

# Internationalisation in the FE sector in Wales

Final report

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Presented to ColegauCymru by Arad Research

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Arad Research  
8 Columbus Walk  
Brigantine Place  
Cardiff CF10 4SD  
029 2044 0552  
[www.arad.wales](http://www.arad.wales)

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arad  
research

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# 1. Introduction and methodology

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ColegauCymru commissioned Arad to undertake research with the further education (FE) sector in Wales to support their development of a strategic internationalisation plan for the sector.

## 1.1 Background to the research

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ColegauCymru wished to undertake research within the FE sector to:

- establish the current status of internationalisation;
- to determine what needs to be in place to further develop internationalisation;
- to improve how the sector communicates its future international ambitions to a global audience.

ColegauCymru plans to formalise the sector's commitment to international collaboration through the development of a strategic plan for the sector so that, in the long term, internationalisation becomes embedded in the FE curriculum.

## 1.2 Aims and methodology

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The research focused on identifying:

- The current position in FE colleges with regards to internationalisation;
- The policy position within Wales and the UK;
- Partnerships within the sector that could support activities, structures and processes for internationalisation in the sector; and
- The colleges' future ambitions, including their views on how ColegauCymru could support these ambitions.

The methodology for this research included a short survey of colleges in Wales (12 out of 13 colleges responded) and interviews with key staff in 11 colleges. All colleges in Wales contributed to the research via at least one of these methods. The survey and interviews focused on the following themes:

- Strategic planning and responsibility for international activity within colleges;
- Student enrichment / mobility opportunities;
- Staff mobility;
- Commercial activities;
- International partnerships;
- Challenges and key learning points involved in developing international activities;
- The impact of international activities; and
- Views on support needed from ColegauCymru and how the FE sector in Wales can improve how it engages internationally.

Interviews were also undertaken with four partner organisations which could potentially support internationalisation in the FE sector. These interviews focused on the current

opportunities offered by the partner organisations, their history of collaboration with the FE sector and perceived opportunities and challenges for future partnership working.

In addition, a case study interview was carried out with two students (and their tutor) who had participated in an international mobility project prior to the Covid pandemic.

Finally, a literature and policy review was carried out to provide an overview of the wider internationalisation context in which ColegauCymru's strategic plan will be developed.

## 2. Literature and policy review

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This section provides an overview of Welsh and UK government policy relating to internationalisation, outlining the priorities for international working and the role of the FE sector in relation to internationalisation. It also provides an outline of international activity that has been taking place within the sector, the benefits of these activities and the current situation in light of recent developments, such as Brexit.

### 2.1 Wales-level policy

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Wales' internationalisation policy has evolved in recent years. In 2015, the Welsh Government published *Wales in the World*<sup>1</sup>, which set out the international agenda for Wales in order to 'ensure Wales has a strong footprint around the world'. The objectives outlined were to:

- strengthen the Welsh economy;
- enhance the profile and reputation of Wales;
- develop and maintain effective bilateral and multilateral relationships;
- proactively co-operate in the sharing of information, best practice and peer learning;
- increase Wales' influence with appropriate multilateral and international organisations;
- contribute to sustainable development and responsible global citizenship.

Since the publication of *Wales in the World*, the international landscape has changed significantly, driving a refocused international vision for Wales. Therefore, in 2020, the Welsh Government published its *International Strategy*<sup>2</sup> which outlines the current priorities in relation to international relationships and economic partnerships. The strategy focuses on three core ambitions for Wales:

- to 'raise Wales' profile internationally' by building on its reputation as a nation of creativity and innovation;
- to 'grow Wales' economy' through increasing exports and inward investments, the creation of new jobs and the development of new technology; and
- to establish 'Wales as a globally responsible nation' with the Well-being of Future Generations Act forming the foundation of Wales' commitment to sustainability.

It is intended that the 'Cymru Wales' brand will be of key importance in achieving Wales' three core ambitions, utilised for campaigns and marketing amongst various sectors, such as the higher education sector to promote Wales as a place to study.

Despite a lack of direct consideration for further education, the strategy outlines elements pertinent to the FE sector. Of particular relevance is the commitment to student and academic exchanges, which will support the ambition to grow Wales' economy. The strategy outlines a commitment to work with education institutions to increase the number of international students studying in Wales and to support the continued participation of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/wales-in-world.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/international-strategy-for-wales-v1.pdf>

Welsh-domicile students in exchange programmes. Further discussion of the impact of student mobility programmes is detailed in section 3.2 below.

In addition to the above commitments, the strategy outlines the importance of continuing the ‘work with Vietnam to develop its educational infrastructure through training opportunities, research, collaboration and academic exchanges.’ Additionally, it states a commitment to develop similar programmes with other partner countries.

Following on from Wales’ International Strategy, a series of action plans have been published. The first publication, *Priority Regional Relationships and Networks 2020-2025*<sup>3</sup>, outlines Wales action plan to further develop relationships with priority European and other partners, namely Brittany, the Basque Country, Flanders and Québec. One medium-term action, amongst others, highlighted within this publication, with a direct link to FE, is the intention to build on existing relationships Wales has developed with Breton educational and youth sectors. See section 3.2 for a short case study on a student exchange with a Breton college.

Wales’ second action plan, *International Relations through Public Diplomacy and Soft Power 2020-2025*<sup>4</sup>, acknowledges the key role international students play in enriching Wales’ cultural diversity and to Wales’ export economy. The plan therefore highlights a commitment to continue to support the promotion of Wales as a study destination internationally. Within this plan is also the consideration of student mobility. A key action in relation to student mobility is providing students with opportunities to gain international experience:

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*‘We will continue to provide our young people with the opportunities to gain international experience through the Seren network and Global Wales Discover, and provide opportunities for young people from the US, Vietnam, India, and the EU to study in Wales through scholarships such as Gilman, Fulbright, Chevening and the Global Wales Postgraduate Scholarship Programme.’*

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Wales’ third action plan, *Wales and Africa 2020-2025*<sup>5</sup> details partnerships and work undertaken with the Wales and Africa programme and the priorities for 2020-2025. An initiative of particular relevance to student mobility, outlined within the plan, is the International Learning Opportunities (ILO) programme. Until the Covid-19 pandemic, the ILO was providing 8-week placements to Lesotho, Uganda or Namibia. The plan details the priority to relaunch and expand the initiative, as well as to investigate the use of IT to enhance placements.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/priority-regional-relationships-and-networks.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/international-relations-through-public-diplomacy-soft-power.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/wales-and-africa.pdf>

Welsh Government's strategy and action plan for internationalisation contributes to the broader ambitions set out in various national strategies. It contributes to the goal to 'position Wales as an internationally focussed, ambitious country' set out in *Taking Wales Forward* (the programme for government 2016-21)<sup>6</sup>. It also aligns with key elements of *Prosperity for All*, (Welsh Government's national strategy for delivering on the programme for government's commitments)<sup>7</sup>, namely the notions that 'a prosperous Wales needs creative, highly skilled and adaptable people' and successful research and innovation which is 'driven by people with broad horizons and a global outlook'.

## 2.2 UK-level policy

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At a UK level, internationalisation is of growing importance to the education sector. This is evident through the UK Government's *International Education Strategy* (2019)<sup>8</sup>, which set out two key ambitions:

- to increase education exports to £35 billion per year; and
- to increase the numbers of international higher education students studying in the UK to 600,000 per year.

One section within the strategy outlines the priorities for technical and vocational education and training, skills and college. The stated actions emphasise a commitment to 'encourage a greater proportion of UK skills organisations to consider taking their offer internationally' and to 'continue to utilise government-to-government and government-to-industry links overseas to promote the UK skills offer'. These actions therefore aim to support the UK skills sector to make its offer international

In 2021, an update to the International Education Strategy was published<sup>9</sup>, which focuses on supporting recovery and driving growth following the challenges and opportunities faced by the education sector as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The update reaffirms the UK Government's commitment to the two key ambitions, set out in the 2019 strategy, in relation to education exports and hosting international students.

