsh. Others wanted to establish a strategic body that funded courses in all our universities in Wales. Several detailed plans were proposed but there was no agreement, and the concept of a 'federal college' meant different things to different people.

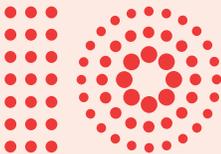


**“WE CAN’T TAKE
OUR FOOT OFF
THE PEDAL.”**

When the “One Wales” Government was established between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru in 2007, talk turned into policy. A planning board was created led by Professor Robin Williams. This then led to the establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in 2011. Since its inception, the Coleg has ensured a huge increase in the number of courses and subjects that can be studied in Welsh universities through the medium of Welsh. It has created a clear strategy, a pathway to create a confident workforce and status for the language.

University education was the focus of the Coleg’s work in the early years, but now the Coleg is also responsible for planning Welsh-medium provision for further education and apprenticeships – the jam in the Welsh-medium education sandwich between schools and universities. Work has already started to appoint teaching staff across Wales for vocational courses and apprenticeships.

The Coleg is a central part of the experience of any student, teacher or lecturer studying and working through the medium of Welsh and is at the heart of the Welsh Government’s campaign to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050.



▲
Above Image:
Professor Robin
Williams

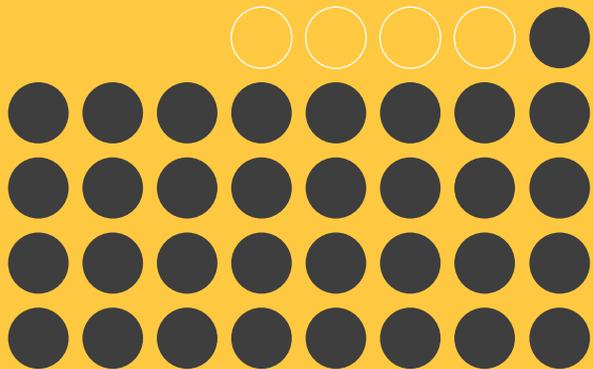
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Ambassador images,
Coleg Cymraeg

10 YEARS IN 10 FACTS

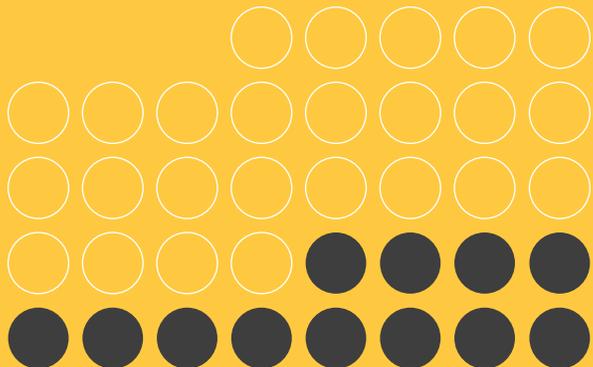
01

In 2011, only **12** of the **37** main subject groups were available through the medium of Welsh at university level. By 2019/20, **33** were available.

2019/20



2011





02

More than **1,900** students have received undergraduate scholarships from the Coleg Cymraeg to pursue their studies through the medium of Welsh.



1,900

03

More than **£3.1 million** has been shared over the decade in undergraduate and master's scholarships.





04

In 2010/11, only **710** staff in universities were able to teach through the medium of Welsh. By 2019/20, this had reached **1,135**.

1,135

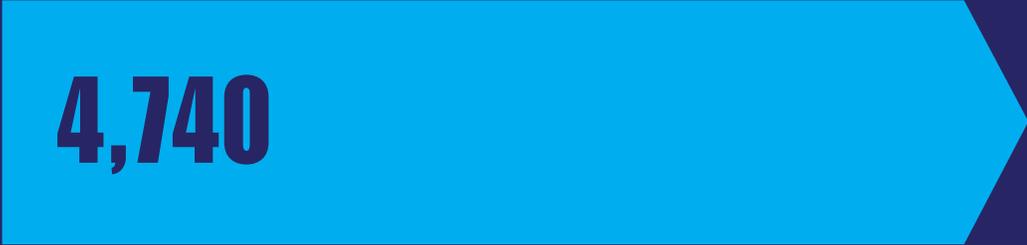
710

05

In 2010/11, **3,005** full-time students were studying at least some of their higher education course through the medium of Welsh. By 2019/20, this had increased to **4,740**.



3,005



4,740



06

In 20010/11, **2,095** were studying at least a third of their degree course through the medium of Welsh. In 2019/20, the figure was **2,670**.

