



Further Education Joint Trade Unions Wales Cyd-Undebau Llafur Addysg Bellach Cymru

BRIEFING

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Workload Update

July 2021

Since March 2021, the academic trade unions have been meeting with Welsh Government officials and Colegau Cymru (CC) to start to address the excessive workload of lecturers in FE. Excessive workload has been evidenced twice by the workforce survey conducted by the EWC in 2016 and 2021 and by a separate UCU survey in 2015/6, which found very similar data to that of the EWC.

The workload steering group, with the independent chair John O'Shea have just concluded their report and recommendations for phase two of the project, phase one being the EWC data collection. We are currently trying to agree a project proposal for stage three.

In the recommendations from phase two, the final draft states that of the 51 average hours (reported in both EWC surveys, five years apart) that 21 hours are spent on teaching, 6 hours on assessment and marking, 6 hours on planning and preparation and 4 hours on digital preparation- a total of 37 hours.

The current draft of the phase three project proposal makes no mention of the fact that these four activities listed above are academic activities and cannot be addressed by reducing the administrative burden.

The JTUs have informed CC that unless the project proposal for phase three is aligned to reductions in academic workload as articulated by the National Workload Agreement, then they will not sign off on the bid to Welsh Government to do the work in phase three. In our view there is no point in arguing for increased funding for FE if it does not address the problems identified by the survey.

The ability of lecturers to deal with the changes the post 16 sector is going to experience during this government term will be compromised if the necessary space is not found to allow lecturers to engage in professional learning.

We wrote to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on the 13th July, asking him to meet with us to discuss our concerns, we are waiting for a response.

Recommendations from Phase two

1 Recommend to colleges that they consider the survey outcomes for their college when planning workload for 2021-22

Recommended action: Colleges to work with their local trades unions after Colegau Cymru circulates survey data and text analysis to colleges on 7 June 2021. Colleges and their local trades unions to

review their college data and jointly agree an action plan, by 30 November 2021, to improve wellbeing and workload in the college. The action plans will be shared and evaluated by the WNCFE.

Recommended action: WNCFE to consider revising workload agreement, by 30 July 2021, so that the current maximum of five hours working offsite is re-phrased so that there is an expectation (where it is mutually agreed) that lecturers will normally work at least five hours off campus during 2021-22.

2. Well-being

Recommended action: HR network to collect and share good practice on staff wellbeing (including with the curriculum and quality network by 31 October 2021 with a view to local discussions designed to improve lecturer wellbeing.

Recommended action: colleges to make full use of Hwb resources to develop wellbeing resources more efficiently – by 31 March 2022.

Recommended action: colleges to review outcomes of Well Aware project by 30 April 2022 and submit resource proposals as appropriate.

3. Professional development

Recommended action: HR network to collect and share (including with the curriculum and quality network and union learning representatives (ULRs)) good practice on professional learning by 31 October 2021 to facilitate local discussions; and then to work with Welsh Government on the outcomes of its post-16 workforce development project. This work will also feed into the outcomes of the professional learning pilots underway at Coleg Sir Gar and College Merthyr Tydfil.

4. Supporting Learners

Recommended action:

- 1. WNCFE to agree a twelve-month protocol to manage student expectations of lecturers outside of working hours by 31 July 2021.*
- 2. Colegau Cymru curriculum and quality network to identify and share practices in supporting students outside of timetabled sessions: by 31 October 2021.*
- 3. Welsh Government to commission research (possibly involving Jisc, by 31 October 2021, into best practice on how to support learners 'outside the classroom' in the digital age – the*

research not to be restricted to Welsh further education, but to led by FE digital leaders. The conclusions to be shared with the social partners so that agreement can be reached on what to take forward.

5. Digital

Recommended action: Welsh Government and colleges to continue to participate in the activities set out above and to draft proposals designed to improve student digital experience and outcomes in general so that Welsh FE provides the very best experience to its learners and cutting-edge training to Welsh industry to underpin economic recovery – by 31 December 2021.

6. Administrative Burden

Recommended action: Colleges, with their local trades unions, to review administrative activity currently carried out by lecturers – and to share outcomes between all colleges by 30 November 2021.

Colleges to review reports and returns from Welsh Government and Estyn and ask Welsh Government and Estyn to consider whether they add value – by 30 November 2021.

7. Qualifications

Recommended action: Colegau Cymru curriculum and quality network to discuss with Qualifications Wales, by 30 November 2021, timescales for the development and introduction of new awards.

8. WNCFE

Recommended action:

- 1. WNCFE to review the workload agreement during 2021-24 as described above by 30 April 2022. An interim evaluation to be undertaken on progress made by 31 July 2022.*
- 2. WNCFE to consider a process agreement to allocate time for course management - that requires negotiation and agreement at a local level; local agreements to be reached by 31 July 2021.*
- 3. WNCFE's drafting group to review the national workload agreement and the suite of FE contracts during 2021-22 to see if greater flexibility can be achieved without exacerbating workload or wellbeing issues; and make recommendations to the full WNCFE – by 31 July 2022.*