

Policy Officer

Key Information

Reporting To	Director of Policy and Public Affairs
Contract	Full time, Fixed term (12 months) (Job-share considered)
Salary	£32,859 - £36,073 (pro rata)
Location	A combination of office (Cardiff) and home-based working
Closing Date	21 May 2024

Overview of Role

We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to take on an exciting policy and public affairs role in the further education and work-based learning sector.

Under the direction of the Director of Policy and Public Affairs, the successful candidate will help promote the benefit of post compulsory education and training in Wales, helping to develop the Colegau Cymru key policy objectives and influence key decision makers including Welsh Government. The Policy Officer will bring expertise in policy development and political analysis as well as a commitment to the success of the post-16 education and training in Wales and organisation's work as a whole. The post holder will deliver influencing strategies across the organisation's main policy priorities and help raise the profile of Colegau Cymru and advocate the quality of FE provision in Wales.

The successful candidate will represent FE colleges on a national stage, working closely with MSs in the Senedd and with Welsh Government officials. This includes meeting and briefing relevant political party spokespeople and members of key Senedd Committees, as well as undertaking research, analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and helping to develop public policy recommendations. They will also be able to work on their own initiative as well as part of a team, and will possess excellent communication skills and the ability to form positive working relationships.

This is a hybrid opportunity which will require the successful candidate to work regularly from the Colegau Cymru offices in Cardiff, so the ability to commute here is essential. Willingness to travel across Wales, within the UK and occasionally internationally, and work outside of normal working hours may also be required.

Key Responsibilities

- Monitor and analyse developments in public policy, with regards to the strategic policy direction of ColegauCymru to ensure the organisation is aware of and responding to policy issues, legislation and developments relevant to the sector.
- Provide evidence-based responses to consultations or inquiries (Welsh Government, UK Government, Senedd etc.) to ensure our recommendations shape emerging policy.
- Keep up-to-date with political developments and policy direction and communicate this as appropriate.
- Help develop and deliver influencing strategies across main policy priorities, acting as team lead on areas identified by the Director of Policy and Public Affairs.
- Positively promote and highlight ColegauCymru and the work of the further education sector, including work-based learning, to politicians and their staff across all parties and with other external partners in government, business, academia and the third sector
- To provide the secretariat for relevant subgroups and networks and provide information to the ColegauCymru Principals' Forum as required.
- Work with the Policy and Public Affairs Assistant where appropriate and as directed, to support effective communication of the detailed policy positions, and the research to ensure the policies and recommendations are informed by robust evidence.
- Represent ColegauCymru at policy stakeholder groups and events.
- Lead on organising relevant events to support the ColegauCymru policy and public affairs work such as cross-party groups and publication launches.
- Maintain and develop constructive relationships with politicians, civil servants, policymakers and other key external partners and relevant organisations to share information and develop partnerships.
- Prepare policy, research and information materials for all communication channels including face-to-face, broadcast media, website and social media, electronic communication and written communications e.g. newsletters and briefings.
- Work closely with colleagues to ensure maximum exposure of FE policy activity in Wales.
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative research and analysis - including surveys and evaluation - to inform a range of policy, project and campaign content and in response to requests from the sector.
- Maintain an interest in developments in the public policy and political arenas and the education sector more broadly.
- Work to agreed budgets with approved suppliers.

General Responsibilities

- Respect diversity and promote good equality practice and equality of opportunity.
- To promote and embed service delivery through the Welsh Language.
- To promote and represent the Post 16 Education sector through all professional interactions and relationships.
- Undertake any other related tasks as directed by the Director of Policy and Public Affairs.
- Keep abreast of developments relevant to the role and be proactive in identifying and implementing opportunities continuous professional development.
- Establish good working relationships with ColegauCymru staff, trustees, partners and representatives of its member colleges and key external stakeholders.

Welsh Language Requirements

ColegauCymru is a proudly bilingual organisation and Welsh language skills are considered an asset to the organisation. We acknowledge the importance of developing and growing a bilingual workforce and encourage and support staff to learn, develop and use their Welsh language skills in the workplace.

Welsh language skills are desirable but not essential for this role. Applicants who do not possess Welsh Language skills or whose skills do not currently meet the desired level but who are able to demonstrate a commitment to acquiring or improving their level of competency are encouraged to apply. Applicants are welcome to contact ColegauCymru to discuss this requirement.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria
Proven experience in policy and research.
Significant experience of responding to a wide range of Government and Senedd consultations and inquiries.
A proven track record of strong written and verbal communication skills, and accompanying research skills.
Experience of defining, analysing and interpreting detailed qualitative and quantitative information.
An understanding of the parliamentary processes.
Experience of the policy making, campaigning and influencing process, ideally in a diverse and fast-moving policy environment.

Proven problem-solving skills with the ability to interpret complex legislation and to translate it for others.
Excellent level of IT skills including MS Excel, Word, Project, databases and Outlook.
Capable of building internal and external relationships at all levels.
Clear analytical and structured thinking.
Excellent written and verbal communication skills including the proven ability to convey complex issues clearly and effectively to a wide range of audiences.
Able to work independently and as part of a team.
Able to prioritise and plan workload efficiently, work under pressure and manage competing deadlines.
Understands and is committed to Equal Opportunities.
Participate in an Annual Performance Development Review.
Comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.
Desirable Criteria
Qualified to Masters level or above in a relevant social science discipline.
Experience of working with senior influencers.
An understanding of current issues in the post compulsory education sector.
Good presentation and public speaking skills.
Experience of acting as a media spokesperson.
Project management skills.
Welsh Language Skills.