

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) i egwyddorion cyffredinol y [Bil Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil \(Cymru\)](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) inquiry into the general principles of the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Bill](#)

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Ymateb gan: **Grŵp Russell**

Response from: **Russell Group**

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I am writing on behalf of the Russell Group in response to your Committee's inquiry into the above Bill. We represent 24 leading UK universities, including Cardiff University, with huge social, economic and cultural impacts in Wales, across the UK and around the globe.

We would like to raise the importance of having a clear strategic objective on research and innovation for the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) and of implementing the Reid and Diamond Reviews in full.

### **Cardiff University's contribution to research, innovation and growth**

The Bill offers a real opportunity to support higher education's contribution to research, innovation and growth. Cardiff University's excellent research across a broad range of disciplines has a real impact on wider society. In the last Research Excellence Framework, 87% of its research was judged world-leading or internationally excellent, with its impact beyond academia being particularly significant. Key breakthroughs range from new cancer drugs to an integrated approach to tackling and solving long-term issues like agricultural sustainability and poverty in rural Wales.

This research adds significantly to Cardiff University's ongoing economic impact. The university contributes over £3.2bn to the UK economy every year, bringing substantial benefits to local businesses and the Welsh economy. The university supports 12,600 jobs across the UK, including almost 1 in every 130 jobs in Wales itself. The latest data shows that for every £1m invested in Cardiff University research, £4.3m is generated for UK companies.

Cardiff has a track record of cutting-edge innovation, to the benefit of the whole economy. In 2019/20, 28 active spin-offs were created thanks to its research, with a combined turnover of over £18m and employing almost 250 people. Cardiff is leading a regional innovation cluster to help South Wales become a compound semiconductor powerhouse, already employing 1,400 people in high value jobs – with plans to expand to 5,000. The university is also one of the UK leaders in using Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) to help smaller businesses improve through access to its knowledge, technology and skills.

### **Duties placed upon the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research**

The addition of nine strategic duties to the Bill is welcome. We are pleased the Welsh Government has addressed the need for greater strategic direction in the Bill, which the consultation on the draft Bill highlighted as an issue. That said, we would like to see the duties made clearer and more directed for research and innovation. Duty 6 is described as *'contributing to a sustainable and innovative economy'*. We take it that this is intended to cover HEIs' research aspirations, and are acutely aware of the importance of their economic contribution. However, we would like to see a clearer reference to the role universities specifically play in shaping economic growth. We strongly agree with Universities Wales and Cardiff University that an ambitious strategic duty specifically covering research and innovation would be extremely valuable.

The Scottish Funding Council has set out a strategic framework on which the Welsh Government may wish to draw. The relevant aspiration is to *'create and sustain a world-leading system of tertiary education, research and innovation that changes lives for the better, enriches society and supports sustainable and inclusive economic growth'*. This, or an equivalent form of words, would provide a much clearer and more supportive framework for universities to deliver the maximum possible in terms of innovation and research.

### **Implementing the Diamond and Reid reviews**

To boost Wales' competitiveness with the rest of the UK and the world and to support it to prosper in future, we would encourage the Welsh Government to increase investment in university research – and specifically the dual system of quality-related research funding and innovation funding.

Some of our most important research and innovation challenges will require collaboration between leading institutions across the UK and internationally. It is vital that Wales is well-positioned to collaborate and compete, making the most of its world-class research, knowledge and innovation assets with appropriate funding and support. The Diamond and Reid reviews have already made this case, drawing on a wide range of evidence and insights; we would strongly support implementing the main recommendations from these reviews, and especially:

- at least maintaining – but preferably boosting – quality-related (QR) research funding, helping Welsh institutions win more grants, supporting them to maximise links with business, charities, public sector partners and other research-intensive universities, and creating a magnet for talent with lasting benefit to Wales' economy and society
- increasing the innovation and engagement funding currently administered by HEFCW to £25m, enabling an enhanced partnership between universities, government and industry to maximise economic and social benefits from Welsh HEIs
- creating a £30m 'Future of Wales Fund', rewarding institutions that attract investment into Wales and leveraging further research investment into Wales from elsewhere

- establishing a £35m 'St David's Investment Fund', including innovation competitions and hubs, to provide a single overarching brand for innovation activities to support business and the public sector.

We would be happy to provide further information on any of these points, but hope this is a helpful contribution to your inquiry.