In terms of the technical and vocational education and training sector, the 2021 update details how the UK Government's Department for International Trade (DIT) has, and will continue to work with the British Council and UK Skills Partnership members to 'promote the UK TVET sector and provide practical opportunities for UK organisations'. Progress so far has included helping the sector to develop bespoke offers to fit other countries' requirements; supporting colleges and providers who have sought to develop partnerships in other countries; and promoting apprenticeships through British Council's international benchmarking tool.

One noteworthy development outlined within this 2021 update is the UK Government's promise of:

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<sup>6</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2017-08/taking-wales-forward.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2017-10/prosperity-for-all-the-national-strategy.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799349/International\\_Education\\_Strategy\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799349/International_Education_Strategy_Accessible.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/958990/International-Education-Strategy-2021-Update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958990/International-Education-Strategy-2021-Update.pdf)

*'permitting international students to apply to study a new course in the UK once they have completed their first course, or to apply under the new Skilled Worker route, regardless of the level of study or the education institution.'*

This promise will be key to improving pathways for international students at all levels of study in the UK, thus contributing to one of the two main ambitions of the UK Government's international education strategy.

## 2.3 Internationalisation activity

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Evidence suggests that internationalisation activities undertaken by the education sector positively impact on students, teachers, learning environments and local communities. Student and staff international mobility programmes have been central to internationalisation activity within the FE and HE sectors. Mobility programmes for students, such as international exchanges, significantly improve learners' chances of excelling. A report by Universities UK International<sup>10</sup>, which examined destination data of leavers from HE cohort 2016-17, found that graduates who participated in mobility programmes had a lower unemployment rate than those who did not (2.3% for mobile individuals compared with 4.2% for non-mobile peers).

The UK has been a long-standing participant in the EU's Erasmus programme, established in 1987. The scheme offers student exchanges as well as school links, work experience and apprenticeships across Europe. A survey of FE learners in Wales who have participated in Erasmus+ found that the scheme supports them to broaden their future aspirations, improve their technical skills, confidence and tolerance of different cultures<sup>11</sup>.

The Erasmus+ programme has also provided international opportunities for staff within FE institutions in Wales. For example, in most recent years, it has enabled lecturers, managers and college leaders across Wales to participate in various different professional learning opportunities in Finland, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Denmark and Italy. This has enabled staff to train alongside and build new connections with peers in other parts of Europe.

According to the annual international survey conducted by the Association of Colleges (AoC)<sup>12</sup>, the national body for the FE sector in England, the Erasmus+ programme was the most common type of international activity undertaken by colleges across the UK in 2019/20. Student recruitment was the second most common international activity. Additionally, just under half of the responding colleges undertook international activity in the form of professional or vocational training programmes. In terms of the countries rated of most importance to colleges' international activity, China was cited by the highest proportion of colleges.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/Documents/2019/Gone-Intl-2019.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.colleges.wales/image/publications/reports/Qualitative%20analysis%20Erasmus%20scheme/Qualitative%20analysis%20Erasmus%20scheme%20final%20draft.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/AoC%20International%20Survey%20Report%202020.pdf>

Although the report acknowledges that the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted international activities, it also notes that colleges remain committed to resuming these activities as soon as it is safe to do so. It should be noted that although this report is mainly focused on England, 4 colleges from Wales and ColegauCymru responded to this survey on behalf of the sector.

As the representative body for FE colleges in Wales, ColegauCymru plays a vital role in organising international opportunities for staff and learners within the FE sector. ColegauCymru supports further education staff to undertake training and develop partnerships with organisations abroad, and helps learners undertake work experience in organisations across Europe. ColegauCymru has been responsible for overseeing the management of Erasmus+ consortium applications for the FE sector.

Another key player in relation to supporting the access to international opportunities is the British Council, which has managed the Welsh Government Funded International Education Programme. The aims and objectives of this programme were:

- to provide individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to contribute in a global community
- to increase awareness, attitudes and response to global learning
- to increase sustained collaboration between Wales and other countries
- to improve educational levels and productive partnerships
- to increase the employability of young people in Wales

Colleges themselves play a key role in ensuring their learners and staff have access to international opportunities. One example, compiled as a case study by the British Council, is activity undertaken by Cardiff and Vale College. International activity undertaken by the college is broad ranging. It includes recruitment of international students to the college's full and part-time courses and summer and winter schools; strategic international partnerships; student and staff exchange visits through partner schools and Erasmus+; and sponsored overseas trips for learners. Staff and learners are actively encouraged to participate in the international opportunities the college offers, due to the positive benefits they present.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the evidence has shown that, although the Erasmus+ programme has played a key role in providing students and staff with international opportunities, other international activities have also been taking place. Many of these activities have positively impacted on students and staff, as well as contributing to Wales' *International Strategy*.

## 2.4 Student mobility and Brexit

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The extent of the impact of Brexit on student mobility is uncertain. However, events to-date demonstrate considerable changes to the international opportunities available to students. In particular, the UK's withdrawal from the Erasmus+ scheme ends the UK's involvement in a scheme which has brought many benefits to those who have participated (see section 3.2). However, in light of this, there have been calls for a successor scheme which enables

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/skills-employability/success-stories/internationalisation-further-education/cardiff-and-vale-college-bringing-added-value>

learners and education institutions to benefit from similar international opportunities to those offered by Erasmus+.

For example, ColegauCymru have stated:

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*'If full participation in Erasmus+ is not possible, the Welsh Government should develop an alternative scheme to ensure that learners from Wales can still benefit from the opportunities and development available to earlier generations of learners.'*<sup>14</sup>

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Following the UK's decision to leave the European Union and to withdraw from the Erasmus+ scheme, the UK Government has announced the introduction of the new Turing scheme<sup>15</sup>. The £100 million scheme will offer around 35,000 students in universities colleges and schools across the UK the chance to study and work abroad from September 2021. One significant difference between this new Turing scheme and Erasmus+ is that it will be a worldwide programme. However, it will not offer placements for teaching and college staff like the Erasmus+ programme does. The exclusion of this element to the programme, indicates that the Turing scheme does not fully address the calls for a successor programme that offers the same level of opportunities as Erasmus+.

In March 2021, the Welsh Government announced the launch of an International Learning Exchange Programme for Wales, which will<sup>16</sup>:

- Enable reciprocal exchanges (whether based on physical mobility or co-operation remotely) between educational and training institutions as well as youth work settings in Wales and internationally;
- Support, as far as possible, the entire range of activities which have been available to learners in Wales under the EU's Erasmus+ programme 2014 - 2020;
- Build on the success of Global Wales in developing links with priority countries across the world, including the US, Vietnam and India, and supporting an ambitious range of scholarships that will attract the best and brightest students from across the world to study in Wales;
- Ensure that opportunities are available to the widest range of learners and young people, including underrepresented groups, those with additional learning needs and protected characteristics;
- Include additional flexibilities, notably allowing for shorter exchanges involving higher education;
- Support capacity building necessary to facilitate a wide range of participation in the Programme;
- Potentially, support exploratory exchanges to broker international research partnerships; and

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<sup>14</sup><https://www.colleges.wales/image/publications/briefings/Erasmus%20plus/Erasmus%20Plus%20briefing%20ENG.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-turing-scheme-to-support-thousands-of-students-to-study-and-work-abroad>

<sup>16</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-international-learning-exchange-programme-wales>

- Align closely with Welsh Government's International Strategy.

The programme will commence from the 2022/2023 academic year, run until 2027 and will be supported by an investment of £65million. It is hoped that the programme will enable the continuation of access to international mobility opportunities and the benefits they generate. In doing so, it will reduce the level of uncertainty upon Wales' international activities in FE caused by the impacts of Brexit and the UK's decision to withdraw from Erasmus+.

