

The University of Wales

About the University

Founded by Royal Charter in 1893, the University of Wales is the degree-awarding body for the majority of higher education students in Wales, as well as for many at other higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and overseas.

The University's position enables it to focus not only on its primary functions as a degree-awarding body and provider of services to the Welsh higher education sector but also, as a national institution, on playing an enhanced role in protecting and promoting the economy, culture and language of Wales.

Recently, the University has signed a memorandum of understanding with six of the university institutions in Wales, with whom it will be working closely on collaborative ventures, research groupings and other new initiatives. These institutions are:

Glyndŵr University
Swansea Metropolitan University
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC)
University of Wales, Newport
University of Wales, Lampeter
Trinity University College

The latter two institutions are set to merge in 2010 to become University of Wales, Trinity St David.

The University is also maintains links with Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University and Swansea University.

The University is also the degree-awarding authority for more than 120 other higher education institutions both within the United Kingdom and overseas, with which it also enjoys close links. Annually, it awards around 15,000 initial degrees and more than 4,000 higher degrees, making it the second largest degree-awarding body in the United Kingdom. The number of students, from all over the world, pursuing University of Wales degrees is 72,445, and their studies cover a wide range of subjects.

The University is a major national institution in Wales. While it is, of course, committed to helping to fulfil the educational and economic needs of Wales and to supporting its linguistic, cultural, and national heritage, the University is also committed to its international role and to enhancing its standing across the UK and overseas. As well as its validation role and the international projects undertaken by its Global Academy, the University sponsors a number of cultural initiatives, such as the prestigious Dylan Thomas Prize, for young writers, which attracts entries from all over the world.

University Centres and Services

The University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies is a dedicated research centre whose staff are engaged on major multidisciplinary research projects. Its work has won universal acclaim and it has, in the past two years, attracted two of the largest grants ever made by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to a higher education institution in Wales. In the 2008 *Research Assessment Exercise* the Centre received the accolade of having 35 per cent of its work rated as “world-leading” and 45 per cent as “internationally excellent”. This result both recognised the exceptional research carried out by its staff and confirmed its status as an international centre of excellence for Welsh and Celtic Studies.

The University of Wales Press was set up by Statute of the University in 1922. Within its educational mission it publishes dictionaries and reference works, as well as books for schools and for students. It also aims to promote the development and expansion of Welsh culture through academic and educational publishing both in the Welsh language, and on Welsh topics in English. Joint publication ventures are undertaken with national bodies in Wales, as well as with University Presses in North America.

Gregynog, the University’s study and conference centre in the Welsh countryside, is held in trust by the University under the terms of the will of the late Miss Margaret S Davies. Standing in 750 acres of gardens and woodland, it provides residential accommodation for up to 100 people, and can host nonresidential conferences for up to 200 people. Gregynog’s primary purpose is to be a study and conferencing facility for university staff and students, but it also provides a commercial conference and hospitality service, as well as hosting an annual classical music festival.

The University of Wales Global Academy was formed with the purpose of helping to boost the economic performance and innovative capacity of Wales, enhance research excellence and capability and improve links between businesses and university institutions within Wales.

The first of the Academy’s initiatives, the Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships, was formally launched by the Prince of Wales, the University’s Chancellor, in May 2009. This ground-breaking programme matches the best students from around the world to cutting-edge research and development projects within Welsh companies, and to related university departments, thus providing unique industrial-based PhD scholarships. Between 2009 and 2012 one hundred of these prestigious Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships will be offered.

The second major programme within the Global Academy, The Prince of Wales Distinguished Visiting Professorships Programme, will provide awards to enable overseas-based distinguished senior industrialists and academics from some of the world’s leading technological and innovative organisations to spend between three and six months in Wales, working with companies, universities and government to increase open innovation culture.

Alumni Services

The University is fortunate to have, in its graduates, a host of ambassadors worldwide. The work of its alumni organisation emphasises two focal points: the fostering of close communication for all the University's graduates with each other, with the University and other organisations, and the provision of opportunities for co-operation between institution-based alumni groups, and for the promotion of each institution. The development of services and activities, especially the modernisation and improvement of communication with all the University's alumni, is a priority.

Please note that specific schools or departments within an Accredited Institution of the University may only be mentioned in exceptional cases (for example, where students studying on validated programmes of study spend part of their studies at an Accredited Institution of the University). The Validation Unit (in consultation with the school or department concerned) will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.

Photographs of the University of Wales Registry, copies of the University's logo and other publicity materials are available from the Validation Unit.

Photographs must be identified as being reproduced with the permission of the University.

The University's Validation Operation

“Validation is the process by which an awarding institution judges that a programme developed and delivered by another institution is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to its award.” (The Quality Assurance Agency.)

While the majority of the University's students study in Wales, the University's very successful and highly regarded international validation operation is also an important dimension of its work. This enables overseas institutions to offer the University of Wales degree at an equivalent standard to the degree offered in Wales itself. Validation is important in fostering links between Wales and other countries and many of the University's graduates are now in positions of influence overseas. Last year, more than 19,000 students were registered on validated courses of the University of Wales and nearly 4,000 graduated with the University's degree. Altogether, more than 40,000 students have been awarded degrees since the validation operation began in 1975.

The maintenance of academic standards is of paramount importance for validated courses, as it is for courses offered within Wales. The University is rightly regarded as a role model in this respect. Its processes compare very favourably with those of other institutions in the UK and positive reports received following independent reviews, favourable audit reports from the Quality Assurance Agency and the University's reputation overseas attest clearly to the high esteem in which its validation work is held.