2,095

2,670

07

Over **90** students have completed a doctorate (PhD) funded by the Coleg, and a further **40** are currently studying for a doctorate



40

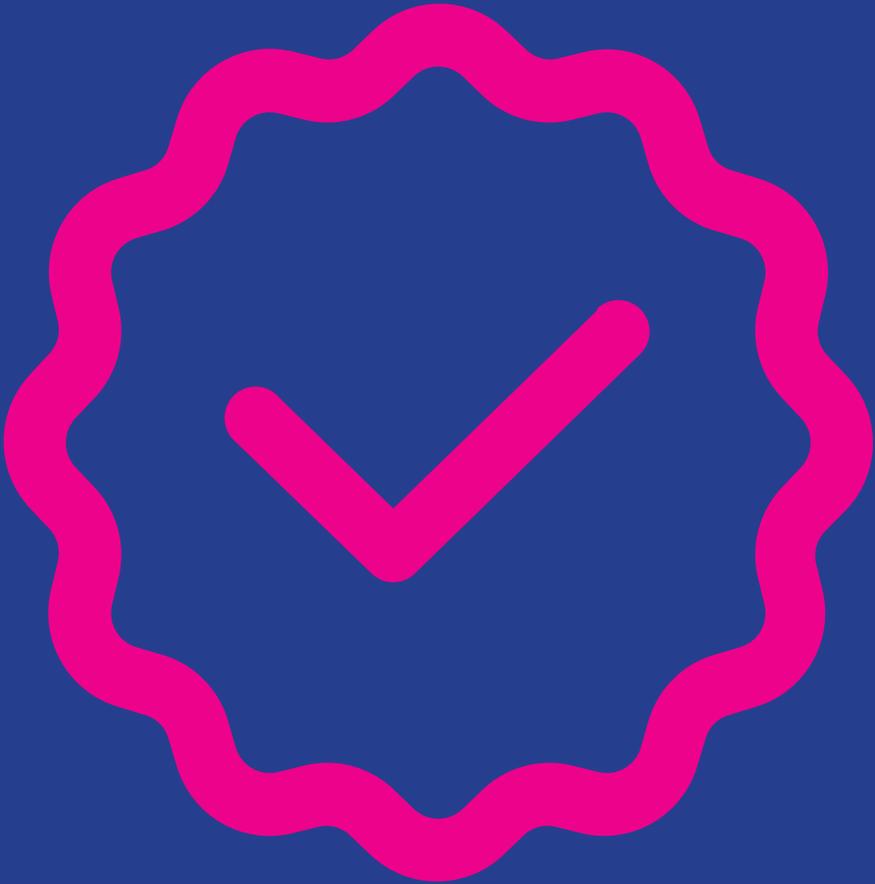


90



08

In all, **1,868** students have completed the Language Skills Certificate since 2013.



09

Since 2019, more than **10,000** learners in the further education and apprenticeship sector have benefited from the Coleg's projects

1 2020 01



10

Since the establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Ambassadors' scheme, **284** learners, students and apprentices have taken on the role of an Ambassador.



THE DREAM **BECOMES A** **REALITY**

**“THERE WAS NO
NATIONAL STRATEGY,
AND THE INSTITUTIONAL
STRATEGIES WERE ALSO
FEW AND FAR BETWEEN”**



At the turn of this century, Welsh-medium education in primary and secondary schools was long established and was an integral part of Welsh life. However, as young people left school, the same level of Welsh-medium provision was not available for them in universities.

"It was hit and miss if a student was able to follow a course through the medium of Welsh" according to Meri Huws, who is now on the Board of Directors of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol but worked in universities before being appointed Welsh Language Commissioner. **"It depended so much on whether an individual in the institution was able to teach and was keen to lecture through the medium of Welsh. There was no national strategy, and the**

institutional strategies were also few and far between."

With the birth of the National Assembly and the devolution of education to Cardiff Bay, there was a growing sense that a strategy was required to give Welsh-medium education status in our universities. The campaign wasn't organised by one specific individual. According to those involved in the discussions during this period, several different parties came together at the right time.

Meri Huws said **"One of the things that prompted this was the fact that Welsh-medium education in schools had been so successful in spreading across Wales, creating prospective students and students who saw that**

they were entitled to some provision, or full provision at university through the medium of Welsh. There was also a group of academics who, at the same time, were saying, we have to do it now or we will miss the opportunity."

She added: **"The landscape in Wales was changing. People weren't arguing to the same extent about the status of the Welsh language. The Welsh language had status, and the political landscape had also changed. Campaigning had moved on from securing official status for the Welsh language, to having provision through the medium of Welsh".**



Twenty years ago, Catrin Dafydd was a student at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and in 2003/04 she was President of UMCA (Aberystwyth's Welsh-speaking Students' Union). She was one of the leaders of the campaign to establish the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

"You weren't operating in isolation, there was a constant flow of voices stating that the situation as it stood was not right. In Aberystwyth, it was becoming increasingly clear that there was a desire from students to study more through the medium of Welsh. It then became clear that students in other universities were sympathetic to the cause and there was little resistance amongst other students. Although we were not, on the whole, a generation that was as political as the students of the eighties, I think we could see that through devolution, our generation could witness the birth of national structures."

