

Cross Party Group on Universities

Wednesday 29 March 2023 / 12.30pm - 1.30pm (In person and online)

Attendees

Hefin David MS - Chair of the CPG on Universities
Sioned Williams MS – Senedd Member for South Wales West
David Rees MS – Senedd Member for Aberavon
Professor Cara Carmichael Aitchison - Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Professor Maria Hinfelaar – Vice Chancellor Wrexham Glyndŵr University (Online)
Dr Ben Calvert - Vice Chancellor USW
Orla Tarn - NUS Wales President
Harriet Barnes - Director of Policy and Funding, HEFCW
Alex Still - Senior Adviser to Hefin David MS
Amanda Wilkinson - Director, Universities Wales
Kieron Rees - Assistant Director, Universities Wales
Joshua Bell - Public Affairs Adviser, Universities Wales
Hefin David MS – Chair of the CPG
Steve Thomas - Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Aberystwyth University
Alex Still – Office of Hefin David MS
Darcie Kleuskens – Scholar
Amy Nguyen – Scholar
Lisa Childs – Wales Director, NUS Wales
Jamie Insole – Policy Officer, UCU
Kevin McStravock – Lead Policy Officer, QAA (Online)
Ioan Bellin - Rhys ab Owen MS Office
Níamh Salkeld - Plaid Group Office
Susana Galvan - Executive Director, Taith
Jamie Arrowsmith - Director UUKI (Online)
Georgia Marks - Public Affairs Adviser, UCAS
Emilia Douglas - Office of Laura Anne Jones MS
Matthew Wilks - Scholarships, Mobilities & Alumni Manager, Global Wales

Minutes

Hefin David MS (Chair) welcomed all guests to the meeting.

1. The international education landscape

Jamie Arrowsmith provided an update on UUKi's engagement with the UK Government.

It was noted that discussions had been ongoing regarding the future of Horizon Europe. A record number of visa applications was flagged by Jamie Arrowsmith.

2. The view in Wales

Dr Ben Calvert provided an update on the work of Universities Wales' International Network.

The work of Global Wales was presented by Dr Calvert, including an update on the Study In Wales programme. Two Global Wales scholars were introduced.

3. The student perspective

Global Wales Scholars, Amy Nguyen & Darcie Kleuskens, provided an update on their experience of studying in Wales.

Darcie Kleuskens noted the benefit of the Can Teach programme and outlined the advantages of studying in Wales.

Amy Nguyen highlighted the lower cost of living in Wales, in comparison to Vietnam, as a reason for studying in Wales. The housing team at USW was praised.

4. Responding to the Ukraine conflict

Professor Cara Carmichael Aitchison provided an update on the one-year anniversary of the Wales/Ukraine twinning initiative.

It was noted that every university in Wales participates in the initiative, and its successes over the past year were presented.

5. Open discussion

The session was opened for wider discussion.

David Rees MS asked Jamie Arrowsmith whether there had been discussions on how we match up Ukrainian qualifications with the UK. It was also asked whether there have been any updates on the Windsor framework.

Sioned Williams MS acknowledged the importance of negotiations on Horizon Europe and requested more information on bridging loan proposals.

Orla Tarn asked a question on what is being done to support international students and their accommodation requirements. It was noted that this issue would be picked up after the meeting.

Hefin David MS highlighted the important role Members of Senedd can play in support students with cost of living/housing issues.

Jamie Arrowsmith responded to the questions, noting that UUK will be working to engage with officials in Gdansk.

Professor Cara Carmichael Aitchison noted that hard work is going on to working hard to match qualifications between Ukraine/Wales.

6. Meeting close

The next meeting will be held in June 2023, topic TBC.

7. Agreed Actions

An action was agreed to consider writing a letter to the Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles, highlighting the work of Global Wales on behalf of the CPG on Universities.