

FE Workload Review

Project Specification Document

12 March 2021

ColegauCymru/FEJTU/Welsh Government FEA Department.

1. Introduction

FE work load has been identified as a priority for the members of the Wales Negotiating Committee for Further Education (WNCFE). As a result, and by the end of March this project will achieve the following outputs:

1. Completion of a workforce survey
2. Produce via a steering group and the work of an independent consultant an initial survey analysis
3. Produce an agreed initial scoping report, summarising the key issues, for potential “quick wins”, and an outline an approach for phases 2 and 3.

2. Background

Existing surveys and employee feedback via the recognised FE trades unions and surveys of staff have identified workload as a common and recurrent challenge to both wellbeing and learner outcome. Employers, via the ColegauCymru Principals Forum, have expressed their commitment to addressing both these challenges within the financial settlement provided by Welsh Government.

Most recently, changes to delivery models caused by the disruption of learning and assessment by COVID19 has placed a greater strain on staff and on the financial resources currently available to employers. Recognition of this fact has given rise to the provision of additional funding by Welsh Ministers to address the specific challenges of the virus.

As well as the pre-existing demands placed on FE staff and the lasting impact of COVID19, the FE employers, Trades Unions and Welsh Government (the Partners) anticipate further disruption to established patterns of FE teaching and learning as together they seek to address other emerging challenges. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the mainstreaming of digital and blended learning, the requirement to deliver learner-responsive programmes (particularly to adult returners) and the challenge of providing higher level qualifications demanded by employers alongside the need for support for basic and remedial skills.

3. Summary of proposal

This a proposal for a project to be delivered via social partnership, the focus of which will be the National Workload agreement. Concerns regarding workload are shared by the social partners and the purpose of this project is to identify and to resolve workload pressures and manage workload

fairly and consistently across the colleges. The National Workload agreement is incorporated in the terms of the national contract .

The project will be an independent and consultant-led review, to identify reliably through quantitative and qualitative research methods, the extent of the impact of teaching related workload and staff wellbeing. The project will consist of three separate phases commencing with the research and completed by a final report. The final report will outline the extent of the current workload demands, identify ‘quick wins’ to reduce workload and protect staff wellbeing, and recommendations for a programme of processes or options to address longer-term challenges.

4. Project Aim

To determine the extent and source of work activity that compromises staff wellbeing and adversely impacts on the time available to staff to support student

5. Project Objectives

The specific objectives to be achieved by the project, and in support of its aim, are as follows:

Stage 1 - Data gathering

1. To survey and collect workload data from lecturers based on the activities identified in the national workload agreement.
2. To identify the actual and potential impacts of Covid-19 on practitioner workload.

Stage 2 - Review data

1. To provide clear guidance to EWC in preparing the survey data report
2. To provide anonymised data to the steering group to identify key areas for review
3. To provide detailed information on responses to allow the independent contractor to identify trends, areas of best practice or of concern
4. Review the data in order to identify and report on quick wins and clear “myth-busting” messages that can be used to help eliminate unnecessary processes and practices, and to simplify necessary ones.

Stage 3 - Analysis and Recommendations

To be determined

6. Project Timetable

Stage 1

December 2020 – February 2021

- presentation of the proposed research methodology (EWC)
- development, piloting and roll out of an FE Practitioner survey conducted by EWC in support of the project objectives above (EWC)
- To establish a steering group of equal representation of the partners

Stage 2

March – April 2021

- Appointment of chair for the steering group to be agreed by the steering group (Secretariat)
- terms of reference for steering group, to be approved by the steering group (Secretariat)
- Determine a schedule of meetings for phase two to be agreed and set by the steering group (Secretariat)
- Provide a detailed and methodologically sound analysis based on quantitative and qualitative information to determine current workload and administrative burdens (EWC)
- Ensure clear guidance to EWC in the preparation of the report to ensure that relevant information is available and clearly communicated (steering group)

Stage 3

To be agreed

7. Project Governance

Governance of the project will be via a social partnership model.

A steering group will be convened and its representation agreed by the WNCFE and nominated received for the Welsh Government membership. The steering group will approve the contracting of an independent consultant and report to the WNCFE and separately to Welsh Government for each stage boundary. The secretariat will be provide exception reports to the steering group or to its designated representative/s and scheduled updates to the partners on behalf of the independent consultant. The steering group will determine when exceptions should be communicated to the WNCFE and Welsh Government. All notifiable events within the standard terms of conditions set by Welsh Government should be notified immediately to the joint chairs of the WNCFE for communication with officials.

Financial management of any grant allocations will be determined in-keeping with agreements entered into with Welsh Government at a subsequent date.

All parties will be required to agree survey content, key communications and to identify their support for the final recommendations. The project will be a standing item on the agenda of the WNCFE for the duration of the project. The Welsh Government nomination to the steering group and their relevant colleagues will be invited to attend its meetings for the duration of the agenda item.

A Secretariat, independent of the members of the WNCFE and Welsh Government will support the consultant, with members of the steering contributing their expertise as required.

8. Project Budget

A project budget for Phase 1 and Phase 2 not exceeding £50,000 will be set with the purpose of engaging a contractor with the relevant and necessary experience to undertake the work. The contractor should be able to demonstrate

- a practitioner knowledge of workload associated with the delivery of learning in HE, vocational/WBL, Welsh Language and A level
- the requirements of employment law and best practice in Human Resources
- an ability to balance the views of the stakeholders

A detailed breakdown of the budget will be prepared once the general principles of the proposal have been agreed by the partners. An allowance will be made within the budget for secretariat, administration, translation etc.

Iestyn Davies

CEO ColegauCymru

Margaret Phelan

FE JTU

Marian Jebb

Welsh Government