Dr Ioan Matthews is the current Chief Executive of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol but his connection dates back to before the Coleg was established. He ran the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education at the beginning of the century in the period when a milestone was reached. He said: **"A major step was to persuade the Funding Council, which had responsibility for higher education in Wales and its funding, that teaching through the medium of Welsh was something that had to be planned at a national level rather than just at a local or departmental level."**

The Funding Council established a Planning Group chaired by Andrew Green, the then National Librarian. In 2004, the Group produced a plan that became, in due course, part of the foundations for the establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The main element was the creation of the **Research Scholarship** scheme. At this time, university departments across Wales were not appointing many Welsh speakers to lecturing posts as the ability to discuss subjects through the medium of Welsh was not essential apart from the Welsh language as a subject, of course.



▲
Above:
Students campaigning to establish the Coleg Cymraeg
Photo credit: Rhys Llwyd



Dr Ioan Matthews said: **"It was decided to nurture a new generation of scholars who would then be eligible to apply for lecturing posts. And that was the purpose of the Research Scholarships scheme – enabling people to complete a doctorate but with the intention that they then, at the end of the period, had the opportunity to be tutors for a year, in the first place anyway, and could therefore apply for jobs."**

As the scheme came to fruition, there was also a significant political development. When the "One Wales" Coalition Government was established between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru in 2007, the establishment of a body to promote Welsh-medium education in universities became official policy. A planning board was set up led by Professor Robin Williams, former Vice-Chancellor of Swansea University.

Almost 15 years later, Professor Williams says: **"I thought at the beginning it would be almost impossible to get everyone to work together and to agree. But as it turned out, it was completely different. Everyone was on the same wavelength and much more in agreement than I would ever have expected, to be honest. This was a great help."**

Professor Williams added: **"We all knew that whatever we suggested had to be practical - it had to work. It was more important to have something that worked properly than some vision of some building somewhere. All we had to do was come up with a plan that would work properly and would be acceptable to everyone. All the doors were open to us."**

Following the publication of the Planning Board's report in 2009, the Welsh Government accepted its recommendations, and after further work by an action group chaired by Geraint Talfan Davies, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was born.

▲
Above:
Dr Ioan Matthews, Chief
Executive of the Coleg

THE EARLY YEARS

**“BY NOW, EVERYONE IS
HAPPY. EVERYONE
BENEFITS AND NOBODY
LOSES OUT AND THAT IS
DUE TO WORKING WITH
THE UNIVERSITIES”**

▶
Image on next page:
Professor Robin Williams



In March 2011, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was established following a policy decision by the Welsh Government. It became a strategic and funding organisation to ensure that the Welsh language is part of the lifelong learning journey of the people of Wales. The aim from the outset was to produce a confident Welsh-language and bilingual workforce across a variety of sectors.

The target area was university education in Wales, with the aim of planning and co-ordinating Welsh-medium provision, operating on the principle that any academic or vocational discipline could be studied and discussed through the medium of Welsh.

The Chief Executive from the outset has been Dr Ioan Matthews. He previously led the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education and prepared the ground for the establishment of the Coleg. The Centre's staff were transferred to work for the Coleg and a number of them continue to work for the institution ten years on.

Dr Ioan Matthews said:
"Initially the Coleg adopted the plans that were already in place, but of course there was then an opportunity to do so much more with a significantly increased budget."

One of the first things the Coleg did after being established was to actively



▶ Right hand image:
Dr Ioan Matthews



appoint lecturers – 26 in the first year. A number of these were in areas where there had been no previous Welsh language provision. At Bangor University, for example, a lecturer in Chemistry was appointed, and at Aberystwyth University, members of staff were appointed to teach Ecology and Physics.

By the time the Coleg was set up, the students involved in the Research Scholarship scheme established in 2005 were coming to the end of their courses and were ready to take up lecturing posts. Many of them were appointed as Coleg Cymraeg lecturers in various subjects and in various universities.

The number of lecturers offering Welsh-medium education grew, and during the first five years, the Coleg had sponsored more than a hundred lecturers to be able to teach through the medium of Welsh in a wide range of subjects. Most of these lecturers continue to teach through the medium of Welsh at the universities today, although the original staffing scheme ended in 2020.

In 2011, it was possible to study 12 of the 37 main subject groups taught within higher education through the medium of Welsh. Ten years later, some Welsh-medium provision is available in 33 of those 37 subjects in at least one institution. This is an increase of 175%.

With lecturers in post, the aim then was to attract students to study through the medium of Welsh.

One of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's successes is the Scholarship scheme introduced for undergraduate students.

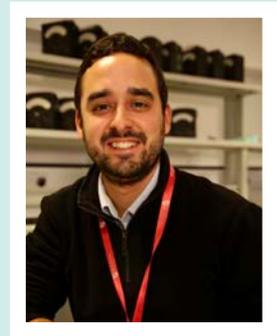
In 2011/12, there were 2,715 students following an undergraduate course partly or wholly through the medium of Welsh, and 505 studying postgraduate courses. By 2019/20, the number of undergraduate students was 5,270 and postgraduate students stood at 660.

Provision soon grew to enable Welsh-medium courses to be offered in areas where Welsh had not previously been the language of university education.

Dr Ioan Matthews says: **"Some of the biggest successes in my view are in areas such as Medicine where there had been a serious problem of a lack of opportunities. By now, this is integral to the provision of the School of Medicine in Cardiff and hopefully soon at the new School in Bangor."**

"It is now fair to say that universities recognise their responsibility in relation to providing through the medium of Welsh."

