COLEG CYMRAEG CENEDLAETHOL

Coleg Board, 25 June 2025 (10:30 – 14:50), Sport Wales National Centre, Cardiff

Present

Board Members:	Dr Aled Eirug (Chair) Ann Beynon Nia Elias Rhys Evans John Hayes Meri Huws Professor Anwen Jones Professor Pedr ap Llwyd Angharad Roberts Llinos Roberts
Observers:	Alan Jones (Welsh Government) Deio Owen (UCMC/NUS Wales) Rhian Huws Williams (Chair of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee)
Officers:	Dr Ioan Matthews (Chief Executive) Gwenllïan Griffiths (Director of Policy, Communications and Engagement) Dr Dylan Phillips (Director of Higher Education and Coleg Secretary) Dr Dafydd Trystan (Director of Strategic Development, Further Education and Registrar) Nia Brown (Governance Officer)

	Suzanne Lewis (Senior Manager for Corporate Services) Lisa O'Connor (Acting Senior Manager for Further Education and Apprenticeships) Gwenllian Owen (Senior Manager for Higher Education) Rebecca Williams (Senior Manager for Language Skills and Workforce Planning)
Apologies:	Professor Enlli Thomas

Minutes of the 25 June 2025 meeting

1. Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and introductory matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
1.1	All those present were welcomed to the meeting.		
1.2	Lisa O'Connor was welcomed to her first meeting as acting Senior Manager for Further Education and Apprenticeships.		
1.3	An apology was noted as above.		

2. Item 2 – Declarations of interest

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
2.1	Members were reminded of the procedure by which they are asked to note any declarations of interest additional to those already noted in the Register of Interests.		
2.2	The Chair noted an interest in Item 15 – Chair's Honorarium which would be a closed item.		

3. Item 3 – Chief Executive's Report

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
3.1	The Chief Executive's written report on recent activities was received and the updates included in the report were noted.		
3.2	**Arrangements for reporting to the Welsh Government** The 2024/25 year-end monitoring report submitted to the Welsh Government was noted (Item 3i).		
3.3	**Manifesto** Following an agreement on the contents of the Coleg's manifesto at the Board meeting on 25 March 2025, it was reported that a link to the abridged version is included in the report which is ready to be shared with the Board's committees and stakeholders. In response to a question, it was reported that the focus of the discussions with the political parties varies by party.		

	During the discussion, it was noted that the Risk Register identifies a critical score for changes in the external environment impacting the Coleg. It was also reported that the Coleg had been given the opportunity to feed into the NTfW manifesto and had been part of the launch on 24 June 2025.		
3.4	**Welsh Language and Education Bill** As reported at the last meeting, a number of the amendments to the Welsh Language and Education Bill that were suggested by the Coleg were accepted. The Bill has received Royal Assent. The Coleg, Medr and Government officials will be part of discussions on a Code to describe Welsh language ability.		
3.5	**Medr** It was reported that James Owen had been appointed as Medr's new Chief Executive. The contribution of the current Chief Executive Simon Pirotte was recognised at the Coleg Awards night on 19 June 2025. It was reported that the Coleg would submit further advice under its designation in relation to		

	Medr's National Plan in the autumn and in relation to funding arrangements in the medium term. It was also reported that Medr was consulting on regulatory principles and the Welsh language, and that the Coleg had prepared advice to be shared with the Board over the coming days. At the request of the Minister for Further and Higher Education, the Coleg is collaborating with Medr on a study of the situation of specific subjects in the sector in view of the current crisis. During the discussion, reference was made to the membership of the Welsh language working group at Medr.	Regulatory principles advice to the Board	Summer 2025
3.6	**Qualifications Wales** It was reported that the strategic partnership between the Coleg and Qualifications Wales had been extended for a year with the intention of undertaking a review in 2026.		
3.7	**The Athrofa** Alan Jones from the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division gave an update on the		

	establishment of the Athrofa, the national institute for learning Welsh. He reported that the Chair's role would be advertised in the summer, with the Athrofa becoming fully operational in August 2027.		
3.8	**Schools Forum** It was reported that the Schools Forum is building a relationship with CYDAG (the association of Welsh-medium schools) and in the sector. A number of projects are underway including to promote the Porth's resources.		
3.9	**National Eisteddfod** A report was given on the Coleg's timetable of events at the Eisteddfod, including celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the scholarship scheme.		
	At this point, Gwenllian Griffiths left the meeting		
3.10	**Higher Education** The Secretary gave a report on the responses of each higher education institution following correspondence enquiring about their plans to protect Welsh-medium provision due to current		

