

**Ymateb gan Undeb Prifysgolion a Cholegau  
Evidence from University and College Union (UCU Wales)**

1. The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents almost 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.
2. UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world. It was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators’ employment and professional interests.
3. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation committee call for evidence on the implications for Wales of Britain exiting the European Union.
4. UCU did not take a view on the referendum during the campaign, recognising the variety of views held by its members. However, the union is clear that the decision has significant implications for post 16 education.
5. The UK’s university sector is world leading and makes a substantial social and economic contribution to the UK. If the UK is to retain its global position it must continue to be a place where academic staff and students are able to work and study. We should celebrate the international nature of this important sector and act to ensure that EU nationals and indeed those beyond Europe continue to feel welcome at our universities.
6. Universities in Wales create £3.6bn for the Welsh economy annually, while generating 3% of all Welsh GDP and generating over £400m in export earnings<sup>1</sup>. In 2014-15 Wales welcomed around 5,500 EU students to its universities, making up 22% of the total international student body.<sup>2</sup>
7. Over the past 10 years, the quality and international standing of Welsh research has increased faster than the rest of the UK. The results of the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) showed that more than three quarters of the research submitted was judged to be ‘world leading’ or ‘internationally excellent’. The 2013 study by Elsevier, concluded that Welsh research is of high quality, and impressively, more than two-thirds of the top 1% highest cited articles globally come from Wales.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uniswales.ac.uk/overview/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://studyinwales.ac.uk/eu-students/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://studyinwales.ac.uk/universities/research-in-wales/>

8. According to Universities UK<sup>4</sup>, in 2014/15 Welsh universities attracted over £38 million in competitive research grants and contracts from EU sources, supporting 471 academic jobs.
9. This uncertainty is already leading to reports of UK researchers being discriminated against or dropped from EU research partnerships, so we welcome the statement from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, that students and staff from across the European Union are welcome at Welsh Universities” We are clear that EU citizens make a valuable contribution to our institutions and that this should be safeguarded.
10. For Erasmus+, UK Government Minister for Universities and Science has confirmed that: “The referendum result does not affect students studying in the EU, beneficiaries of Erasmus+ or those considering applying in 2017”. What happens after this is not clear, however it represents a substantial amount of funding that offers invaluable learning experiences, for many of our students, which as a country striving for global recognition would be hugely detrimental.
11. In 2015 alone, there were 40 successful applications for Erasmus+ funding, amounting to almost €6.5m, which included €3,384,220 of funding for HE and €1,596,721 for VET and Adult education<sup>5</sup>. The FE sector in Wales was allocated €4.25m of Erasmus+ funding, for work placements and apprenticeships in European countries<sup>6</sup>
12. For the period 2014-2020, over £750m of EU funding is expected to be invested through the Structural Funds Programme, of this £320m will be used to improve workforce skills levels, with additional funding to support post 16 education and training projects<sup>7</sup>
13. In May this year £29m of European Structural Funding was allocated by Welsh Government to support a variety of initiatives to support young people at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment of Training), workplace learning and leadership training. Two of the four new initiatives are led by Coleg y Cymoedd & Coleg Gwent and Gower College Swansea.<sup>8</sup>
14. There is currently a high level of uncertainty about the impact which exiting the EU will have on post 16 education in Wales, not least because the future shape of the UK’s relationship with the EU is not yet clear.

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<sup>4</sup> Universities UK, *Economic impact on the UK of EU research funding to UK universities*, June 2016:  
<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/economic-impact-of-eu-research-funding-in-uk-universities.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s45023/EBC4-23-15%20p.6%20Evidence%20from%20British%20Council.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://colegaucymru.ac.uk/Policy> The EU and Post 16 Education & Training in Wales: an Overview.

<sup>7</sup> <http://colegaucymru.ac.uk/Policy> The EU and Post 16 Education & Training in Wales: an Overview.

<sup>8</sup> <http://colegaucymru.ac.uk/Policy> The EU and Post 16 Education & Training in Wales: an Overview.

15. On a national level UCU have several concerns for UK higher education with regard to exiting the EU, and especially a 'hard' Brexit, for example:

- New visa restrictions could be introduced for EU academics who want to work at UK institutions, which could make it harder to recruit leading personnel.
- The UK may lose access to the EU research programme Horizon 2020 and its successor programmes, and find itself excluded from European research partnerships.
- UK students' may no longer be able to access the Erasmus+ programme which facilitates study exchanges across the EU
- The UK may lose access to European Structural Investment Funding, which provides resource to develop local areas and has funded projects.

### **UCU recommendations**

1. In light of the concerns raised above, UCU Wales calls for Welsh Government to seek:
2. The protection rights of existing EU staff and students.
3. Assurance that Wales is not cut off from important opportunities for international research collaboration.
4. Continued access to Erasmus+ opportunities for post 16 students, apprentices and staff.
5. That UK Government invest directly to make up any shortfall in funding streams affected by Brexit, to ensure that institutions, their staff and students do not lose out.