### 3. Findings from fieldwork

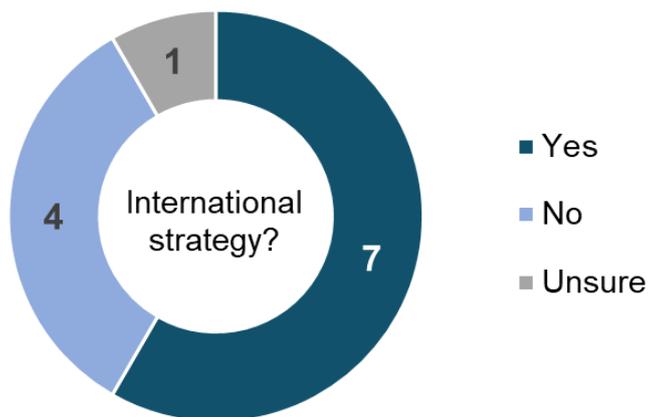
This section presents the key findings from fieldwork carried out with colleges, partners and learners.

#### 3.1 Responsibilities and strategy

Of the 12 colleges who responded to the survey, 7 stated that they have an international strategy, while 4 do not and 1 was unsure. Those colleges which do have an international strategy provided a brief summary of its objectives, which varied in focus between colleges; some prioritise commercial international activity while others focus on learner enrichment, or both. Those colleges who do not have a strategy primarily noted that international activity was not enough of a priority for the college to develop a specific international strategy.

A similarly mixed picture was described by a wider FE stakeholder interviewed as part of this research, with some colleges in England focused on the enrichment agenda, with others actively recruiting overseas students and engaging with a range of international partners on curriculum development, training the trainer, qualifications and assessment.

**Figure 1: Whether colleges have an international strategy**



Source: Internationalisation survey, n=12

For 4 colleges, the commercial element of internationalisation is the main driver for their international strategies. These strategies are largely targeted at the recruitment of overseas students, predominantly in countries such as China (including Hong Kong) and India, through courses delivered in these countries and validated by the college or in terms of recruiting students to study in the UK. These strategies tend to have senior management buy in and a ‘top down driven’ approach to internationalisation. College representatives noted the importance of this international engagement to the income of their respective colleges and that centralised structures have been put in place to support this.

*‘We are unusual as a college because we have a team of seven working entirely on the commercial aspect of international. The commercial team*

*includes staff focus on marketing, relationships with agents, visa compliance, the China operation, pastoral care. Developing online learning has also been a focus as well as a campaign to attract European students to Wales.' FEI representative*

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These colleges report that internationalisation is high on the agenda, supported by principals and senior management teams (SMT) and Governors, and with management and delivery structures to embed it within college goals. One college is developing international champions across the institution who will meet as a regular forum to share knowledge and good practice amongst staff – both management and teaching, a model based on similar activities in higher education institutions. These processes aim to support staff awareness and communication about international activities across the college.

Another college noted that they were centralising processes and resources through their international office, combining commercial and learner enrichment activities through international exchanges, learner mobility, compliance, student recruitment and admissions. This aims to avoid duplication and allow the college to integrate and promote international activities with overall college goals and strategies. Other colleges have staff roles linked to key income areas such as European Union funding e.g. through Erasmus+ and these are linked to staff in areas such as compliance and administration, promoting a college-wide approach to international engagement.

While commercial reasons are the driving focus for these colleges, they also nonetheless support a range of enrichment activities. These are designed and delivered largely through the initiative of heads of faculties who either lead specific partnerships or activities or are part of wider international initiatives organised by ColegauCymru and other organisations.

Other colleges focus much more on enrichment and the *'desire to open up horizons'* for learners. Some representatives noted that their respective colleges do not currently have the infrastructure, capacity or the strategic impetus from SMT to develop commercial activities. These colleges tend to have more ad hoc approaches to developing international projects with staff sometimes in split roles between commercial and enrichment, which can lead to a perceived lack of joined up activities and sustainable approaches. These colleges therefore often rely on external initiatives led by organisations such as ColegauCymru to engage internationally.

Several of these college representatives noted that there were pockets of good practice within certain faculties and they felt they could do more to broaden the benefit beyond particular learners as part of a more college-wide approach. They noted a growing appetite across faculties to support student opportunities to experience international elements to their learning and support global citizenship along with staff development too, linking to one of the key objectives of Welsh Government's Wales in the World strategy.

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*'We wanted a new strategy for the college that placed the focus first on enrichment for the learners and staff and then on the commercial element. There's a focus on developing an international ethos in the*

*curriculum to promote learners' potential for mobility and raise aspirations to do an element of work experience abroad - placement quality is key aspect of this.' FEI representative*

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Challenges faced by colleges to expand their international provision and engagement include new visa requirements for students, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resource-intensive nature of arranging international activity. One college representative highlighted the requirement for a greater focus on domestic students rather than international was driving their current provision.

### **3.2 Learner experiences and impact**

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The key programme for vocational learners over the past years has been Erasmus+ with the majority reporting some level of engagement with the programme. Erasmus+ opportunities are circulated and advertised to all vocational learners within these colleges and representatives reported that the courses involved have included engineering, catering and hospitality, hair and beauty, business administration, art and design, sports, computing and health and social care.

Engagement with the programme can be driven by historical partnerships, interests of course leaders and links to wider college enrichment strategies. Colleges also engage with ColegauCymru support for the development of consortium activities. This support has included finding partners, with one college representative noting that they couldn't have done as much or scaled up as quickly without it. Another noted that the consortium approach promoted by ColegauCymru is especially effective for colleges with less experience of international engagement or those who lack the capacity or overarching strategy to engage.

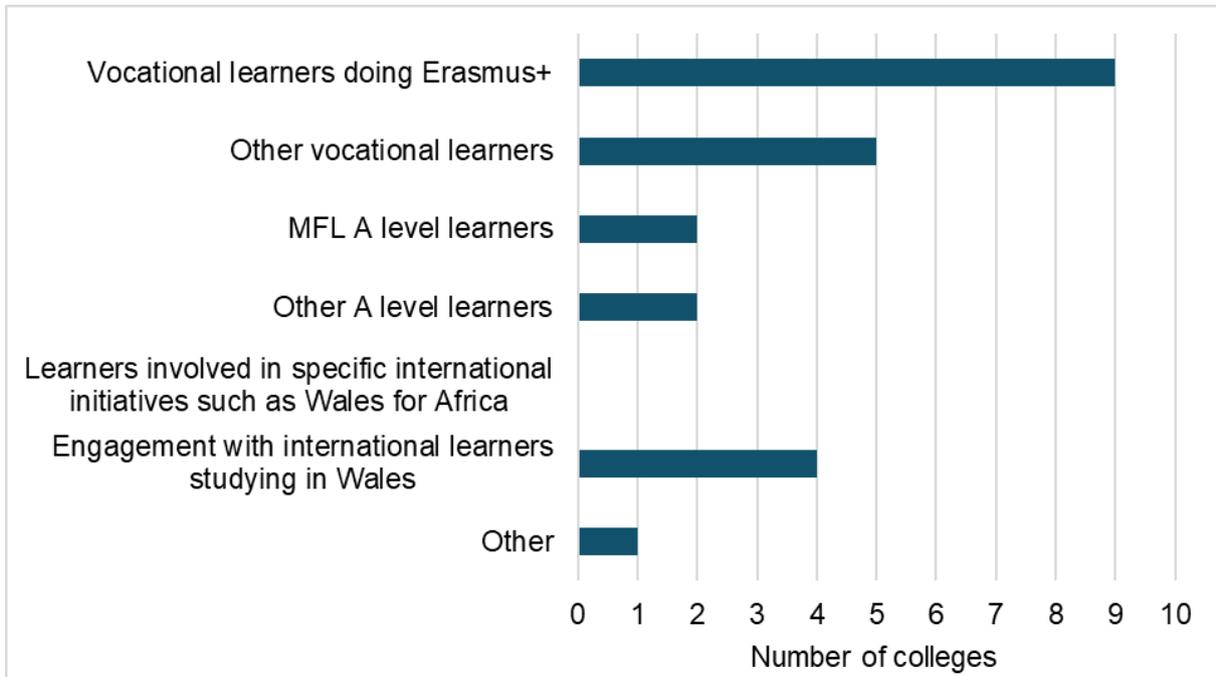
Some college representatives noted that other faculties also undertake international visits not linked to Erasmus+. Again, this can depend on historical links with partners, previous exchange projects and support for the enrichment of learners e.g. in one college travel and tourism collect evidence for their qualification abroad, while learners in hospitality and business administration also go abroad regularly. Another college has longstanding links with Norway for courses in sustainable construction methods, while their health and beauty learners go to Spain. In one college, it is not just vocational students who participate as A level students visit the college's school in China, the art and design group went to a partner school in Paris and the film studies department to Spain.