At Bangor University, the Engineering department now offers at least 40 credits a year through the medium of Welsh on its degree courses.



Dr Daniel Roberts, Lecturer in Electronics Engineering at Bangor, who studied for his PhD through a Coleg Research Scholarship, said: **"We are now in a position to offer at least 40 credits a year through the medium of Welsh on each of our Engineering courses, which is a major step for the School. A number of students have noted how beneficial it is for them to be able to study through the medium of Welsh, and that it is one of their reasons for studying at Bangor."**

Professor Robin Williams, Chair of the Planning Board back in 2007 and former Vice-Chancellor of Swansea University, said: **"Before the Coleg, there were tensions around teaching through the medium of Welsh. Most university staff were non-Welsh speakers, and some were anti-Welsh. They didn't want this kind of thing. By now, everyone is happy. Everyone benefits and nobody loses out and that is due to working with the universities. Now anything that is presented to promote the Welsh language is accepted much more easily by university staff."**

► Image:
Dr Daniel Roberts

SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING COMMUNITY

**“OFTEN, THE VOCABULARY
WASN'T AVAILABLE, AND
ONE OF THE THINGS THAT
THE COLEG CYMRAEG
CENEDLAETHOL DID WAS
TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO
DEVELOP TERMINOLOGY.”**

▶
Image on next page:
Dr Neil Hennessy



Prior to the existence of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the vocabulary to discuss university subjects through the medium of Welsh was limited. A portal of ***Terms for Higher Education*** was created for students and staff to facilitate the process of studying, teaching, and researching through the medium of Welsh. It now includes technical terms from a wide range of academic fields including Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Health and Care, Mathematics and Woodland Management.

“Often, the vocabulary wasn’t available, and one of the things that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol did was to encourage people to develop terminology in various fields. There just weren’t the words to describe some things in Welsh,” said Meri Huws, former Welsh Language Commissioner and a current member of the Coleg Cymraeg’s Board of Directors.

She added: **“There was a tendency to say, Oh, Welsh is the language of the chapel, the language of culture, the language of the arts, but the Welsh language needed to be part of the language of sciences and so on, and that is what the Coleg Cymraeg has done, it has encouraged this kind of development directly and indirectly.”**

For any student, lecturer or teacher in the post-compulsory sector, the resources available on the ***Porth Adnoddau*** resource portal are invaluable. The Porth website offers one central place to search for Welsh-medium and bilingual digital resources to support learning and teaching. Within the Porth, a significant collection of resources from various platforms are available across a wide range of areas, as well as resources from partner organisations.

Each year, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol awards up to ten Research

Scholarships lasting three years. The ***Research Scholarship*** Scheme sponsors students to study towards a doctorate thereby promoting the development of scholarship, research, and publishing through the medium of Welsh and nurturing world-class researchers. This is the main path to create future lecturers.

Dr Neil Hennessy secured a Coleg Cymraeg Research Scholarship and is now a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sport at Cardiff Metropolitan University, and an Associate Lecturer with the Coleg.

Dr Hennessy said: **“I was extremely fortunate to secure a doctoral scholarship from the Coleg. During those exciting times, I undertook research on the development of talented referees, and presented at a few conferences organised by the Coleg Cymraeg. I greatly appreciate the opportunities and experiences that the Coleg has given me over the years.”**

Rhonwen Lewis was working as an NHS speech and language therapist in Gwynedd when she received a Coleg Cymraeg PhD Scholarship to undertake a research project into speech development in Welsh-English bilingual children. She said:

"I knew that research into speech and language development in bilingual children in Wales was very rare and that therapists needed more information to ensure that they provided an effective service to Welsh-speaking children."

Following the research scholarship, she secured a job as a lecturer on the BSc (Hons.) Speech and Language Therapy course at Cardiff Metropolitan University, which was funded by the Coleg's staffing scheme. She added:

"The existence of the Coleg has meant that I have been able to achieve my ambition of being a lecturer and a part of leading-edge research that is going to have an impact on theory and policy within speech and language therapy. I have seen my students graduate and go on to successful careers here in Wales and this gives me satisfaction as I can see that they are having a positive impact on the lives of children and adults who receive their service."

The Coleg Cymraeg's **Research Conferences** are now an integral part of the Welsh academic calendar. One positive impact from the pandemic has been to open these virtual events to Welsh-

speaking academics who teach in universities outside Wales.

