

New teacher training changes to attract the best to the profession – Kirsty Williams

The Welsh Government has revealed changes for initial teacher education (ITE) that include strengthening how schools and universities work together and increasing the role of research.

The latest accreditation criteria are part of the Welsh Government's national mission to reform education and include:

- An increased role for schools.
- A clearer role for universities.
- Structured opportunities to link school and university learning.
- A greater emphasis on research.

The changes come after the recently published new professional teaching and leadership standards.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I want teaching in Wales to be a first choice profession so that we can attract the very best. For this to happen, we must get our initial teacher education offer right.

“The new accreditation standards are part of our national mission to raise the standards and standing of the profession.

“The teaching profession can only make its proper contribution to raising standards of education in our schools if our initial teacher training offers our future teachers the skills, knowledge and appetite to lead the change required.

“This is about our schools and universities working together, using the best research available, so our teachers have the right skills to deliver our new curriculum for the benefit of all our pupils.”

The Education Secretary also announced that the Education Workforce Council (EWC), through the establishment of the Initial School Teacher Training Committee (the Board) will accredit individual ITE programmes.

She added:

“I am delighted to announce that the public appointment process for the Chair, and Deputy Chair, of the EWC ‘Board’ is now open. The establishment of the Board will enable more specific consideration

of how ITE programmes will raise the quality of provision – attracting the right people with the right qualifications and an aptitude for teaching, to enter the profession.”

The Education Secretary wants international evidence and best practice to help guide Wales’ education reforms. From today the OECD will be holding an international workshop in Cardiff to help further develop ITE in Wales.

[Edinburgh student represents Scotland U18s in international rugby match](#)

Andrew Nimmo has returned to his studies at SRUC following an exciting weekend representing Scotland U18s rugby team against England.

[Friends of Wighton update](#)

With thanks to Sheena Wellington, here’s the latest update from Friends of Wighton :

**Wighton Heritage Centre, Central Library – Saturday 18th March at 11am
(doors open 10.30am)**



Cappuccino Concert with singer/songwriter Bob Knight

Bob Knight is a singer from Aberdeen who has slowly but surely been making a name for himself in the world of folk and traditional music. He comes from a long line of traditional singers and musicians, and is related to many of the great traditional singers from North East Scotland.

He is well known in North East Scotland folk circles as a singer and writer of songs in traditional style, having performed at most of the local clubs, and festivals, including many events at Aberdeen University's Elphinstone Institute.

Bob doesn't just confine himself to his home patch though, and has played all over Scotland, including Edinburgh Folk club, The Scottish Storytelling Centre ,(Edinburgh) The Rolling Hills Folk Festival in Melrose, the Portsoy Boat Festival, Dougie McLean's Perthshire Amber festival, and Celtic Connections in Glasgow. In August 2012 and then again in 2013, he performed in a series of highly successful concerts at the prestigious Whitby Folk Week, in Yorkshire.

In August 2013, Bob released his second CD, "Songs From My Tradition," this time ringing the changes by recording Scottish traditional unaccompanied songs. Future projects include another CD, of Scottish folk favourites, "Fields Of Home," recorded with his brother Willie Knight, and the eagerly awaited third solo album, which will feature Bob's best known and requested original songs.

Tickets £5 at door. Tea/coffee available for small donation.

[Giant panda to return home as she feels the effects of age](#)



Keeper Liu Jiang feeds Shu Lan at a zoo in the northwestern city of Lanzhou. The 23-year-old giant panda, who is 70 in human terms, is to be returned to her hometown in Sichuan Province. [Photo/Xinhua]

A 23-year-old panda living in a zoo in the northwestern city of Lanzhou is to return to its hometown in southwest China's Sichuan Province due to its age, zoo authorities said yesterday.

Shu Lan was born in Chengdu, Sichuan's capital, and moved to Lanzhou in 1996.

In 1999, she went back to Sichuan to live in Chengdu and two giant panda centers in the city of Ya'an for research and breeding.