Colleges usually promote these opportunities for learners at enrolment and highlight the benefits and the progress that they can make. Colleges use an open application process for learners who want to participate in overseas opportunities, which include interviews and a presentation regarding their reasons for participating; a process which was considered to have benefits for learners in terms of their communication and presentation skills.

Figure 2 below shows the number of colleges who reported providing opportunities for learners to engage in activities with an international element. As discussed above,

Erasmus+ is the primary mechanism by which learners are provided with international opportunities and colleges tend to focus on providing opportunities for vocational students. Data on the number of learners benefiting from these activities are presented in the Appendix.

**Figure 2: Number of colleges providing learners with activities with an international element during an academic year**



Source: Internationalisation survey, n=12

Benefits for learners are wide-ranging. College representatives particularly highlighted the positive impact on learners’ confidence, communication skills and personal growth during their international placements. Improvements in skills and knowledge relating to their chosen courses also are reported. College representatives highlighted examples such as learning about different ways of working in engineering or catering, sector specific skills development, and soft skills development such as problem solving and analysis. Greater intercultural understanding is another important attribute coming out of the exchanges, with one college reporting the benefits of buddy systems with partner colleges to support integration.

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*‘Some of the learners haven’t even been to Cardiff so it’s an amazing experience for them. They are often from deprived areas and their confidence grows hugely. They hold down their work placement, they learn on the job, the discipline and mindset and job specific skills and structure, you can see the change in them. It is transformative and gives learners an opportunity they’d never be able to afford otherwise.’*

**FEI representative**

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There have been some reported benefits for modern foreign language (MFL) learning, but these are generally minimal and stakeholders considered that there should be more emphasis on supporting language skills before, during and after exchanges in order to enhance learners' experiences. A few colleges have used their MFL staff or college alumni to provide taster sessions, however, this is not currently the norm across all colleges. The removal of the Welsh Bac from vocational training has also led to lack of opportunities to develop language skills or for meaningful language learning.

Several colleges also highlighted the benefits of reciprocity, with learners who come to Wales to study bringing new languages and cultural exchange ideas and being hosted in their local communities. Some of these learners come through Erasmus+ and some through commercial projects in subjects; for example, in one college a small number of learners study business administration or health and social care in partnership with a college in Denmark. It was also noted that many international learners coming to Welsh colleges tend to study A levels rather than take the vocational route, as they want to access UK's higher education system.

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*'The students bring a lot, it's great to hear other languages being spoken in the college. They are also very active in community outreach, helping to organise trips to sites like Lourdes, the chaplaincy as well as supporting extra curricula activities such as enterprise, they're innovative and energetic.'* **FEI representative**

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Despite these benefits, a number of challenges exist with promoting exchanges for learners. For some colleges, developing international experiences require too much capacity and the management and logistics are considered too complex. Capacity and concerns about learner and staff health & safety are barriers, with some representatives noting that some learners will never have been abroad before and that they and their family will require reassurance. The demands of the curriculum were also cited as a barrier, with a lack of flexibility and concerns about loss of teaching time. Nevertheless, some college representatives noted that once these barriers were addressed staff were more open to international engagement activities.

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*'Staff saw there was a lot of paperwork for student mobility. Once the compliance and administration officer took that away from them, staff bought in quickly. Full time teachers are usually too busy for logistics however they were receptive when the admin was removed.'* **FEI representative**

*'International visits can offer students stretch and challenge, letting them see how things work in practice, they are great for disadvantaged students who may not otherwise get such opportunities to expand horizons.'* **FEI representative**

*‘Internationalisation enhances and is what we are as a college. There is also an employability dimension as home students who engage with foreign students gain a better understanding of global sectors which will help when they work for international companies in future. Internationalisation also helps the confidence of home learners, some of which have come to the college unsure what to do next or having had a negative experience in school.’ **FEI representative***

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### **Case study**

ColegauCymru received Welsh Government Securing Wales’ Future Relations (SWFR) funding to pilot week-long mobilities in Brittany for 20 vocational learners from five colleges in Wales. ColegauCymru and the Regional Council in Brittany supported the development of partnerships between the colleges in Wales and their counterparts in Brittany in the following curriculum areas: Marine Engineering, Hospitality & Catering, Health & Social Care, Childcare and Agriculture. Tutors from Wales visited the colleges in Brittany in January/February 2020 in order to plan for the learner visits. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, only one group of learners undertook their visit.

The college heard that funding was available for them to run a small pilot exchange project in Brittany. The project involved taking four learners who were studying Catering and Hospitality (Level 3 and Level 2) to a partner college in Brittany. The tutor explained that the college was already providing opportunities for learners through Erasmus+ and the Charles de Gaulle programme, so they were aware of the benefits of international activities. The learners explained that they wanted to develop a deeper knowledge of other cuisines, as well as seeing how the industry operates in different countries and learn new skills.

It was the first time the learners had really spent time away from their families, the visit gave them an opportunity to be independent. Although the learners were nervous at first, they quickly learnt from other learners and the college in Brittany was very welcoming.

The learners experienced a range of activities in Brittany, including trying new food, buying and working with shellfish, practising knife skills, front of house experience, visiting a cider maker, and visiting mass food production facilities. They also ‘buddied’ with other learners at the Breton college, shadowed each other and made new friends.

Learners developed a range of skills through the visit, such as chef skills, communication, working as a team with their peers and specific skills relating to the activities they experienced (such as cooking shellfish). The learners also explained that they experienced different ways of working, for example noting that chefs in Brittany run their kitchens differently, taking charge of the whole operation. It was also a cultural and social experience for the learners, allowing them to learn about Breton culture and meet new people.

*“Nobody had given me the opportunity before to meet new people and make new friends abroad. People helped me out, I dreamed of making a connection in France, I felt like I belonged.” (Learner)*

*'I always liked cooking and wanted to develop a deeper knowledge of other cuisines. I wanted to see how the industry operates in different countries and learn new skills and take the opportunity on offer.'* (Learner)

The tutor felt that the project was good for the college's image as well, as they were able to show the Breton college how they work; for example, introducing them to the campus, their hospitality partners, how they provide professional development to staff and how they deliver the curriculum. The project provided opportunities for a good exchange of knowledge.

The learners noted that they would like to do more work experience and continue to a Level 4 qualification, eventually become a teacher and /or continue working as a chef.

