



**WALES
CYMRU**

**RESPONSE TO:
The Children, Young People and
Education Committee Inquiry into
Teachers' Professional Learning and
Education.**

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 Children, Young People and Education Committee Inquiry into Teachers’ Professional Learning and Education.
4. The significant changes proposed to take place within the Welsh education sector, particularly with regard to Professor Donaldson’s Successful Futures, will directly impact on both FE and HE. However there consistently appears to be little acknowledgement of this, which we believe this to be a major oversight.
5. Frequently our questions about the role of the sector in the new educational landscape, are met with the response that such issues will be dealt with at a later date. From our point of view, the role of the post 16 sector and the expertise within it, should be welcomed in the development of a better and more ambitious education system. If we continue to maintain a silo approach, it is unlikely that we will ever achieve a curriculum that engages “the interest of all children and young people“, as envisaged by Professor Donaldson.¹
6. We are concerned that current discussions around the changes to the education sector in Wales, particularly with regard to the reviews of both Donaldson and Furlong, do not appear to meaningfully extend to lecturers in the FE sector. We are not aware of any pioneer colleges, nor are we aware of plans to address Initial Teacher Training for the post 16 sector.
7. Lecturers in the FE sector are required to be registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) because they are considered by Welsh Government to be a part of the education workforce and subject to the same standards of professional conduct as other registered teachers. However the lack of regard given to this group of professionals and to the expertise that they have, when it comes to

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>

strategic planning for the future of education in Wales sends out a very different message.

8. The schools sector alone should not be expected to shoulder the burden of such wide ranging reform. The FE sector has for several years, offered alternative pathways for many 14-16 year olds. The Priorities for the Further Education Sector 2017/18 it state, in priority 1, that:

“By adopting the new [curriculum] framework we will ensure that our young people are able to lead to fulfilling personal, civic and professional lives in our modern democracy”²

9. Therefore we should draw on the strengths of the wide range of expertise that we already have in the sector, in order to deliver the continuum of education that our children and young people deserve. Lecturers in post 16 need to be included, more fully, in the current planning and development of the new education landscape, if we are to deliver a broader curriculum offer.

10. The recent Qualifications Wales review of Health and Social Care Qualifications, highlighted the issue that vocational qualifications for 14 – 16 year old were in many cases:

“...delivered and assessed by practitioners with no background in the health and social care sector, and it was therefore perhaps unsurprising that some of the key principles were misunderstood or misrepresented.”³

11. Therefore, with regard to the readiness to implement the New Curriculum, the developmental needs of a significant part of the teaching workforce are being overlooked. This is not due to the unwillingness of the sector to engage in professional learning, as the substantial research in to classroom observations at Merthyr College indicates.
12. From our perspective, if we are to implement a new curriculum that truly engages all young people, we must offer educational opportunities outside the boundaries of traditional formal education. The FE sector has the proficiency to offer a new, but complimentary approach to compulsory age schooling, however these skills will remain untapped if the workforce in the sector are kept at arm's length from the critical early planning stages.

² <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/161206-fe-en.pdf>

³ <http://qualificationswales.org/media/1904/hsc-report-2016-e.pdf>

13. There is currently little consideration of initial teacher training for lecturers in post 16 education. We have a system whereby teachers in schools are given “qualified teacher status” but teachers in FE are not. We have concerns that this may be reflected in the apparent thinking that FE colleges do not offer the same high level of education and training that can be offered in schools. This is an area that needs to be seriously addressed if young people are to be guided towards qualifications that are suitable for their needs and skills and provide them with the tools to become confident, competent and responsible adults. Raising the professional status of lecturers in the FE sector, would help to increase public confidence in the value of vocational qualifications and enable many young people to undertake pathways that they can excel in. We see the roles of schools and colleges in the new curriculum, as parallel rather than sequential.

14. In conclusion, arrangements for the professional development of the current workforce, with regard to the readiness to implement the new curriculum:
 - a. Lack the inclusion of a major part of the education workforce within the FE sector; the workforce that has the expertise to deliver an alternative, but complimentary curriculum offer to young people at 14+ , that would enhance Donaldson’s recommendations.
 - b. Do not offer equal status with regard to teaching qualifications held by professionals in differing teaching categories within the EWC. This, in our opinion, does little to promote a positive public image, of the value and quality of teaching and learning within the FE environment.

We cannot expect to radically change educational choices and outcomes for young people, if we do not change what we offer and how we deliver it.