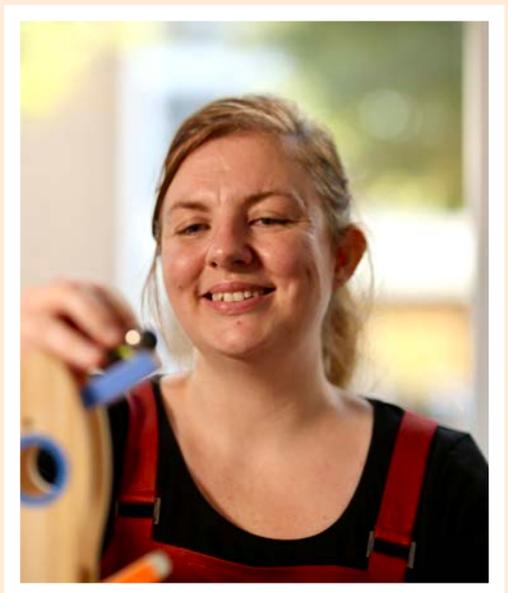
The main purpose of the annual conferences is to give the next generation of Welsh-speaking academics the opportunity to cut their teeth presenting their research to peers and meeting other scholars. At the 2021 Conference, research presentations were given on topics ranging from

"Developing therapies for the treatment of prion diseases" to "Creating a defence to murder in assisted death circumstances".

While studying for his doctorate in Engineering funded by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, presenting his research at these conferences was an invaluable experience for Dr Daniel Roberts of Bangor University.

"Attending the conferences in Aberystwyth and Gregynog made me feel part of the Welsh language higher education community in Wales. Through these opportunities, I had my first experience of presenting my work to an audience, and it was a pleasure to do so through the medium of Welsh," said Dr Roberts.

Since its inception in 2007, **Gwerddon**, the Coleg Cymraeg's academic e-journal, is published at least twice a year. The journal contains academic research in Sciences, Arts and Humanities. As well as providing a platform for publishing Welsh-medium academic articles across these disciplines, **Gwerddon** is a valuable resource for students studying a wide range of subjects at university.





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Previous Page
Rhonwen Lewis

>
Bottom Image
Dr Daniel Roberts

The Coleg awards a series of **Academic Awards** annually to students and lecturers – the Merêd Award, the Dr John Davies Memorial Award, the Eilir Hedd Morgan Memorial Award, the Gwyn Thomas Award, the Norah Isaac Award, and the William Salesbury Awards. These are awarded to individuals for outstanding work, achievement, or contribution in the field.

The awards exist in a variety of areas and are awarded by individual adjudication panels. The Coleg also appoints **Honorary Fellows** each year.

The establishment of an **Associate Lecturer Scheme** in 2018 enabled the creation of a community of lecturers who contribute to the universities' Welsh-medium provision and contribute more widely to the work of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. It is an opportunity for lecturers to network with other lecturers, apply for the Coleg's grants, take advantage of the training programme for lecturers and attend the annual conference of associate lecturers. Over 350 members are now involved in the scheme.



THE BILINGUAL WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

For Welsh speakers educated in Wales, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has been a prominent part of their lives over the last decade. From visits by Coleg staff to schools and further education colleges, to the exhibition stands at the Eisteddfodau and agricultural shows, the opportunities to apply for Scholarships and to be Ambassadors, but mainly the opportunity to follow all or part of their university courses through the medium of Welsh, these are opportunities that did not exist a decade ago.

There has been a visible increase over the decade in the number of students studying some element of their course through the medium of Welsh.

In 2011, there were 2,715 higher education students doing some of their undergraduate course through the medium of Welsh. By 2019/20, this had risen to 5,270.

In the same period, the number of postgraduate students rose from 505 in 2011 to 660 in 2019/20.

At the heart of the Coleg's ethos is the partnership with students and learners. The success of Welsh-medium education depends on ensuring that the student voice is heard loud and clear throughout the educational process.

“IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME STUDENTS WHO HAVE PRODUCED WORK IN WELSH WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MY ROLE.”



LENA— ZAHARAH MOHAMMED

▶ Image on next page:
Lena Zaharah
Mohammed

Lena-Zaharah Mohammed first encountered the Coleg Cymraeg while studying for her A Levels at Coleg Cambria. Lena was one of the Coleg Cymraeg's first ever Further Education Ambassadors. She is now studying for a degree in Media, Journalism and Culture at Cardiff University. Lena is studying a third of her degree course through the medium of Welsh.

Lena said: **"I never thought I could study my degree through the medium of Welsh as I had learnt Welsh as a second language, but my experience of the Welsh language community at Coleg Cambria showed me how important and beneficial it is to develop my Welsh language skills and so I was persuaded to study in Welsh and to apply for one of the Coleg's Incentive Scholarships."**



DR RUTH — WYN —

► **Image on next page:**
Dr. Ruth Wyn
Williams

Dr Ruth Wyn Williams had a Welsh upbringing in Pen Llŷn, but as she trained to be a nurse and studied for her master's course, the language of education turned from Welsh to English. In her day-to-day work in the field of learning disabilities, she was fully aware of how essential it was to be able to work bilingually. She was delighted when she secured a Research Scholarship funded by the Coleg Cymraeg.

"Welsh was my day-to day language, but the opportunities to write and present my work in Welsh were few and far between. So, I thank the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol for the opportunity in 2008 to change this. I received support through the Research Scholarship Scheme to study towards a doctorate. With support to polish my language skills, opportunities to conduct research and projects, lecture, and present my work at conferences in Welsh, it developed my skills and understanding of the importance to do more than just speak Welsh day to day."