### 3.3 Staff experiences and impact

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College representatives highlighted a range of activities involving staff at an international level. Again, Erasmus+ has been a key part of this approach, with colleges noting that staff have accompanied learners on their placement visits. This has allowed staff to bond with their learners and to enrich their own learning experiences and professional development, developing new skills and knowledge. Examples included staff involvement in engineering and mechanics visits to Germany, health and social care in Norway and innovation in the Basque Country. These opportunities are also considered as ways to build new networks for the college and share ideas with colleagues.

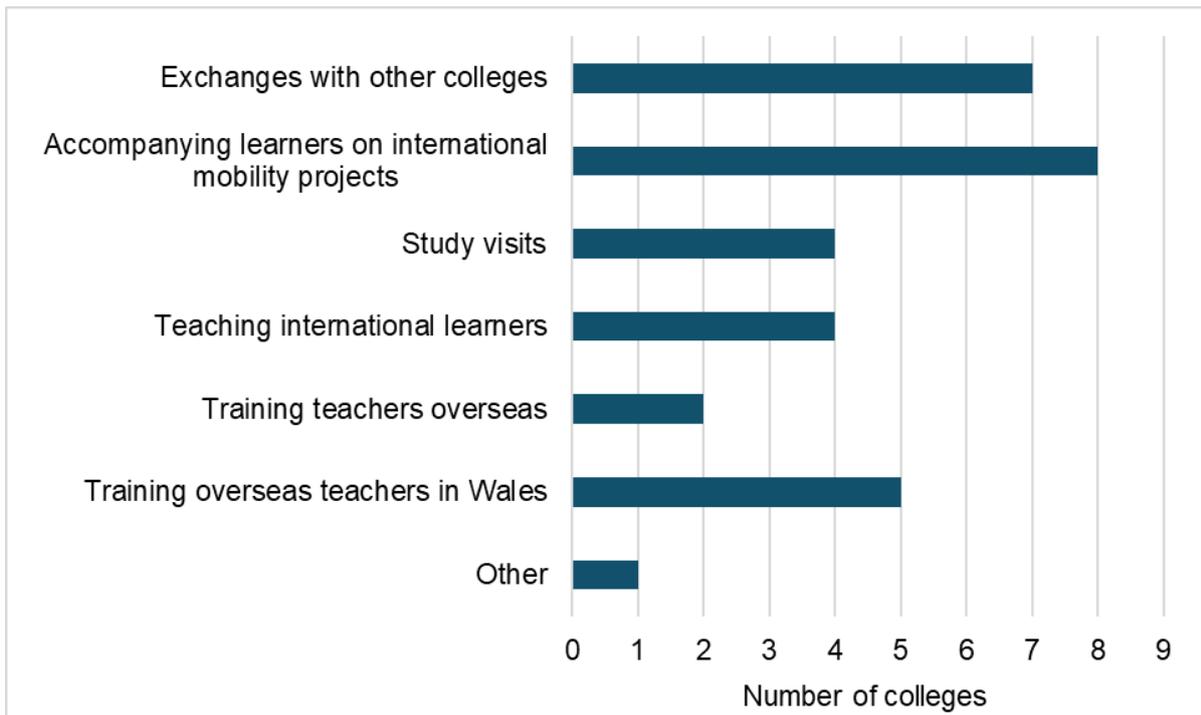
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*'It has been a confidence booster for staff, giving them new teaching techniques for some subjects an awareness of new techs e.g. renewables as well as other systems of production e.g. for food-based apprenticeships. It gave them more responsibility too.'* **FEI representative**

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Figure 3 below presents the number of colleges who provide staff with activities with an international element. The activities most commonly offered by colleges are accompanying learners on international mobility projects, for example through participation in ColegauCymru staff visits, exchanges with other colleges and (for those with a commercial focus) training overseas teachers in Wales. Data on the number of staff benefiting from these activities are presented in the Appendix.

**Figure 3: Number of colleges providing staff with activities with an international element during an academic year**



Source: Internationalisation survey, n=12

Staff study visits also take place under Key Action 1 of Erasmus+, which promotes good practice exchange and collaborative studies opportunities. Colleges provided examples of themes included such as curriculum development, college management and quality assurance techniques. The aim of focusing on such themes is to ensure visits are purposeful and have an impact and the visits are arranged by ColegauCymru as part of their consortium approach to Erasmus+. Examples included going to Finland to look at approaches to literacy and numeracy and Italy to examine processes for developing an international ethos to support learning.

There are also examples of reciprocal exchanges with international staff coming to Wales and Welsh colleges welcoming delegations from international partners e.g. 20 staff from China to look at finance modules. Several colleges also noted involvement in British Council initiatives e.g. senior leaders went on study visits to South Africa and Brazil. One college reported staff were involved in an EQAVET exchange, working with other faculties in international colleges examining employment rates, types of qualifications, accreditation and transition strategies for learners into employment.

Staff also benefit from opportunities for international cultural exchange and skills development through involvement in commercial international activities (discussed in section 3.4 below). Staff are required to develop awareness and understanding of pedagogy and curriculum differences in other countries and gain additional experience in teaching internationally. For colleges with a strategic commitment to commercial international activities, a large number of staff can participate in some form of international interaction whether that be through teaching abroad or through teaching international students within their own colleges.

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*'The staff visit to Italy had a particular focus on looking at innovative and creative approaches to engaging learners through international projects. It was also interesting to see how embedded literacy and numeracy is within their FE curriculum. It's a really holistic approach.'* **FEI representative**

*'The ColegauCymru visits have been the best staff development and networking I've ever been on.'* **FEI representative**

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### **3.4 Commercial activities**

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As referenced in section 3.1 some colleges place a strategic focus on developing the commercial element of international activities and several colleges in Wales with the necessary infrastructure and capacity have developed strong commercial arms. These colleges are involved in international activities such as teacher training, recruiting learners to do A levels or ESOL courses in Wales and establishing colleges abroad.

For example, one college runs teacher training for vocational teachers overseas (especially in China) which has moved to virtual training since the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also recruited a cross-college teacher training team to work abroad to work on an electric vehicle technology project which has a teacher training element. This is supported by cross-college buy-in to address organisational and timetabling challenges that arise from such large-scale engagement.

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*'We are now developing a team of staff who are really starting to understand the nuances of working abroad, for example cultural understanding.'* **FEI Institution**

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Another college reported that they have a number of commercial activities abroad including branded, accredited schools/colleges. The income from this allows them to focus on other elements of international commercial activity, for example student recruitment (which they noted can be challenging because other countries don't always see further education as a route into higher education), TVET training (e.g. aviation skills in India), English or sports academies and summer schools. Another college organises home stays, international social programmes and tutoring through summer schools to deliver income.

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*'Due diligence is important when you're working internationally, you really have to do your homework and quality assurance becomes a big thing. You have to work with reputable agents to find students. The legal basis of partnership is also very important so we use lawyers and review regularly.'* **FEI representative**

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Representatives from these colleges highlighted the importance of developing a quality offer to attract students along with promoting their locations and study in Wales. Their good academic results also attract students, as does the potential of becoming involved in extra-curricular college activities including acting as ambassadors for the college. For these college representatives, international recruitment it is a way of internationalising the curriculum and the classroom and this can bring benefits for the whole student cohort.

College representatives note that international recruitment is always challenging, for example gaps in cultural understanding and in how pedagogy is understood. One college representative noted that they must work out how to bridge these gaps and find a hybrid approach. They also noted that FE college in Wales are competing with private schools for international A level learner recruitment. Colleges consider they will also see lower international student numbers following the COVID-19 pandemic, as teaching students online in another country is challenging. Changes in the international student visa system in recent years also reduced international student numbers and Brexit has further aggravated this situation.

