

Item 9.c Wales report

Erasmus+

Following on from the letter that I sent to the Welsh Government on January 15th expressing concerns about the impact of withdrawal from the Erasmus+ scheme (the letter, adapted from the UCML letter sent to Westminster, is available on the UCML website), I met with Marie Knox on 4th February 2021. Notes from the meeting were shared with colleagues across Wales.

On March 21st the Welsh Government announced a new international learning exchange programme. <https://gov.wales/new-international-learning-exchange-programme-make-good-loss-erasmus>

The scheme will enable learners and staff, both from Wales and those who come to study or work in Wales, to continue to benefit from international exchanges in a similar way to the opportunities that flowed from Erasmus+, not just in Europe but also further afield.

The new scheme – which will run from 2022 to 2026 - will be supported by an investment of £65m from the Welsh Government.

The Programme will provide funding to enable students, staff and learners across universities, Further Education and Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education, youth work settings and schools to undertake a period of structured learning or work experience overseas, as well as enabling strategic partnerships.

A fundamental principle of the programme will be reciprocity. Where necessary, the programme will fund costs related to the inward mobility of learners, teachers and young people from partner organisations abroad. This will enable existing partnerships which have been built up under Erasmus + to continue and help to create new ones, raising Wales' international profile as well as offering opportunities to those who benefit directly.

The scheme aims to enable 15,000 participants from Wales to go on overseas mobility exchanges over the first four years, with 10,000 participants coming to study or work in Wales.

Cardiff University has agreed to take on the detailed development of the programme over the next 12 months, working with an advisory board of stakeholders from across the education and youth sectors, with funded activities getting underway in 2022/3.

While Welsh institutions will be able to participate in the UK Government's Turing Scheme in 2021/2, they will also continue to benefit from Erasmus+ exchanges deferred from last year due to the pandemic. The new programme will then fill the gaps Turing leaves, including, crucially, the commitment to long-term funding, the retention of the principle of two-way exchanges and the inclusion of youth work.

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