Ruth Wyn Williams now works as a Lecturer in Learning Disability Nursing at Bangor University and is currently on secondment with Improvement Cymru as a Senior Improvement Manager. The Welsh language is an integral part of her job. She said:

"The Welsh language underpins the provision of language choice for healthcare students and underpins the promotion of improvements that meet the requirements of our communities in Wales. Identity must be respected, and dignity maintained in health, and it is vital that individuals receive efficient care that reflects their language and culture. It is a challenge to increase the number of Welsh speakers in healthcare, but I take pride in the support that I received as a postgraduate student, lecturer, and nurse from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. By increasing the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh, this will create a solid foundation for a bilingual health workforce."



WILLIAMS



SCHOLARSHIPS



For students, the backbone of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's offering is the Scholarships scheme. Almost two thousand young people have received Scholarships to study through the medium of Welsh since the Coleg was established in 2011, and they are extremely popular. In 2021, the Coleg Cymraeg received more applications for Scholarships in the first week of opening the application window than the total number of scholarships awarded in the first year in 2011.

During the first decade, **£3.1 million** was awarded in Undergraduate and Master's Scholarships.



AMBASSADORS

“THE COLEG HAS CHANGED ATTITUDES, IT HAS CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE, IT HAS CHANGED THE NARRATIVE, IT HAS CHANGED THE STORY.”

▼ Below Image
Meilyr Jones



Over the last decade, the methods of communicating with students have changed. The key to accessing them is through the students themselves using social media and speaking with their peers. To reach people who do not use traditional media, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol appoints Ambassadors each year - enthusiastic students who are either Welsh first or second language, who share information about their studies, the importance of using Welsh and the social elements at their universities across the whole of Wales. The aim is to attract more people to study in Wales through the medium of Welsh. It is also an opportunity to develop valuable skills that will help young people when looking for future employment.

Meilyr Jones has taken advantage of the Ambassadors scheme more than once. He was an undergraduate Ambassador while studying at Cardiff Metropolitan University in both 2018 and 2020, and in 2021 was one of the Coleg Cymraeg's first postgraduate Ambassadors.

He said: **“The post offers a range of opportunities to build confidence and develop essential skills that can be included on the CV, it was also great to make numerous contacts and to meet students from universities across Wales. It certainly builds our confidence as individuals, speaking publicly promoting the excellent work of the Coleg and the courses available in Welsh, as well as skills in presenting information and thinking about ideas when working with the marketing team on social media content.”**

BRANCHES

On the ground, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol works via its branches. Originally there were seven branches in the universities. The aim of the Branches is to support the Coleg's work and act as a local point of contact for students and staff. The Branches are independent of the Coleg as a body and organise their own events. Branches are now also being established in some further education colleges.



**“EVERYONE
BENEFITS AND
NOBODY LOSES OUT.”**



POST-16 EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIPS

► **Image on next page:**
Kirsty Williams,
former Welsh Government
Education Minister

The early years were a period where the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol worked successfully with universities to lay firm foundations for Welsh-medium higher education. A review in 2017 led to another significant milestone in the organisation's history. The Welsh Government decided to build on these solid foundations and extended the Coleg's responsibilities to include Welsh-medium provision in the post-16 sector and apprenticeships.

Kirsty Williams was the Welsh Government's Education Minister at the time. After leaving politics in 2021 she said: **"Given the importance of the FE sector in providing vocational skills and qualifications and the very real need for these skills in the workplace (for example in childcare and social care), I felt it was a priority. I was also struck that there was a real lack of equity for those students who had been educated through the medium of Welsh throughout their education who could not continue to do so if they chose a FE college route rather than staying in school sixth form provision.**

According to Meri Huws, Coleg Cymraeg Board Member and former Welsh Language Commissioner, it was time to move into this important area: **"The Coleg has changed attitudes, it has changed the landscape, it has changed the narrative, it has changed the story. University Welsh-medium education is something that is now recognised as perfectly acceptable and is welcomed. This has then made it possible to step back into post-16 education and further education apprenticeships and say, You're missing an opportunity here guys. Universities are providing, schools are providing, this is your opportunity now."**



**“UNIVERSITIES
ARE PROVIDING,
SCHOOLS ARE
PROVIDING, THIS IS
NOW YOUR CHANCE.”**



Meri Huws added:
“Further education and apprenticeships are so different from university culture. There is a great emphasis on the vocational, a great emphasis on creating a workforce, but also an emphasis on educating people who are going to stay in their own communities”.

The former Education Minister Kirsty Williams has praised the way in which the Coleg has worked with this sector:

“The leadership of the Coleg responded to the new challenge with characteristic enthusiasm and focus. As ever with any change, the development of relationships is key, and I think that this has been the essence of the Coleg’s success. The team has always been careful to work with partners to make the case for change and to support key stakeholders make a difference in individual organisations. They have recognised when there are real constraints and have focused on finding practical solutions and support.”

The provision of Welsh-medium education in the further education sector had changed little since the dawn of devolution and therefore an ambitious plan was needed. The aim was once again to pull everyone together by working with all the leaders of further education across Wales. In the universities, the aim was to target confident Welsh-speaking students.