	reorganisation plans. It was noted that there was no concern at some institutions but that institutional planning at some individual universities could have a detrimental effect on provision nationally. The current situation at Bangor University was discussed specifically. It was noted that the Welsh Government, through the Coleg, had invested significantly in individuals and had increased provision capacity but that the voluntary redundancy scheme at Bangor University did mean a reduction in Welsh-medium provision. It was reported that the Coleg had provided them with a document expressing the Coleg's position and findings, which included the possibility of them losing half of the Coleg's grants from September 2025. The document outlined the Coleg's long-term requirements to alleviate the situation and rebuild the provision.		
	At this point, Rhian Huws Williams and Rebecca Williams joined the meeting.		

3.11	The Chief Executive outlined the Coleg's pattern of funding that had been adopted in order to provide a commitment to invest in individuals and give them a career. In response to a question, it was reported that all institutions in Wales had protected Welsh-medium roles from voluntary redundancy schemes, but that this had not been possible at Bangor University. A new staffing plan will be needed in order to rebuild capacity at Bangor University. It was reported that it was not practically possible to move investment to another institution due to the specific cases of individuals. The possible damage and the implications for the Coleg were discussed. It was recommended that the Coleg should bring influence to bear on Medr in terms of the planning strategy for Welsh-medium provision nationally.		

	At this point, Gwenllian Griffiths rejoined the meeting		
3.12	Alan Jones from the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division noted that Mark Drakeford had conveyed to Medr a need to plan Welsh-medium provision at a national level.		

4. Item 4 – Presentation on audience expansion projects

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
4.1	A presentation on audience expansion projects was given by the Senior Manager for Higher Education and the Senior Manager for Language Skills and Workforce Planning.		
4.2	A report was given on the following projects: • behaviour change techniques pack • recording and measuring language skill progression (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) • mapping and developing language skills (Aberystwyth University)	Share the behaviour change pack with members	Summer 2025

	• teaching methodology development research (Bangor University and Cardiff Metropolitan University) • simulation-based resources (Wrexham University and Cardiff Metropolitan University; and Swansea University and Aberystwyth University) • enrolment by default (Swansea University – Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences)		
	At this point, Yusuf Ibrahim joined the meeting, as did Osian Rhys to provide simultaneous translation		
4.3	The importance of the pilots in order to influence national outputs was discussed.		
	At this point, Deio Owen joined the meeting		

5. Item 5 – Further Education and Apprenticeships update

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
5.1	Yusuf Ibrahim was welcomed to the meeting.		

5.2	A paper on Further Education and Apprenticeships was presented by the Director of Strategic Development and Further Education, and Yusuf Ibrahim, Vice-Chair of the Post-16 Strategic Board.		
5.3	The principles of raising aspirations in relation to work in the further education and apprenticeships sectors, and the next steps in terms of setting expectations in collaboration with other bodies, were discussed.		
5.4	It was recommended • that there should be collaboration with Medr and the tertiary sector on monitoring, supporting and planning with the learner being at the centre of decisions • that the individual situations of the colleges should be considered • that the Post-16 Strategic Board should discuss the expansion of provision		
5.5	The principles of increasing learners' experience of Welsh-medium provision were accepted, and		

	the responses to the recommendations in the Estyn review were approved.		
	Yusuf Ibrahim was thanked as he left the meeting, and Osian Rhys was thanked for providing the simultaneous translation.		

6. Item 6 – Minutes of the 26 March 2025 meeting

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
6.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 were approved with an addition on point 3.4 to note that Government officials had also been part of a meeting on 12 March 2025.	Update the minutes	Immediately

7. Item 7 – Matters arising

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
7.1	Item 3.9 – Presentation on the behaviour change techniques pack in Item 4 – audience expansion.		

7.2	Item 4.7 – It was reported that officers had met with the Minister regarding the Seren scheme as stated in the Chief Executive's report.		
7.3	Item 7.3 – It was reported that the Chair would write formally to Ymddiriedolaeth Salesbury once the matter had been resolved.		

8. Chair's Matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
8.1	The Chair reported that he had attended the Medr Board on 22 May 2025 with the Chief Executive and the Director of Policy and Engagement, where they had given a presentation on the Coleg's work and development, including its designation to advise Medr, as well as a full briefing on current policy and legislative developments relevant to the Welsh language.		
8.2	He gave a report on the Awards Night held at the Egin on 19 June 2025.		