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*'The sheer volume of competition is scary, huge amount of international schools being established overseas. It is also challenging to manage blended learning during the pandemic, when students are still studying abroad.'* **FEI representative**

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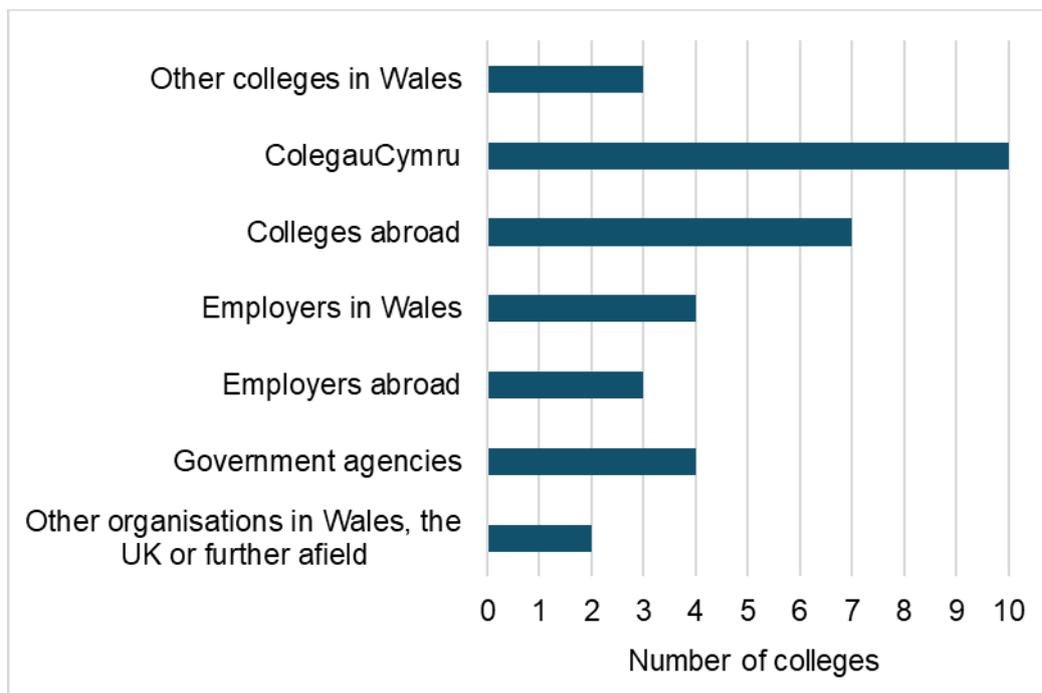
### 3.5 Partnerships

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Figure 4 below presents the number of colleges who reported working with different partners to support their international activity. ColegauCymru and colleges abroad are cited as partners most frequently by FE colleges. In discussions, colleges further explained that they have developed a range of partnerships through programmes such as Erasmus+ or through historical exchanges. These historical exchanges were often developed as a result of other cultural or education initiatives, attendance at conferences, links with employers or further partnerships developed through other EU projects.

Examples include historical work with the British Council, participation in Welsh Government exchanges and a partnership with a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States. ColegauCymru promoted the opportunity for colleges in Wales to host undergraduates from the MIT. A number of colleges participated in the scheme in 2020 and the scheme was undertaken online in 2021.

**Figure 4: Colleges' main partners in international activities**



Source: Internationalisation survey, n=10

Support from ColegauCymru was welcomed, particularly by smaller colleges as part of a collective approach to engagement and support. Some colleges also wish to engage internationally with colleges and countries with excellent reputations in particular fields, such as health and social care in Scandinavia and engineering in Germany. Several colleges noted that contact with international partners has been sustained through the COVID-19 pandemic through virtual means. Another noted that their Catholic ethos was also a part of the motivation to engage with certain countries such as Spain, Italy and France.

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*'The head from a Breton college visited us and this was a good exchange and an ideal way of developing better international engagement as he could get a picture of the college and our location, ethos and student make up. It was a sort of fact-finding mission and also helpful for health and safety, employer relations and getting an idea of costs.'* **FEI representative**

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Several colleges nonetheless considered there is a missed opportunity to link with local companies that have international connections and that this should be a key future focus for international engagement. One positive example was a college which works with a local green economy company in partnership with a college in Finland.

Partnerships for commercial activity were highlighted by several colleges as vital to their overall international strategies. One college own a number of private subsidiary companies and joint ventures including an office in Beijing and are part of wider brokerage activities between UK and India, indicating their status and reach. Another has just signed a 10-year

contract with their education partner in China to build on a perceived huge appetite for vocational training abroad for example in aerospace, engineering, construction, building services.

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*'International partnerships are by definition higher risk. However, we don't see our partnerships as a short term thing. We feel that all partnerships should be long term and sustainable'. FEI representative*

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Wider FE stakeholders who were interviewed as part of this research highlighted some key considerations for how the FE can further develop its partnership working to support internationalisation in future.

One stakeholder reported that FE is often seen as a 'missing link' in terms of international activity as there isn't a clear vision for the sector as a whole due to its disparate nature. This was considered to be a UK-wide issue. It was outlined that there is thus a requirement for the sector to crystallise and unify its vision in order to attract support and investment from partners. Sharing good practice regarding the Welsh experience would be an initial option, for instance, working in partnership with the HE sector to attract international students to study A levels at Welsh colleges and then progress to Welsh higher education institutions.

Other stakeholders felt that stronger senior management support and direction across all colleges for internationalisation would be beneficial. This includes stronger support for language learning. Erasmus+ was seen to plant a seed of interest for some learners and staff, with one partner noting that it is one of the only routes to demonstrate the cultural insight that language learning can provide. However, even Erasmus+ is seen by stakeholders to suffer from lack of preparation in terms of placements and lack of structure in terms of the language element. Future international activities and partnerships would benefit from a more professionalised approach, in their view.

Stakeholders also feel that internationalising the FE curriculum through an increased focus on MFL could be a way forward for colleges. There is a need for short courses for learners which are vocationally focused and promote intercultural skills to disadvantaged learners. Stakeholders feel there are minimal opportunities for studying MFL in FE on the vocational side, as colleges are not really creating space for languages. They emphasised that languages could support the development of key skills for vocational students such as communication, problem solving and analysis.

A pan-Wales approach is very important for these projects and so stakeholders are keen to work with FE across Wales to model languages and make them more relevant and accessible. Projects such as this provide benefits to the college learners including networking opportunities (international partners often attend the events such as British Council Wales, Institut Français and Goethe Institut), a sense of independence and opportunities to discuss language study with university students who also attend (allowing them to ask questions about future study and opportunities).

Another stakeholder identified particular partnership opportunities for the sector in future, including working more closely with government departments (such as the UK department of trade and industry) and improving FE links with industries and international exporters, along with working closely with UK Skills Partnerships.

### 3.6 Monitoring and sharing good practice

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Colleges commonly gather feedback from learners and staff who participate in international mobility projects, particularly Erasmus+ projects and those projects which are run through partners such as ColegauCymru and British Council Wales. It is usually the case that collecting some feedback and learning from such projects is required by the partners or the projects. While some colleges share this learning amongst colleagues and across departments (for example by encouraging learners or staff to do a presentation on their experiences), others collect this information primarily for compliance purposes.

College representatives generally agreed, however, that dissemination could be improved, as there were limited opportunities in place to share learning with colleagues. One representative commented that *'staff learn a lot about teaching and learning in different contexts, there's a shared experience but this is sometimes hard to sustain.'* A lack of formalised opportunities and structures were seen to be the issue although several colleges nonetheless offered examples of staff being encouraged to disseminate findings through presentations e.g. a visit to an innovation centre in the Basque Country.

As such, there is scope to improve the way in which the FE sector as a whole collates, uses and shares learning from international activities. In particular, some colleges recognised that they could improve the way in which they disseminate lessons and good practice from international activities across the sector, for example through conferences or communities of practice. This is seen as an effective way to support colleges looking to develop their own activities. Sharing lessons and experiences more widely and systematically is also seen as a way of encouraging the interests of staff and learners in international activities.