In the post-16 sector, a decision was made to target *all* learners regardless of their Welsh linguistic ability. But there are additional challenges in further education, according to Dr Ioan Matthews, Chief Executive of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:

“One of the main problems is that qualifications in this sector are provided by awarding bodies mainly based outside Wales, and they must be persuaded to provide bilingual qualifications. It is not just a matter of persuading the learners, it is not just a matter of ensuring that there are tutors available, but the qualifications aren’t there. There are large pieces of this jigsaw that need to be resolved.”

But some of those jigsaw pieces have already started to fall into place:

- The same cycle starts again with the appointment of 20 tutors in the first year – two each for the ten further education colleges across Wales.
- Discussions are developing between the Coleg Cymraeg and Qualifications Wales.
- New resources are being commissioned in the priority areas.

Meri Huws said: **“Is it a challenge? Yes, it is. What’s challenging is that there is no tradition.... there aren’t enough people who can train and teach through the medium of Welsh, we need to create this workforce. But one thing I’ve noticed with further education is that it’s an area that responds very quickly. It is barely two years since the Coleg Cymraeg started working with further education and apprenticeships, but the progress that has been made has been incredible in changing attitude again, as well as the desire to work together to create joint provision across the colleges. There is a network of people across the sector who are Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers who are so keen to work together to succeed.”**

Pembrokeshire College has been running a pilot scheme, and a bilingual development tutor has been appointed in Health and Social Care. Med Richards is the only Welsh-speaking tutor in the faculty, and his appointment has seen a change in attitudes among students and staff. The Coleg Cymraeg’s Development Grant has given 162 learners access to bilingual learning experiences – 12 students now follow half the level three Health and Social Care course bilingually and a further 150 follow some provision bilingually.

▶ **Image on next page:**
Meri Huws

▶ **Photo credit:**
The Welsh Language Commissioner



Med Richards said: **"It's enabled me to spend time with diverse groups of learners, encouraging even the smallest use of Welsh within their work as well as encouraging more use of spoken Welsh. It's likely that some of the students who have produced work in Welsh would not have done so had it not been for my role."**

Dr Barry Walters is Principal of Pembrokehire College and is already seeing the difference the Coleg Cymraeg has made in the post-16 sector.

"The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol offers a single point of contact and support to influence awarding bodies and other agencies to support colleges in developing their bilingual provision. Being able to take advantage of the Coleg's networks in terms of staff training and project management has led to the sharing of good practice amongst the further and higher education sector and helps us to create continuity between the two sectors," said Dr Walters.

He added: **"The Coleg's professional approach, the direct link and the practical support all maintain momentum and goodwill within the sector. Two years ago, when responsibility for the Welsh language was transferred to the Coleg Cymraeg, a percentage of staff were not aware of the organisation's work but there is now great respect for the Coleg Cymraeg and we consider them to be**

integral as we continue to develop our Welsh-medium and bilingual provision."

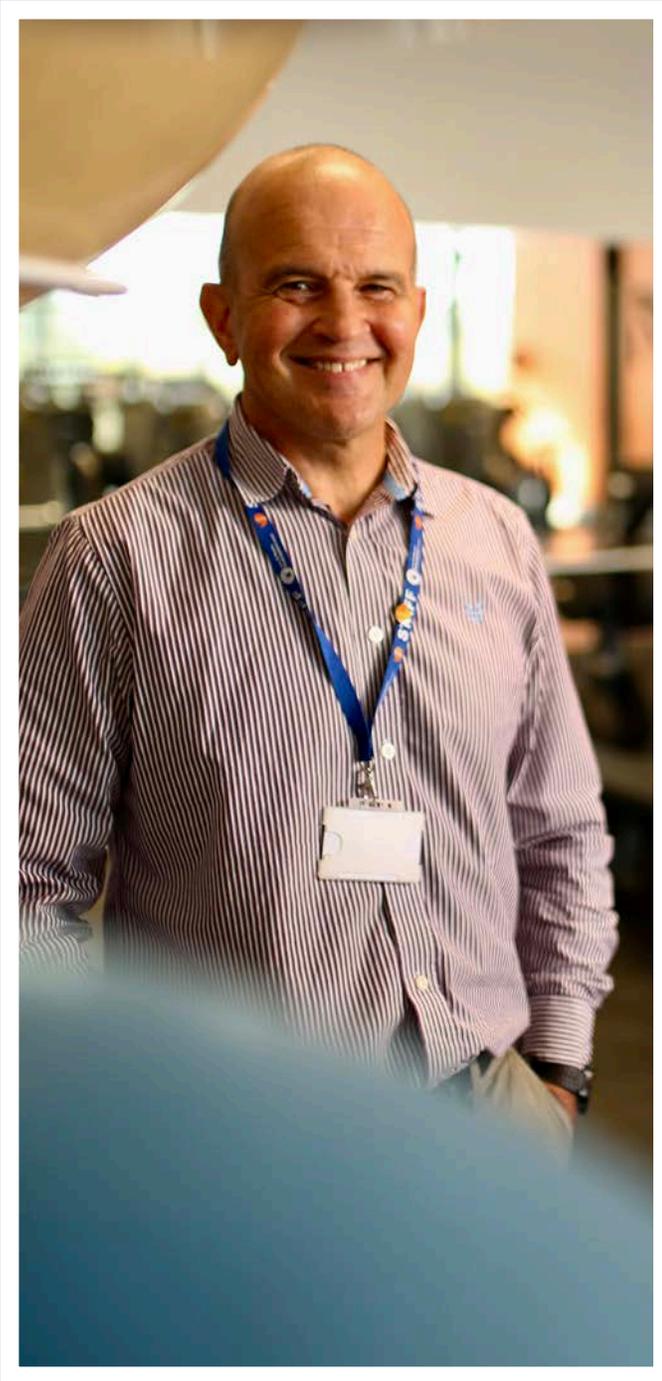
One of the Coleg Cymraeg's partners is ColegauCymru, an education charity that promotes the public benefit of further education in Wales. ColegauCymru's Chief Executive, Iestyn Davies, said:

