



Briefing Paper for AMs on Hazelkorn

The Students' Union, UNISON and The University and College Union (UCU) are all key stakeholders in the future of post 16 education and training in Wales. We writing to you to present this briefing as we wanted to impress upon you, as a representative of your constituents who rely on post 16 education and training to climb out of the poverty trap; provide a university education for their children; support the apprenticeship they may be looking to obtain, how important the decision you will be called upon to make in this 5th Assembly term in relation to the recommendations of the Hazelkorn Report.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop an overarching vision for the post-compulsory education system for Wales based upon stronger links between education policy, providers and provision, and social and economic goals to ensure the needs of Wales are future-proofed as far as is practicable.
2. Establish a single new authority – to be called the *Tertiary Education Authority* (henceforth TEA) – as the single regulatory, oversight and co-ordinating authority for the post-compulsory sector.
3. Place the needs of learners at the centre of the educational system, by establishing clear and flexible learning and career pathways.
4. Civic engagement should be embedded as a core mission and become an institution wide-commitment for **all** post-compulsory institutions.
5. Create a better balance between supply-led and demand-led education and research provision shifting away from a market-demand driven system to a mix of regulation and competition-based funding.
6. Create the appropriate policies, processes and practices to encourage better long term and joined-up thinking about the educational needs and requirements for Wales, now and into the future.

We would like you to consider the following when reflecting on the report's recommendations.

The impact that casualisation of the workforce has on the quality of education. We believe that high quality education and fair working conditions depend on contracts that give staff stability and continuity of employment. Casualisation is bad for staff and bad for education, yet it's endemic, particularly in our universities.

A workload comparison of FE and HE teaching staff, to assist in the equitable delivery of HE in FE.

In line with the widening access agenda, we recognise the need for the growth of the provision of accessible, higher level qualifications. Investment in further education will be key to this vision, in order to enable staff in FE colleges access to appropriate CPD and manageable workloads, that allow them to deliver the quality of provision expected at higher levels.

The statutory protection of academic freedom extended to all staff working in teaching and research, including academic-related staff. Individual academic freedom allows new ideas to be researched, advocated and published against existing orthodoxies, however inconvenient for the

academic hierarchy, government or funders. One of the purposes of post-compulsory education is to serve the public interest through extending knowledge and understanding and fostering critical thinking and expression in staff and students, and then in society more widely. Academic freedom is essential to achieving these ends and therefore to the development of a civilised democracy.

A commitment to the provision of affordable and accessible adult education. Traditionally, further education has provided valuable opportunities to adults who for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability and need to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

Review the process used to appoint Council members to the EWC. In order to drive up standards in FE through the EWC, it is vital that the Council has members with a clear understanding of the unique nature of FE and the subtle but important differences between compulsory and post compulsory classroom practice. However, there is currently no representation for FE lecturers on the Education Workforce Council; a glaring omission of the skills, knowledge and expertise required of the Council to support this section of the Education Workforce.

Why are these issues important?

We are expecting the Diamond report to be published at the end of September. We believe the recommendations from Diamond will trigger the discussions in cabinet about the Hazelkorn recommendations. We must avoid re-introducing nugatory competition, this time between HE and FE institutions. The introduction of one post 16 funding body should help avoid that situation. We believe that the government should be encouraged to maintain and expand the role of HEFCW to undertake this work, allowing the funding to be allocated to the provider who has the direct links with industry and is able to support the aspirations in relation to higher level apprenticeships.

Further and higher education is vital for individual development, social mobility and a successful economy. Learning benefits people of all ages in terms of employability, wellbeing, personal development and self-confidence.

Colleges and universities are key economic contributors, both as local employers and as providers of training and education for the workforce on which local and Welsh economies depend.

To realise its full potential to society, education and training must be adequately funded and fully accessible. Policies should be based on the premise that schools, further education providers and universities collectively provide the route to life enhancing opportunities and to stronger economies.

We need to seriously address these issues and return the balance of education, to one where all sectors are viewed as a coherent part of the same process, and that the process is for the benefit and wellbeing of society as a whole and not just as a means to satisfy an employer led skills agenda. This should be the remit of the post 16 funding body.

21 September 2016