The panda returned to Lanzhou in April last year, but her health aroused public concern after photographs of her with an injured back and foaming at the mouth went viral.

The China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda sent three experts to Lanzhou earlier this month to evaluate her health and the living conditions at Lanzhou Zoo.

They found that Shu Lan's health was normal and determined that the foaming at the mouth was caused mainly by chewing and playing with her tongue. But they also pointed out that her weight had dropped from 103 kilograms to 92kg since she had returned to the city, though that was still in the normal range.

However, they also concluded that Shu Lan was showing symptoms of aging.

Giant pandas live mainly in the mountains of northern Sichuan as well as the southern parts of Gansu and Shaanxi provinces.

According to the latest nationwide survey, there are 132 giant pandas in the wild in southern Gansu.

But Lanzhou, in the middle of the province, has a different environment and climate compared with wild panda habitats.

Heating, air conditioning and a humidifier have been installed in Shu Lan's living area in the zoo. But the panda habitat was built in 1976 and is now deemed too antiquated for her.

The bamboo she was fed was not fresh enough as it was transported from central China's Henan Province. In addition, the zoo lacks experience in taking care of old pandas.

Experts suggested sending Shu Lan to the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan to help maintain her health.

That suggestion has been approved by the zoo, though a specific schedule has not yet been released.

The decision was confirmed by Zhang Jianlong, head of the State Forestry

Administration.

“We will try our best to improve the condition of the zoo,” said Lei Qinghai, its director, adding that the city is planning to move the zoo to a new site for future development.

A national survey released in February 2015 showed that by the end of 2013, China had 1,864 wild pandas and 375 others living in captivity.

Press release: Essex wood waste site fined for illegal waste operation

JSJ Wood Recycling Ltd, operating in Nazeing, Essex, and two directors have been ordered to pay over £12,000 in fines for treating wood waste without the correct authorisations from the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency was also awarded £10,000 in costs.

The company, and former company directors Jenny Dodge of Epping and John Michael Parish of Wickford, Essex appeared before Barkingside Magistrates Court (on Friday 10 March 2017) and pleaded guilty to operating their wood recycling site unlawfully over a period of 8 months.

Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, certain low-risk waste operations can be undertaken when an operator registers an exemption with the Environment Agency. Exemptions are limited to particular types and amounts of waste and methods of treatment. If an operator registers an exemption but then operates outside of its terms, he or she commits an offence.

The court heard how JSJ Wood Recycling Ltd registered two exemptions for the storage and treatment of wood waste, which allowed the storage of up to 600 tonnes of waste wood at any one time. The company had a blatant disregard to the requirements of the exemption and exceeded the allowance by storing up to 1,750 tonnes of waste wood. The site also accepted waste which it was not authorised to treat and processed it in ways which it was not permitted to do.

JSJ Wood Recycling Ltd received payments for illegally receiving waste wood on its site at Birchwood Industrial Estate, Hoe Lane, Nazeing. Once on the site, the wood was processed by using heavy plant to chip it. Chipping wood makes it easier to store and transport, and in some instances makes it suitable for reuse. Once chipped, some of the wood was taken off site for incineration and for export. Some of the wood was baled in black plastic wrapping prior to removal.

Environment Agency officers attended the site in May 2014 to assess

compliance with the registered exemptions, but raised concerns about the way the site was being operated, most notably the dust being generated from the chipping process and the treatment of waste wood of a type not allowed by the exemptions.

Lead Officer in the case, Patrick Schneiders, said:

I visited the site on numerous occasions during 2014 but the defendants continued to ignore our advice on how to comply with their exemptions and run a site within the rules. Further visits to the site throughout 2014 revealed an increase in illegal activity with even more waste on site.

Waste crime can undermine legitimate businesses, so we work closely with businesses to help them comply with the law. In cases like this where individuals consistently operate illegally, we have no hesitation in prosecuting them as we want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.