"The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol plays a vital role in post-16 education in Wales, not only in the areas of education in general but also in the increasingly important vocational and technological areas. With funding from the National Centre for Learning Welsh, ColegauCymru co-ordinates the Cymraeg Gwaith project in the further education sector.

"THE COLEG'S ROLE FOR THE NEXT DECADE WILL BE TO STRENGTHEN AND REINFORCE WHAT HAS ALREADY STARTED – THE JOURNEY CONTINUES"

▼
Below Image
Dr. Barry Walters





This provision is a great example of how successful partnerships can work and where learners and workers alike benefit. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus pandemic has brought many challenges to the fore for the further education sector, and for Welsh-medium learners in particular because of a lack of resources and support available compared to their peers. It will be essential for organisations across the sector to work together to learn lessons from these challenging times, and to plan adequately for the future.”

⁴
Left Image
Med Richards

THE NEXT CHAPTER



“WE WON’T REST ON OUR LAURELS”

The aim of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol from the outset was to create a confident bilingual workforce. And as another decade dawns in its history, the mission is the same.

When Meri Huws started working as the Welsh Language Commissioner and introduced the Welsh Language Standards, she often heard employers saying that they did not have staff who could speak Welsh. Hand in hand with the Commissioner’s work, the Coleg was in the process of producing the workforce of the future who were then available to employers in all areas.

“I now meet young people in their thirties who have taken advantage of Welsh-medium university education - several of whom come from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds - but are now totally bilingual, and professionally bilingual too. It surprises me,” said Meri Huws, who is now a Board Member of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

There are now solid foundations in the universities, but we won’t rest on our laurels in this sector over the next decade building on the work of the past ten years. The Coleg will co-ordinate and develop Welsh language provision across all academic areas in universities, continue to work with partners, and put in place specific plans to increase the number of students studying in Welsh in priority subjects at our universities.

At the start of a new decade, the priority is the post-16 sector and apprenticeships. These sectors present different challenges and opportunities for the Coleg, as most learners are local to the further education colleges and the apprenticeship providers. All learners are a target audience for the Coleg, and the plans that have been developed are based on a model that provides Welsh language skills training opportunities for all learners – from language refresher courses to being able to follow full courses through the medium of Welsh.



“WE CAN’T TAKE OUR FOOT OFF THE PEDAL”

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol does not work in isolation and the work being done by the organisation feeds into a number of wider bodies and policies including the Welsh Government’s policy of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

If a young person continues with some, or all, of their further education in Welsh they may go on to follow a university course in Welsh and/or secure a job in Wales where they can work bilingually. If the student enters the world of work after completing their further education course or apprenticeship, then it is hoped that they will stay in their communities and secure bilingual jobs, raise a family locally, become part of the community and keep the Welsh language as a living language at a professional and social level.

Ensuring an adequate supply of teachers, lecturers and trainers is key to the success of the Welsh Government’s national language strategy, Cymraeg 2050. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol wants to play its part and contribute to this area to ensure enough teachers are available to meet the increase in demand. A much greater emphasis needs to be placed on increasing the Welsh language skills of all trainees as a core part of their initial university training.

Dr Ioan Matthews said: **“The Coleg is essentially a planning body that enables things to happen by ensuring that resources are used as effectively as possible.”**

Over the next decade, there will be more planning, more collaboration with partners, more resource creation and the production of teachers and lecturers to ensure a confident bilingual workforce across Wales.

Looking ahead to the next decade, Meri Huws, a member of the Coleg Cymraeg’s Board, says: **“What we are doing is creating the workers of the future who will be able to work through the medium of Welsh. If they work through the medium of Welsh, the likelihood is that they will stay in Wales and work bilingually in Wales. These are the people who will be the parents of the future and also the people who will keep our communities alive, and revive those communities too.”**

Meri Huws added: **“The role of the Coleg Cymraeg in creating that workforce is so important. We can’t take our foot off the pedal either. We’ve got this far. This needs to be normalised now, and I see that the Coleg’s role for the next decade will be to strengthen and reinforce what has already started – the journey continues.”**