8.3	He reported that he had attended meetings of the Board's sub-committees during the term.		

9. Item 9 – Appointments and Governance Standards Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
9.1	**Minutes (Item 9i)** The minutes of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee meeting held on 7 May 2025 were noted. The Secretary reported on: • members' participation, due to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting being inquorate on 5 March 2025 • conflicts of interest • amendments to strengthen the risk relating to governance in the strategic risk register • the appointment of Carys Morgans as an external member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee		

	• the appointment of Mair Gwynant as an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee • plans to recruit three new members to the Board during 2026 • positive feedback on the training programme and updates Members of the Committee, including the Chair, were thanked for their work.		
9.2	**Report on the Board's evaluation questionnaire (Item 9ii)** A report on the Board's evaluation questionnaire was presented by the Secretary. He reported on: • the results of the questionnaire • the main themes of the responses The Chair reported that he would have individual discussions with members during the summer term. The report was received.		
9.3	**Annual report (Item 9iii)**		

	An annual report was presented by Rhian Huws Williams, Chair of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee. She reported on: • opportunities to appoint to the Board • the importance of holding individual conversations between the Chair and members • the Internal Auditors' substantial assurance on the Coleg's governance processes • the intention to carry out a governance effectiveness review in 2027 • a pilot scheme to offer Black, Asian and ethnic minority leaders experience on the Coleg's committees The annual report was received.		
9.4	Following correspondence from Professor Pedr ap Llwyd, he had been invited to the Committee's next meeting on 10 September 2025 to present a paper on diversity and governance.	Invite Professor Pedr ap Llwyd to the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee	10 September 2025

10. Item 10 – Audit and Risk Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
10.1	**Minutes (Item 10i)** The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 21 January 2025 were noted.		
10.2	**The Risk Register (Item 10ii)** The Strategic Risk Register was noted, for information.		
10.3	**Annual report (Item 10iii)** Rhys Evans, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, reported on: • the contributions of William Callaway, former Chair of the Committee and Peter Curran, former external member • the added value of the internal audits • a constructive relationship between the Internal Auditors, officers and Committee members • 2025/26 priorities • progress to mitigate risk in cyber security and the *Cyber Essentials+* accreditation		

	The annual report was received.		

11. Item 11 – Finance and General Purposes Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
11.1	**Minutes (Item 11)** The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 11 June 2025 were noted. Pedr ap Llwyd, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, reported on: • full attendance at the meeting • the need to commend officers on the Coleg's financial management • the need to consider the Coleg's investment managers in September 2026 • Marketing updates, including school visits and data showing an increase in the use of social media • the equality, diversity and anti-racism strategy • good human resource practice		

	• the timeline for *Cyber Essentials+* accreditation The report was received.		

12. Item 12 – Academic Board

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
12.1	**Minutes (Item 12)** The minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 14 May 2025 were noted. Due to the absence of the Chair of the Academic Board, the Secretary reported that: • as Professor Enlli Thomas was not present, Dr Aled Eirug had chaired the meeting • students had given an update that noted their concern about the impact of the current cuts on Welsh-medium provision, including on professional services at the institutions • updates had been received from the branch chairs • a presentation had been given on the behaviour change techniques pack		

	• presentations had been given by the chairs of three subject panels		
12.2	During the discussion, Meri Huws, as Chair of Aberystwyth University, noted that the Chief Executive's presentation to the Chairs of the Universities had raised awareness of the Welsh language in the context of the current situation in the higher education sector.		

13. Item 13 – Post-16 Strategic Board

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
13.1	**Minutes (Item 13)** The minutes of the Post-16 Strategic Board meeting held on 20 May 2025 were noted. Meri Huws, Chair of the Post-16 Strategic Board, reported on: • the initial discussion for the Further Education and Apprenticeships paper presented in Item 5 • an update regarding the Learner Voice • Qualifications Wales' presentation		

	• the database of Welsh-speaking assessors		

14. Item 14 – Any other business

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
14.1	**Meetings in 2025/26 (Item 16)** The dates of the next meetings were noted: • 19 November 2025, Bangor • 25 March 2026, Carmarthen (the Annual Congregation will be held on 24 March) • 24 June 2026, Cardiff		