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*'The sector as a whole is not the best at saying what a difference we make, including international.'* **FEI representative**

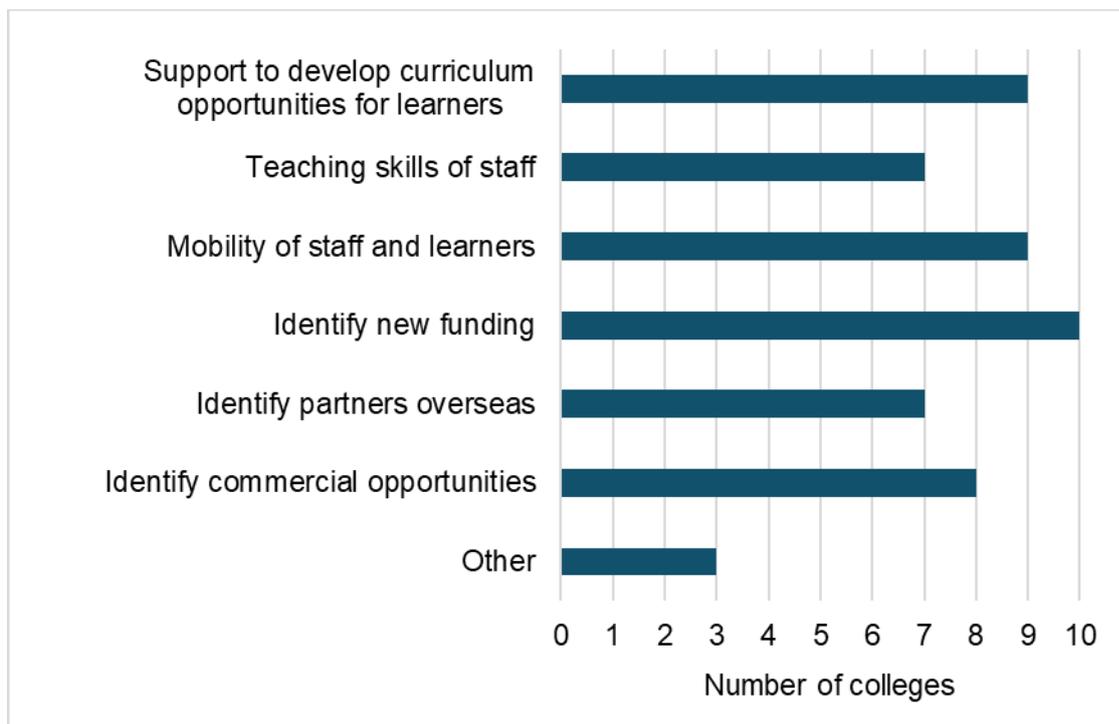
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### 3.7 Future support requirements and improving internationalisation

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Responses to the survey demonstrated that colleges in Wales would value a broad range of support to develop international activities. Colleges demonstrated interest in support for enrichment opportunities (such as support to develop curriculum opportunities) as well as support for commercial opportunities.

**Figure 5: Support colleges require to continue to develop international activities**



Source: Internationalisation survey, n=11

During discussions with college representatives, a series of key areas for future support and development were identified.

Positioning and promoting the Welsh FE sector as a whole internationally was identified as a priority for ColegauCymru by some colleges to support their international engagement, particularly their enrichment activities. This could include building the reputation of the sector abroad and acting as a voice for the sector in partnerships with other governments and FE sectors. A few colleges noted that one challenge to be overcome is the perception of FE in general, which is seen as less developed than the HE sector, particularly with regards to international engagement.

Colleges also noted that Wales has good quality, accredited frameworks of delivery so there is scope to identify where these types of sector-specific and employability skills would be valuable abroad. Colleges would therefore value support in highlighting the international work being undertaken by the sector and “*positioning us as a small, agile nation with innovative thinking.*” This may include a focus on particular countries where the Welsh Government or other partners such as the British Council or Universities Wales already have partnerships in place or countries with a particular expertise in certain sectors.

Related to this, some colleges highlighted a need to better demonstrate the value and impact of international activities across the sector. There is scope to collate information about the impact of internationalisation on colleges in Wales and their learners – including developing good practice case studies – which can be shared across the sector. This is seen as a way of supporting colleges to ensure buy-in and support from colleagues, giving colleges ideas on how to arrange international activities, and inspiring staff and learners to participate.

Developing international partnerships and networking opportunities was also seen as a priority. Colleges value the support that ColegauCymru provides in identifying international partners (including colleges, employers and others) based within the UK and abroad. Continuing support to build partnerships would be appreciated by colleges, as well as wider networking opportunities such as seminars and conferences where Welsh and international colleges and partners can build relationships. Support for inward mobilities through Welsh Government was cited as a possible funding source for this networking approach.

Similarly, colleges also value ColegauCymru's information sharing role and would like this to continue. This includes sharing information about ongoing international activities and about opportunities for funding or participating in international work.

One key challenge faced by some colleges is a lack of resources to effectively plan large-scale international activities and difficulties in administering these activities. These colleges noted that international activities are often resource-intensive, particularly if they are new activities. Some of these challenges are internal to colleges but colleges do appreciate ColegauCymru's role in limiting such challenges where possible – for example by managing the Erasmus+ consortium approach.

Any support which can minimise the administrative and managerial burden of international activities (particularly within colleges which do not have a dedicated international team) would be valued by colleges and could raise levels of engagement. Colleges consider there is scope for further support in this area, to identify common ground to facilitate joint international activities and encouraging information sharing.

One college suggested that there is a role for ColegauCymru in supporting consortium applications for TVET delivery abroad, as invitations to tender are often too large-scale for individual colleges or require a larger blend of skills. However, colleges also acknowledged that there is sometimes competition within the sector (particularly within commercial aspects) which can hinder such collaboration.

Coordinating a sector-level consortium approach to the new Turing scheme was given as a primary example of how ColegauCymru could support the sector to work collaboratively (although one college indicated that they would not be joining a consortium application). Colleges generally expressed positive views about ColegauCymru's role in supporting the Erasmus+ consortium application and felt that it would be appropriate to continue this role with the Turing scheme.<sup>17</sup> Colleges also expressed positive views about the Turing Programme and its potential to engage globally although some expressed reservations about the current lack of reciprocity envisaged.

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<sup>17</sup> At the time of writing, Welsh Government's new International Learning Exchange Programme for Wales had only recently been announced and had not been specifically discussed with colleges during fieldwork.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

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There is a mixed picture with regards to current levels of international engagement in FE colleges across Wales. The majority reported having an international strategy, however, almost a third of colleges currently do not. Four colleges prioritise commercial international activity while others focus on learner enrichment, with several reporting little current engagement at all and a focus instead on their community and learners.

Overall, it was reported that there is growing appetite across the majority of colleges to engage internationally, despite the perceived challenges involved. This offers an opportunity for the FE sector to contribute to Welsh Government's international objectives.

### 4.1 Focus on commercial and enrichment activities

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Colleges whose commercial focus drives their international strategy reported a focus on senior management buy-in and a 'top down driven' approach to international engagement. Other common features include centralising processes and resources, as well as combining commercial and learner enrichment activities; this is done through learner and staff mobility, and recruitment and learning programmes.

Other colleges focus much more the '*desire to open up horizons*' for learners, currently lacking the infrastructure, capacity or the strategic impetus from their senior management teams to develop commercial activities. These colleges instead focus on engagement based on the successful activities of some faculties, again involving student and staff mobility programmes and longstanding bilateral partnerships with colleges abroad.

### 4.2 Impact on learners and staff

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Positive impacts from international mobility programmes were reported for learners' confidence, communication skills and personal growth. Colleges also drew attention to improvements in skills and knowledge relating to their chosen courses, sector specific skills development, and soft skills development such as problem solving and analysis. Greater intercultural understanding is another important attribute, with colleges reporting the benefits of buddy systems with partner colleges to support learner integration.

