

DIARY CASE



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**DC/VH/00128/25 – Meeting to discuss how we can work to support the Music Sector
in University's**

PREAMBLE

Meeting date/time	[REDACTED]
Who is the Minister meeting?	[REDACTED]
Who requested the meeting?	[REDACTED]
Primary purpose	How we can work to support the Music Sector
Is there an agreed agenda?	[REDACTED]
Which officials are supporting the Minister?	[REDACTED]
Where is the meeting?	[REDACTED]
Other practical considerations	N/A

DIARY CASE BRIEFING

Purpose


You have requested a meeting with the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership to discuss how you can work together to support the music sector in light of Cardiff Uni's consultation on the closure of their music school and the issue of the junior conservatoire at RWCMD.

Current position and issues to note – Cardiff University

On Wednesday 29 January Cardiff University announced a proposal for the restructuring of provision and closure of specific courses. The university has commenced a statutory consultation on redundancies of up to 400 staff (via voluntary and as a last resort compulsory redundancies), and the potential closure of specific courses. You met with the Vice Chancellor, Wendy Larnar on the 20 February to receive an update on the consultation progress.

Since this announcement there has been a large amount of correspondence to Welsh Ministers from parents of current and prospective students, academic staff from both Cardiff University and other institutions, and other Ministers. There has also been local and national news coverage.

You are aware that the higher education sector in Wales is currently facing significant financial instability.



Cardiff University is currently in financial deficit and over the past year has been openly engaging staff and stakeholders in considering their future strategy. Increasing costs and falling resource from international students has resulted in the university concluding significant strategic change is needed. The university has published its strategic plan for change – Our future, together, Our path to 2035.

Wendy Larnar notified officials that the university was planning to launch proposals for restructuring the workforce, reducing the headcount by up to 400 and ceasing several academic courses. The university notes that it wants to focus on better outcomes with improved academic and financial stability.

Course closures

The proposals announced by Cardiff University identifies the following provision for closure:

- Nursing (excluding Midwifery)
- Ancient History
- Modern Foreign Languages
- **Music**
- Religion and Theology

The university has advised that where programmes are closed as a result of these proposals, teach-out plans will be developed to protect and support students, ensuring that all students continue to receive a high-quality student experience. There will be consultation with students and staff to inform the development of teach-out plans. A Discontinuation of Programmes Oversight Group – chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) will provide oversight on the appropriateness of the teach-out plans, the delivery of these plans, impact on students, and the mitigation of risks.

Music

We received a large amount of correspondence about Music provision in Wales following the plans by the Royal Welsh college of Music and Drama to stop its Junior music and drama provision. While the RWCMD still continues to provide a higher education programme, this is not the same provision as currently offered by Cardiff University. The Conservatoire provision offered by the RWCMD is focussed on practical training and performance while the courses offered by Cardiff University also include a broader range of academic theory and research.

Staff Redundancies

[REDACTED] The university will consider VES and opportunities for deployment and staff transfers, as it develops its Trans-National Education offer, more flexible lifelong learning provision and enhancing pedagogy.

The UCU is balloting members on possible industrial action.

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Petition

There is currently an ongoing petition created by Eluned Parrott (Fund music education for future generations in the "land of song".) as of the 3 March 2025 midday, it has reached 1,141 signatures.

The petition highlights that music is an inalienable part of Wales's cultural identity. Wales's choirs, bands, orchestras & opera companies are world-class, & contribute to Wales's international brand & tourist economy. The petition goes on to raise that over recent years, free instrumental tuition has vanished from schools in Wales. The loan of free instruments to learn on has also gone. Wales's biggest university plans to close its music department due to financial pressures.

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