# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Publication of the Statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation** |
| **DATE** | **28 February 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

This is the first [statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.wales%2Fstatement-strategic-priorities-tertiary-education-and-research-and-innovation&data=05%7C02%7CIorwerth.Griffiths%40gov.wales%7C21fc9523fae9454b253308dc37bc8b8d%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C638446530125256686%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YXBCuriHNXImEWGB75VMjMbyeG0cg0tsSiqUYOwQyX4%3D&reserved=0) published under section 13 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 and reflects Welsh Government priorities on a cross-government basis including both Education and Economy department policy. It is envisaged the statement of priorities and the strategic plan that the Commission will need to produce to address it applying for a timeframe of five years.

The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research must respond to the Statement by preparing a strategic plan setting outhow it will address the priorities contained in this statement. That strategic plan must also set out how the Commission will discharge its strategic duties as detailed in the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022. The Commission will consult on its plan before submitting it to the Welsh Ministers for approval and undertaking work to implement the plan.

This Statement is published in the context of a challenging budgetary situation and we anticipate that the Commission’s plan will reflect this. Separately from this Statement, the Commission’s funding will be set out in an annual funding letter.

There are five substantive priorities in the Statement and they are not listed ordinally in terms of importance.

The first priority concerns making learning as flexible as possible, increasing adult learning and making sure that basic skills needs are addressed so that Wales is a nation of second chances. The second priority is to ensure that the tertiary system is one of high-quality that strives for excellence whilst keeping a focus on widening participation, reducing attainment gaps and improving equity and diversity in the system.

Putting the learner at the heart of education is the third priority ensuring their voices are heard and that they are supported during their time in education. To reach their full potential learners need to be aware of all the different pathways available to them, including flexible and part-time learning. These pathways should be available through the medium of Welsh. Fourthly, the continuing contribution of the tertiary education system to the economy and society will require collaboration: collaboration in research, collaboration with industry and government, collaboration to ensure provision is aligned with the needs of employers and collaboration to ensure continuation of the great work done by our providers and their learners in contributing to the places in which they are based.

The final priority recognises that establishing the Commission will be a significant undertaking during the life of this first statement and by including it as a priority provides space for the Commission to do this work, develop its relationship with providers and, for the first time, establish data systems that give a picture of the whole tertiary system rather than its discrete sectors.

There is also a look to the future in how this data and how the Commission will fund the sector can be used to steer the system strategically with collaboration delivering clearer learner pathways and a national offer that reduces duplication between neighbouring institutions.

We are on the threshold of a new and exciting future for tertiary education in Wales and this Statement of Strategic Priorities provides the direction needed for the Commission to take us over that threshold and into that future.