The benefits of reciprocity, with students who come to Wales to study bringing new languages and cultural exchange ideas and being hosted in their local communities, was also highlighted. This links closely to the recognition of the key role international students play in enriching Wales' cultural diversity and to Wales' export economy, highlighted in Welsh Government's *International Relations through Public Diplomacy and Soft Power 2020-2025*.

There are also some impacts with regards to modern foreign language (MFL) learning however stakeholders considered that there should be more emphasis on supporting language skills before, during and after exchanges in order to enhance learners' experiences. Barriers to developing international learner enrichment opportunities include lack of capacity, complex logistics and health & safety. The demands of the curriculum were

also cited as a further issue, with a lack of flexibility and concerns about loss of teaching time.

Positive impacts were also reported for staff. International mobility exchanges are seen as opportunities to enrich their own learning experiences and professional development in fields such as curriculum development, college management and quality assurance techniques as well as bonding with their learners. Involvement in commercial international activities develops staff awareness and understanding of pedagogy and curriculum differences in other countries and can allow them to gain experience in teaching internationally. These opportunities contribute to building new networks for colleges, allowing staff to share ideas with colleagues and establish reciprocal exchanges.

These findings link to Welsh Government's commitment to student and academic exchanges, which will support the ambition to grow Wales' economy. They also contribute to the goals of *Wales in the World* to develop and maintain effective bilateral and multilateral relationships and proactively co-operate in the sharing of information, best practice and peer learning.

### **4.3 Commercial benefits and challenges**

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Several colleges reported strong commercial benefits from international activities such as teacher training, recruiting learners to study A levels or ESOL courses in Wales as well as establishing colleges abroad. This large-scale engagement requires cross-college buy-in to address organisational and timetabling challenges and to support student recruitment against stiff competition. Other commercially focused activities include TVET training, English or sports academies and summer schools.

This form of engagement requires capacity, investment and intercultural understanding to develop a hybrid approach. Challenges faced by colleges to expand their international provision and engagement include new visa requirements for students, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resource-intensive nature of arranging international activity.

### **4.4 International partnerships**

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Colleges have developed a range of partnerships through programmes such as Erasmus+ or cultural or education initiatives, attendance at conferences, links with employers or further partnerships developed through other EU projects. Some colleges also engage internationally with colleges and countries with excellent reputations in particular fields such as health and social care. Support from ColegauCymru was welcomed, particularly by smaller colleges as part of a collective approach to engagement and support.

Several colleges nonetheless considered there is a missed opportunity to link with local companies that have international connections and that this should be a key future focus for international engagement. Wider stakeholders also considered that FE can further develop its partnership working to support internationalisation in future. This requires the sector to crystallise and unify its vision in order to attract support and investment from partners.

Stronger senior management support and direction across all colleges for internationalisation would be also be beneficial as would more effective monitoring and evaluation of impact to improve accountability.

Stakeholders also considered that future international activities and partnerships would benefit from a more professionalised approach, particularly with regards to promoting MFL and intercultural skills to vocational learners. Other potential partnership opportunities for the sector in future include working more closely with government departments (such as the UK department for international trade) and improving FE links with industries and international exporters, along with working closely with the UK Skills Partnership.

It was considered that this would ensure that the FE sector has the opportunity to play its part alongside higher education in promoting the Cymru Wales brand and promoting Wales as a place for innovation and opportunity.

#### **4.5 Future progress and support for internationalisation**

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There is thus scope to improve the way in which the FE sector as a whole collates, uses and shares learning from international activities. College representatives considered that dissemination could be improved, as there were limited opportunities in place to share learning with colleagues. A lack of formalised opportunities and structures were seen to be the issue and communities of learning were seen as a potential option to improve these structures. Sharing lessons and experiences more widely and systematically is also seen as a way of encouraging the interests of staff and learners in international activities in the future.

Colleges demonstrated interest in support for enrichment opportunities (such as support to develop curriculum opportunities) as well as support for commercial opportunities. Positioning and promoting the Welsh FE sector as a whole internationally was identified as a priority for ColegauCymru by some colleges. This could include building the reputation of the sector abroad and acting as a voice for the sector in partnerships with other foreign governments and FE sectors. This again links to stakeholder calls for a unifying vision for the sector.

Any support which can minimise the administrative and managerial burden of international activities (particularly within colleges which do not have a dedicated international team) would be valued by colleges and could raise levels of engagement. Colleges consider that there is scope to identify common ground to facilitate joint international activities and to encourage information sharing. This could include supporting consortium applications for TVET delivery and the Turing programme. It was nonetheless recognised that there is competition within the sector regarding commercial aspects which can sometimes hinder such collaboration.

Colleges value the support that ColegauCymru provides in identifying international partners (including colleges, employers and others) based within the UK and abroad. Continuing support to build partnerships would be appreciated by colleges, as well as wider networking opportunities. This can help address the lack of resources to effectively plan large-scale

international activities and difficulties in administering these activities. A framework of delivery to identify sector-specific and employability skills would be valuable and demonstrate the value and impact of international activities across the sector and its potential to engage globally in future.

## 4.6 Recommendations

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- ColegauCymru should work with colleges and wider stakeholders to develop a vision for international engagement for the FE sector in Wales. This vision should highlight:
  - the advantages and mutual benefits to colleges through international engagement and reciprocal partnerships;
  - the potential impacts of internationalisation on teaching and learning;
  - the opportunities to enhance language learning through internationalisation.
- Stronger senior management support and direction is an essential element of international engagement. ColegauCymru should work with college principals to promote its vision for international engagement across the sector.
- ColegauCymru should continue to work with colleges' senior management teams to address challenges regarding a lack of administrative support and capacity to support international engagement. Information sharing, joint funding bids and sector-wide partnerships could all contribute to supporting colleges.
- ColegauCymru should continue to facilitate joint international activities including supporting consortium applications on behalf of the FE sector. This could minimise the challenges associated with international engagement. The Turing Programme provides an early opportunity to continue to develop this model of working.
- Colleges should be encouraged and supported to link with local companies that have international connections. This should be a key future focus for international engagement for the sector, in line with Welsh and UK government strategies for exports.
- As part of its forthcoming international strategy, ColegauCymru should produce a framework of delivery to identify sector-specific and employability skills which would be valuable for the economic growth of Wales.
- ColegauCymru should work with colleges to develop common monitoring and evaluation processes for international engagement activities. This would contribute to providing a stronger evidence base to illustrate their value and impact.

## Appendix: Data on staff and student mobility

**Table 1: Number of students benefiting from activities with an international element during an academic year**

<i>Colleges</i>	1	2*	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Vocational learners doing Erasmus+		30	50	150	Yes		50-60	20		100	About 10	140
Other vocational learners	4			50			20-30	101				40
MFL A level learners				40		20						
Other A level learners							40-50	2				
Learners involved in specific international initiatives such as Wales for Africa												
Engagement with international learners studying in Wales		5		30		**						1000+

Source: Internationalisation survey, n=12

\* In addition, 2 work placement opportunities for international learners

\*\* The college's international learners are integrated into the main student body and as a result most will engage with international learners.

**Table 2: Number of staff benefiting from activities with an international element during an academic year**

<i>Colleges</i>	1	2*	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11**	12
Exchanges with other colleges			3	5	Yes		15	20	5			2
Accompanying learners on international mobility projects		8	10	60	Yes		15	2		45		5
Study visits	1			20			5	3				
Teaching international learners		8		10			25-30					50

Training teachers overseas							10	100				
Training overseas teachers in Wales			10	5			5	25				3

Source: Internationalisation survey, n=12

\* In addition, 8 who engage with work placement learners.

\*\*Numbers not monitored centrally and vary from year to year.